



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FEBRUARY 13, 2026

Contact: Sandy Wright  
contact@riverworksart.org  
301.922.8507

**THE SHARED EXPERIENCE OF “LIFE IN THE AG RESERVE”**  
**In the latest Riverworks exhibition, painter Betsy Casaleno**  
**inspires reverence for beautiful places—and a special way of life**

POOLESVILLE, Md. — For longtime Ag Reserve resident Betsy Casaleno, the restorative natural surroundings of upper, western Montgomery County hold special meaning. Whether inspired by walking along the canal towpath, contemplating rusty farm equipment and sagging barns, or watching horses play in open fields, each of her paintings is a fresh attempt to show the world what she sees, and why it matters.

“My purpose in art is to share my reverence for the beauty of life,” Casaleno says, “striving to instill harmony and balance out of the difficult moments we encounter.”

Casaleno’s “Life in the Ag Reserve” will be on display from **Wednesday, February 18, 2026, through Sunday, April 19, 2026, at Locals Farm Market, 19929 Fisher Avenue, Poolesville, Md.** This show is the 24th Riverworks “Artist in the House” exhibition to be featured at the historic Veirs-Stevens House at Locals.

An artist’s reception will be held at Locals on **Sunday, February 22, 2026, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.** The reception is free and the public is invited to attend.

For Riverworks co-founder Sandy Wright, Casaleno’s paintings are a natural fit for an “Artist in the House” exhibition. Casaleno has shown her work across the region and has been involved in several area organizations, including the Poolesville Fine Art League, which brought together local artists in the late 1990s and encouraged children to explore their creativity.

“Betsy has been a Riverworks Associate Artist since our founding four years ago, and she’s always been a supporter of the arts in our community,” Wright explains. “She understands what’s special about this town and its surrounding area, and she has a real eye for scenes in the upcounty that express without words why we love living here.”

For Casaleno, this rural corner of Montgomery County, with its historic ruins, varied wildlife, riverside scenes, and gently rolling hills, is a place of endless artistic potential.

“I find well-used, even abandoned buildings and equipment interesting,” Casaleno says. “I also lived in a farm environment when I was a young child and feel very at home living in an agricultural area. Farming, in this area at least, is rapidly disappearing, so I also feel I am, in a way, documenting a past way of life.”

Casaleno adds that translating scenes of natural beauty into paintings is about more than just appreciating the world around us, but also becomes a means of capturing an unnameable feeling in the hope of fostering a shared emotional response.

“My hope is that you will connect with how I feel about my subjects,” she says. “So, if you feel something positive after viewing my artwork, then my job is done.”

###

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST:**

Primarily a self-taught artist, Betsy Casaleno has been painting her whole life. She was painting commissioned portraits as early as high school. She was Vice Chair of the Poolesville Fine Arts League and Vice President of the Fairfax Art League, and she has also given private art classes to children. She has a Computer Graphic Arts certificate and Associate of Arts in Computer Programming. She takes ongoing classes in the Community Arts Program at Montgomery College to continue to grow in her craft.

Casaleno enjoys the outdoors and nature. Some of her favorite artistic subjects are the C&O Canal, horses, and dogs. She most frequently paints in watercolor but explores other media as well. Although she has mostly worked in the genre of realistic paintings, she has created some abstract works with a spiritual influence. She also has an unusual skill: Polish paper cutting. She is currently planning to create a book of paintings of the C&O Canal. Some of her art has been on display over the years at the Delaplaine Arts Center in Frederick, Maryland; Fairfax City Old Town Hall in Fairfax, Virginia; Kentlands Mansion in Gaithersburg, Maryland; the Sandy Spring Museum in Sandy Spring Maryland; Poolesville Town Hall; and at many Poolesville-area events.

###



Established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2022, [Riverworks Art Center](https://www.riverworksart.org) offers a wealth of arts and culture programs in a restorative rural setting, including art classes, introductory workshops, community roundtables, Storytellers presentations, theater and music classes for children, fine arts exhibitions, outdoor concerts, community festivals, weekly jam sessions, and more.

Riverworks is rooted in the small town of Poolesville, only 40 minutes outside the D.C. Beltway and just half an hour south of Frederick, with Sugarloaf Mountain rising eight miles to the north. The surrounding 93,000-acre Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve offers hiking trails, riverside views, farm-fresh produce, independent restaurants, African American historic sites, Civil War trails, local beer and wine, and more.

In its first three years, Riverworks has hosted more than 200 art classes, programs, and public events, many of them low-cost or free, with the goal of cultivating creativity and connection in the rural corner of Montgomery County and with visitors from across the D.C. region.

To learn more, visit the Riverworks website: [www.riverworksart.org](https://www.riverworksart.org).



Established in 2020 at the height of the Covid pandemic, [Locals Farm Market](https://www.localsfarmmarket.com) at **19929 Fisher Ave., Poolesville, Md.** is a vital restaurant in the historic heart of Poolesville that serves as a welcoming first stop for visitors exploring the Ag Reserve, a community gathering place, an art gallery, and a marketplace for the work of local artists, writers, artisans, and farmers.

Locals is open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Locals hosts Riverworks jam sessions open to musicians of all ages and experience levels on Friday nights from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Music-loving audience members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The Locals menu emphasizes fresh ingredients from area farms. Guests can eat, meet, and relax in a shade-covered outdoor setting or indoors on two floors of the historic 1840s Veirs–Stevens House.

The second floor at Locals hosts rotating Riverworks “Artists in the House” exhibitions featuring the work of respected local and regional artists.

To learn more, visit the Locals website: [www.localsfarmmarket.com](https://www.localsfarmmarket.com).

###