



# Cole Steen, Grasshopper

Boiling Springs High School, PA.

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## Artist Statement

I consider the piece, *“Support Giraffe Conservation”* to be extremely personal to me and my mental health. I have struggled with mental illness for as long as I can remember. I struggle with depression, anxiety, and ADHD. I have been battling severe cases of these illnesses for years and at some points, it got so bad I had to be admitted to a psychiatric hospital for suicidal ideations or even legitimate suicide attempts. In early February of 2022, I was admitted to my 10th hospital.

Daily life can get extremely boring in these facilities with very little to do, but I always had art. I was allowed endless amounts of paper and crayons, and with supervision, I could even use markers and colored pencils. I was going through a particularly difficult time, so I decided to draw a portrait of the stuffed giraffe my aunt got me for support. It was challenging to make the piece since I only had access to crayons, but I’m still extremely proud of how my piece came out. I’m proud to say that I have not been in a single hospital since this drawing, nor have I had any episodes to lead me to suicidal ideations. I hope this piece can bring someone else the comfort it brought me.

## About Art Class with Ms. Olson

When I first walked into Ms. Olson’s classroom, I was expecting it to be like any regular art class. I’m one of the only ones who can create decent art, I do assignments on my own time and work ahead of most people, etc. I was preparing to go through the classes with ease without really learning anything new. I’m so happy to say that this was not the case with Ms. Olson and I was able to grow my understanding of art.

I took two classes with Ms. Olson during the first semester, 2D Design and Survey of Art History. Art History was by far the most influential because I finally got to understand the beginnings and foundations of art. I dove deep into the lives of some of my favorite artists, including Andy Warhol and Picasso, to see where they started off.

The most inspirational story I learned is from Henri Toulouse-Lautrec who suffered from a disease that made his bones very brittle. The cost to take care of his disease left Toulouse-Lautrec in poverty for his entire life. Even though Toulouse-Lautrec struggled so much, he still became a worldwide art figure and is even considered one of the greatest artists of the post-impressionism era. I really admire Ms. Olson for widening my view on art and its history, while also giving me many helpful tips that I still use even though I’m not in her class anymore.