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**KANSAS CITY CHIEFS**

# Local artist diagnosed with cognitive impairment gets artwork recognized by Chiefs legend

by: [Juan Cisneros](#)

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OLATHE, Kan. — Former Kansas City Chiefs running back Jamaal Charles made a local artist's day when he said he would sign the prints she made of him for an auction.

[Cynthia Burris](#) uses the Chiefs as her muse to create works of art that she sells on her website and donates to charity.

Burris grew up in central California and became a Chiefs fan when she started hearing former quarterback Alex Smith's name on TV. His name sparked her interest because her father is also named Alex Smith.

"I decided to watch him and I've been a fan ever since," Burris said. "Haven't missed a game."

Burris uses programs like Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop to add textures and shapes to her prints. She said fellow Chiefs fans have been supportive and have given her positive feedback.

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"I wanted it to be different and funky," Burris said. "I love all the Chiefs art we have here in Kansas City, but I wanted to do something weird and something that nobody had seen before and maybe show players in a different light."

Recently, Burris created two prints of the legendary running back for the HopeKids Tailgate Challenge auction happening at The Easy Inn in Kansas City, Kansas on November 20 at 5 p.m.

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# 20 NOV. 5PM CHILI COOKOFF

## HopeKids Tailgate Challenge

This years challenge will be set up a little different then in 2019. BUT we are competing with 3 other teams (Denver, Dallas and Minnesota). All for 1 amazing cause! Join us @ the Easy Inn for some drinks and a chili cook off! We will also have auction items, Raffles, Tee shirts and decals available! Come out and hang with some of your favorite Tailgaters and Ultimate Fans!!

AUCTION AND  
RAFFEL ITEMS

CHILI COOK OFF

TAILGATE  
CHALLENGE FACING  
3 OTHER TEAMS!  
FOR 1 AMAZING  
CAUSE!

LIMITED TEE SHIRTS

LETS SHOW WHY  
WE ARE THE  
HOPEKIDS CHAMPS!  
LETS GO BACK 2  
BACK!

### THE EASY INN

322 N. 6th Street  
Kansas City, KS 66101

[www.hopekids.org](http://www.hopekids.org)

20 November

From 5PM - ????

The HopeKids fundraiser is a friendly competition among their chapters from Dallas, Denver and Minnesota who will be supporting their respective teams on Sunday.

“When you discover you have an ability to make things any type of artwork, you really want to share it. You want to use it for some sort of good purpose,” Burris said. “It’s not just for people to hang on a wall. I think its nice to be able to give

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WHEN SHE MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT ON TWITTER, CHARLES HIMSELF SAID HE WOULD SIGN it for whoever won the item at the auction.



“I’d like to thank Jamaal Charles for all of his support and for offering to sign a print,” Burris said. “Thank you for being such a huge inspiration not just to me, but everyone in Chiefs Kingdom.”

Burris said she never expected that kind of response and it is made even better because the proceeds will go to a good cause.

