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## Grateful Dead auction benefits Hidden Wings

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Portions of the auction of hundreds of pieces of memorabilia from one of the most revered rock bands of all time — the Grateful Dead — will benefit Hidden Wings, a Solvang-based life skills school for young people with autism.

The auction of about 700 pieces of memorabilia and fine art, including the original patent and copyright for the band's name and handwritten lyrics, will be held next weekend in Illinois in what's billed as a "philanthropic partnership" with Hidden Wings.

The nonprofit Hidden Wings was founded about five years ago by the Rev. James Billington and his wife, Dr. Julia Billington.

The live auction, called "The Grateful Dead Family Jubilee Auction," will be hosted by Donley Auction Services in Illinois, but the public can participate in the online auction now through the closing Sunday. A sneak peak preview will be held Wednesday in Union, Ill., and tickets can be purchased for \$25 at [www.gratefuldeadauktion.com](http://www.gratefuldeadauktion.com). A portion of those ticket sales will go to Hidden Wings.

The connection to the iconic touring band known universally as "The Dead," comes via drummer Mickey Hart, who has visited the school in

the past to conduct drumming therapy workshops.

Mr. Hart has also donated two items of his own, with 100 percent of the proceeds at auction going to Hidden Wings. One item is a drum kit "add-on" VIP gift basket for the winner of Mr. Hart's drum kit, expected to fetch \$40,000.

He is also donating the proceeds from the sale of "One from the Vault," a signed artist proof of "Beam Man," said to be a highlight of his "Drum Ki" art collection, according to the auction house.

Mr. Hart was the artist who created the piece, but it has also been "hanging in his personal studio for inspiration," according to auction officials. It is one of three proofs, and the only one that will be released to the public.

"Powerful in size and visual, 'Beam Man' is an extraordinary example of rhythm as fine art," the auctioneers said. "To construct 'Beam Man,' each of Hart's fingertips (was) outfitted with light sources and through performance, the art piece as born."

Mr. Hart uses his drums as a "healing activity" for the students at Hidden Wings.

"There is nobody more passionate and dedicated to the use of music as therapy for autistic children and adults than Jim Billington," Mr. Hart said in a statement. "I have seen his

work in action and have supplied him over the years with drums to carry out his mission. By using drums as therapy to finding the inner music of autism, Hidden Wings has become a leader in the field."

Mr. Hart added that he supports the work of Hidden Wings and hopes people become contributors to the school.

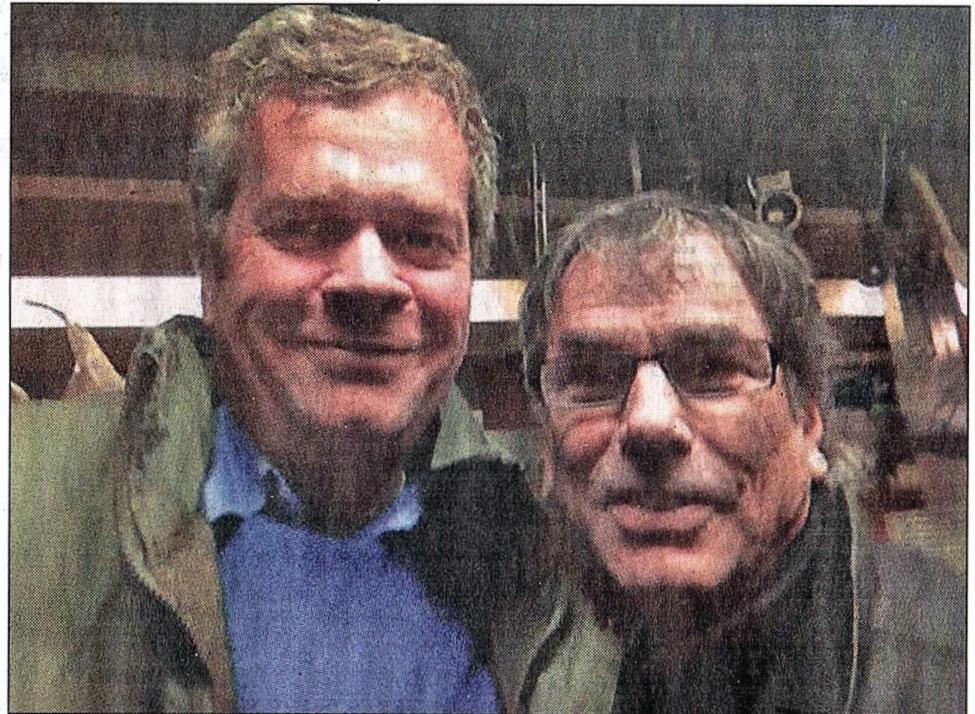
"Hidden Wings is the cutting edge in focusing upon the gifts of autism, not the deficits," Mr. Hart explained. "They spend their time and resources bringing out their students' inner gifts and talents."

Rev. Billington noted Mr. Hart's use of rhythm for the past two decades as a means of communication for those with Alzheimers.

"For the last four years he has pioneered the use of drumming to develop bonds of friendship among those whose greatest affliction is the lack of a friend — the literal meaning of autism," Rev. Billington said in an interview. "We have been the incredibly fortunate place of his initial work."

Mr. Hart developed large, low-frequency round drums, called table drums, for the school.

"I have witnessed time and time again how young adults, achingly alone, gather around this table like they were having dinner," Rev. Billington said. "One young man, who spoke barely at all, told his mother af-



COURTESY PHOTO

**Hidden Wings co-founder Rev. Jim Billington, left, is shown with Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart in 2013. A signed artist proof of "Beam Man," the highlight of Mr. Hart's "Drum Ki" art, will be auctioned next week, with 100 percent of the proceeds going to the Solvang-based Hidden Wings school.**

ter a drumming, 'Mom, I have made my first friend.' For this gift — the heartbeat, the pulse, the common rhythm — we found the language of autism."

Though all of the actual auction proceeds won't benefit Hidden Wings, the auction is expected to bring in several million dollars. The online auction is available now for bidding at [www.proxibid.com/asp/AuctionsByCompany.asp?ahid=6309](http://www.proxibid.com/asp/AuctionsByCompany.asp?ahid=6309).

The top-seller is expected to be "Skeleton and Roses," a hand-painted original silkscreen from 1966 that ultimately became the band's signature image. It is expected to bring \$66,000. The original, handwritten

lyrics to "Fire on the Mountain" is estimated at \$45,000 to \$60,000, while the late Jerry Garcia's Colt .25 may bring \$30,000.

Other items include Mr. Garcia's Einstein wrist watch, his Screen Actors Guild card, two Grateful Dead equipment road cases, and Mr. Garcia's 11th annual BAMMY award for outstanding guitarist of the year.

The Dead is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

"We are delighted to be able to support Hidden Wings as our philanthropic partner," said auction house owner Randy Donley.

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