



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mural Unveiling in Flatbush

**Middle School Youth Artists Enliven Glenwood Underpass
with Local, National, and International Heroes**

Mural Dedication Ceremony: Friday, June 12 at 10 am

Location: Glenwood Road between
East 46th Street and Schenectady Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11234

NEW YORK, NY – Groundswell, in partnership with P.S./I.S. 109, Councilmember Jumaane D. Williams, and the Long Island Railroad (LIRR), is pleased to announce a dedication ceremony highlighting the unveiling of a new mural, entitled “Local Heroes.” This monumental mural enlivens a once neglected underpass with a vibrant tribute to the local heroes of Flatbush, including local, national, and international figures.

To create this mural, 15 middle school students participated in an intensive Cultural Afterschool Adventures (CASA) Program in partnership with Lead Artist Misha Tyutunik and Assistant Artist Narus Carlos Jefferson. Together, the team collaboratively researched, designed, and fabricated this 480 sq ft mural consisting of seven panels installed at Glenwood Road between East 46th Street and Schenectady Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11234.

During the mural research and design phase, young people researched cultural icons – past and present, citywide, national, and international. This intensive research process enabled young people to discover local heroes and underrepresented leaders of color who have contributed to positive change within their community, the nation, and/or the world. The youth muralists also surveyed fellow students and neighborhood residents to discover additional inspirational leaders they would like to see represented in the mural.

Within each panel, a local icon is paired with a national or international figure, creating meaningful dialogue within and across images. For example, in the first panel, which takes the form of a car, Pastor Gilford Monroe of Mount Zion Church is paired with political leader, journalist, and orator Marcus Garvey, who founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL). Pastor Gilford is renowned within East Flatbush for his tireless efforts to end gang violence through a clergy crisis response team.

In the fourth panel, shaped like a house, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American woman elected to Congress, is paired with Dr. Una Clarke, the first Caribbean-born woman elected to the New York City Council. Elected in 1991, Dr. Clarke sponsored more than 300 pieces of legislation on a wide range of issues including child welfare, education, health and mental health

issues, economic development, public safety and transportation during her 10-year tenure. Additional figures represented include Connie Cincotta of Glenwood Masonry, Bishop Eric Daniel Garnes, Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson, and Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein.

“Through the Cultural Afterschool Adventures program, I am delighted to continue my strong partnership with Groundswell and P.S./I.S. 109 and complete our efforts to transform the Glenwood Underpass through public art,” said Councilmember Jumaane Williams. “I am inspired by the research conducted by these talented youth artists and am particularly honored to be depicted within the mural myself, alongside one of my revered personal heroes, anti-apartheid revolutionary Nelson Mandela.”

“Too often in school, the same historical figures are studied,” said Principal Dwight Chase. “This mural project was a powerful opportunity for our students to celebrate the cultural diversity of Flatbush as well as highlight changemakers who have contributed to social justice, civil rights, and peace efforts: from the well-known historical figures to the local, homegrown leaders. I am delighted the students chose to include me, alongside abolitionist and women’s rights activist Sojourner Truth.”

“Groundswell is grateful to Councilmember Williams and our project partners for this opportunity to transform a neglected East Flatbush space through vibrant public art,” said Groundswell Executive Director Amy Sananman. “We welcomed the opportunity to celebrate this incredible array of transformative local heroes. At the same time, we are proud to have leveraged the collaborative mural making process as a tool to empower a new generation of community leaders, artists, and activists.”

“Local Heroes” is made possible with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the New York City Council. Special thanks to New York City Councilmember Jumaane Williams.

About Groundswell

Groundswell, New York City’s leading organization dedicated to community public art, brings together youth, artists, and community partners, to make public art that advances social change, for a more just and equitable world. Our projects beautify neighborhoods, engage youth in societal and personal transformation, and give expression to ideas and perspectives that are underrepresented in the public dialogue. www.groundswell.nyc

About P.S./I.S. 109

The mission of P.S./I.S. 109 is to establish an educational environment where the goal is to meet the needs of the Whole Child. Its aim is to produce lifelong learners and thinkers by providing standards-driven instruction in all curriculum areas. P.S./I.S. 109 always seeks a collaborative environment where parents, teachers, and children are active participants in the total learning process.

About LIRR

The Long Island Rail Road is the busiest commuter railroad in North America, carrying an average of 301,000 customers each weekday on 735 daily trains. A subsidiary of New York State’s Metropolitan

Transportation Authority, the Long Island Rail Road marked its 175th Anniversary in 2009.
www.mta.info/mta/lirr

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