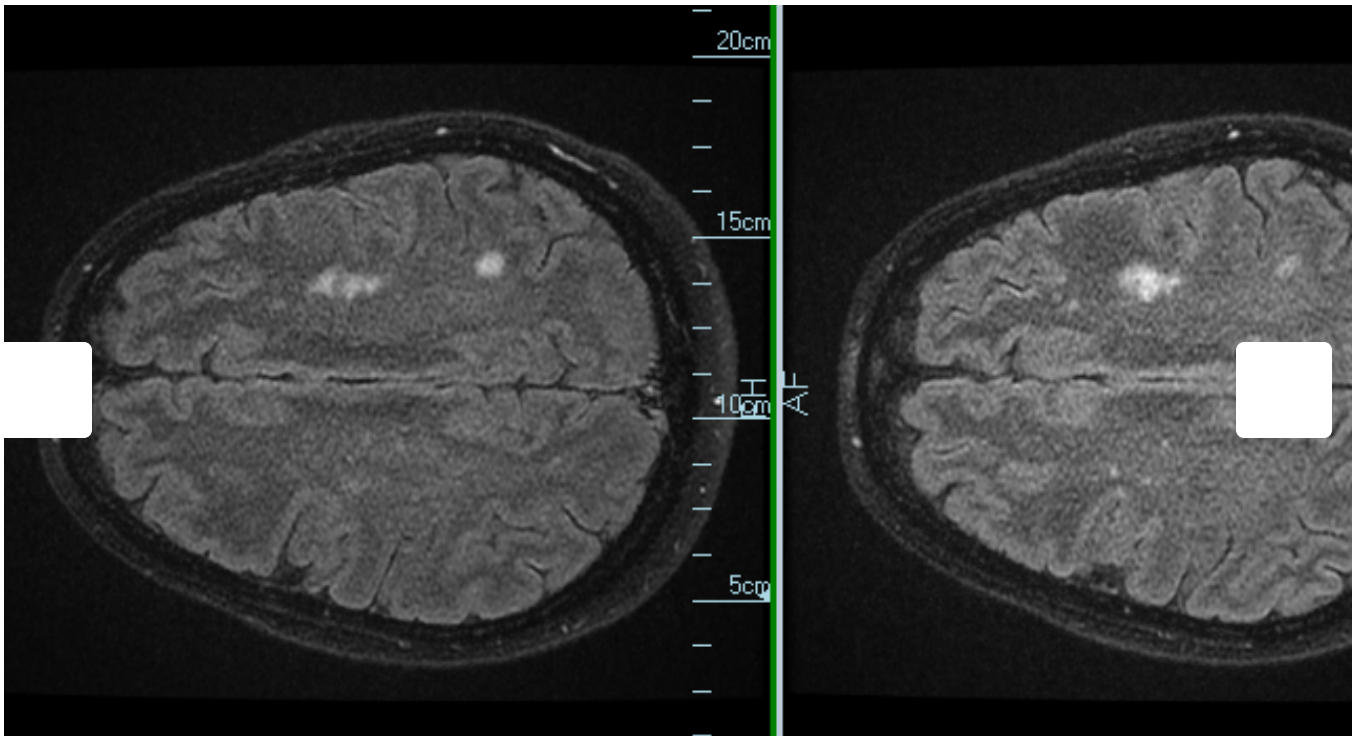
“I was touched, because these prints are going to a children’s charity HopeKids,” Burris said. “Jamaal Charles has such an interesting story. He as a child overcame adversity and a learning disability and eventually, he was persistent and he made his dreams come true. He’s such an inspiring story of success and pushing past your limitations.”

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But it wasn’t just his signature that made Burris’ day.

On November 9, 2021, Burris was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment. A

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Brain scan courtesy Cynthia Burris



“I went straight home and started working on the Jamaal Charles piece and I sat there until I finished it,” Burris said. “He was kind of my comfort zone and I could zone in and enjoy it and not think about what’s going on with my brain.”

Burris suffers from lesions on her brain and her and her husband started noticing that she was starting to forget things. A recent MRI showed she had no new lesions, but was suffering from MCI.

“My husband will kiss me goodnight and he’ll turn the corner to go into the bedroom and minute later I’ll say, ‘Hey! Where is my kiss?’ or I’ll ask him the same questions over and over again,” Burris said. “He thought I was ignoring him and I just wasn’t listening to him. For us to have the diagnosis and know what it is, is actually a relief for me.”

Burris said her husband has been a huge beacon of support for her art and her

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Due to her diagnosis, Burris said she will continue to make art, but will more than likely step away from social media. She said she is more concerned with her ability to drive and use her cell phone.

“You can’t reverse it. You can’t slow it down really. All you can do is take care of yourself,” Burris said.

For Burris, art is her way of giving back to the community and she won’t let MCI slow her down.

“As with any hurdle in life you just have to push past it and just do the best you can and make your dreams come true don’t let anything stop you,” Burris said.

She has designed prints of Patrick Mahomes, Travis Kelce, Tyreek Hill, Tyrann Mathieu and Derrick Thomas and has ideas and prints for Priest Holmes, Len Dawson and Joe Delaney in the works as well.

“I’ve never been to a Chiefs game. I’ve never been inside Arrowhead Stadium. I would love to go,” Burris said. “It’s my dream to go, but at the end of the day, if I have to choose between giving my prints to a charity and buying a ticket. I’m gonna give my prints away.”

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