



## **Artist Statement:**

### ***You Are My Harmony*** Valerie Leuchs

*It was an honor to be asked to participate in Seniorlink's #thankacaregiver campaign and to honor family caregivers nationwide. My art has always been a way for me to express the sentiment felt at a moment in time, in the most positive yet honest way. **You Are My Harmony** is reflective of my gratitude to the people that have taken on this role and in doing so, have managed to provide a calm for others around them.*

*When I started this project, I immediately thought of my Mom and Dad. After 38 years of marriage, my Mom was diagnosed with Brain Cancer. In that moment, my Dad became her caregiver and was by her side as she battled this horrible disease. I was in awe of him; watching him handle every detail of her care with love and devotion while still working every day to provide for our family. What struck me most, however, was how he cared for my brother and I throughout this experience. He did everything he could to make sure that we were living out our lives fully, and remaining positive and supportive of each other. My Dad created a calm for us, even when his world was anything but calm.*

*Brain cancer is a fast-moving, horrible disease and my Mom lost her battle within two years of her diagnosis.*

*When I think of family caregivers, I immediately think of my Dad. He stepped into the role of caregiver for my Mom when she fell ill, but never lost sight of caring for my brother and I. He did an incredible job as both caregiver and Dad, inevitably helping our family through a most difficult time. **Thank you, Dad.***

*Parents are caregivers, too. Since becoming a mom, I've come to realize how challenging the role of parent can be. I was probably not the easiest child to raise, but my Mom and Dad did it so well. My Mom taught me so much and gave me the gift of creativity and my love and appreciation of life. My Mom was an incredible caregiver, too. **Thank you, Mom.***

*As I painted this piece, I thought of my parents – my caregivers. The incredible love and care they had for each other and their love and commitment to my brother and I. I think of all caregivers who work tirelessly to ensure those they love get the care they need.*

**Thank you, Caregiver Nation** --- *You are our strength, our balance, our peace, our calm. You are the person that does so much so that others can live in the most comfort possible. Without you, we would be lost.*

## **Artist Bio:**

Valerie Leuchs has been making art since childhood: sewing clothes with her mother, singing Little Orphan Annie at the top of her lungs, bedazzling tee shirts, and painting just about everything.

She graduated from Boston College with a degree in Fine Arts. In 2002, she moved to New York City and worked in fashion, sales, and finance, though she's always been drawn back to creating art.

Now the mother of two young boys, she's focused her career strictly on painting. Valerie is widely recognized for her bright Pineapples, New York City Palms, and colorful abstracts.

Valerie paints using acrylics, ink, and pastels. Her work, like her personality, is bright and cheerful. She says, "I strive to use as many colors of the rainbow in my art and see how they juxtapose against white space."

You can see more of her work on [www.valerieleuchs.com](http://www.valerieleuchs.com).

