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Local Filmmaker Invites Public To Help Change The Conversation About Women's Breasts

---Holyoke--- Gateway City Arts presents a screening of *The Breast Archives*, a film by Easthampton documentary filmmaker Meagan Murphy on June 28, 2019 from 7-9 pm, with a panel discussion afterward. The screening is open to the public. \$10 admission.

The Breast Archives is a revealing documentary film in which nine daring women bare all as they share their personal histories and feelings about their breasts. At once enlightening and entertaining, *The Breast Archives* exposes the complex emotions women have about their breasts as they move from puberty to sex and through childbirth, cancer and menopause.

The nine women are an inspiring group whose stories offer a disarming honesty as they slowly disrobe and come to terms with their individual breast journeys. Audiences of all ages and genders appreciate the endearing yet candid nature of the film, which ultimately is a celebration of life through this evocative body part.

The film, conceived in Egypt where director Meagan Murphy traveled in 2012, was inspired by ancient depictions she saw en route of the goddess Isis proudly exposing her breasts. Enthralled by Isis's unabashed display, Murphy began to put together the pieces of her own breast story. When she returned home, she started work on the film with the aim to uncover a breast-based wisdom, like Isis's, that might be accessed through gentle questioning of women. But what she found instead was a far richer dialogue that revealed an oft unspoken narrative where breasts are objects of pride, shame, pleasure, guilt, connection and fear.

Because studies show 85% of women are discontent with their breasts, Murphy is now a breast-appreciation activist of sorts, hoping that her film, which will be screened internationally, has the power to change our culture—one that seems generally afraid to talk about breasts and breast image. “This conversation needs to start happening openly and honestly in our culture to lift women up,” Murphy said. “There’s no reason women should feel insecurity, shame or the heartache of a negative body image that robs them of confidence and of the opportunity to express their natural selves.” Plagued for years with a negative breast image herself due to a case of early pubescence and inverted nipples, Murphy’s message hits home for many women.

After the screening, a panel of successful, locally based women and men in health, academia, and the healing arts, including YWCA Wellness Director, Jennifer Allen, University of Massachusetts Professor David Sela, PhD, social worker Susan Solis-Casteneda, and Leslie Cerier, Rev. Sandra

Harrick, and Teresa Lorencio, who are in the film, will discuss and explore the cultural issues arising from the suppression of women's breast and body-based experiences, new ways to provide outlets and conversation-starting tools for adolescents and families, and *The Breast Archives'* role in the global #MeToo movement.

Meagan Murphy is a documentary film producer based in Easthampton, Massachusetts. Her work focuses on the humanities and women's health. She has received a *Communicators Award*, a Blue Cross/Blue Shield *Medical Journalism Fellowship* and was a Time Inc. Health Education *Freddie Award* Finalist. Meagan has spoken and presented *The Breast Archives* at Western New England University Social Work Conference, the annual conference for Assoc. for the Study of Women & Mythology, Women's International Film Festival, and Hampshire College. *The Breast Archives* is represented in North America by Kanopy and First Run Features, and is available via iTunes and Amazon.