



# My Heart Is In Your Hand

When Jane DeDecker set up her booth at the Ann Arbor Art Fair several years ago, she might not have imagined that her work would one day grace one of the city's most important new buildings.

But now, her bronze sculpture, "My Heart Is In Your Hand", stands proudly in the main entrance lobby of the U-M Cardiovascular Center building. Commissioned especially for that location, it was made possible by a gift from Doug and Laurie Valassis.

The piece evokes the shape of a heart, through the curved elongated bodies of a man and a woman connected by clasped hands. Simultaneously symbolizing the trust that patients put in their caregivers, and the bonds with family and friends that sustain patients throughout their healing process, it's destined to become a landmark of the CVC building.

DeDecker created the work in her studio in Loveland, Colorado, where she has also sculpted works for locations such as Meijer Gardens and the Mayo Clinic. After this piece was cast early in 2007, she put it on display outside the studio, so it was visible to people as they walked downtown. Townspeople grew fond of it – so fond that when it came time to package it up for shipment to Ann Arbor, the local newspaper called to see what had happened to it!

Now that the work has reached its permanent home, its creator hopes that the realistic but impressionistic nature of the sculpture, with its sense of selflessness and giving, will create a positive feeling among all who encounter it as they enter the CVC.

"I feel like it's a give and take within those two figures," DeDecker says. "You can't tell who needs the healing, and that's part of it too – that everybody's learning and everybody's receiving, and everybody's giving. It's a balance."

Before creating the piece, she spent time speaking with CVC physicians, nurses and leaders, and reading about cardiovascular disease. "I found out that in order to successfully heal, you have to have a good relationship with your caregiver. This is not a disease where you can be alone," she says. "It was very inspiring to meet people at U-M — everyone is so passionate about what they do."

As she sculpted, she pictured the people she had met at U-M. "I tried to see them and how they might have taken someone's hand," she explains. "I tried to portray their generosity and selflessness."