



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mural Unveiling on Pitkin Avenue

**As City of New York Announces “Transform/Restore: Brownsville,”
Youth Artists Unveil Mural Along Historic Pitkin Avenue**

Mural Dedication Ceremony: Thursday, August 29 at 4pm
Location: Lane Bryant, 1550 Pitkin Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11212

Groundswell, in partnership with NYC DOT, Pitkin Avenue BID, and the Brownsville Community Justice Center, is pleased to announce a dedication ceremony to celebrate the unveiling of “Intersections Humanized,” a new public mural which promotes a vision of shared streets in Brownsville and supports the economic revitalization of historic Pitkin Avenue.

This summer, 15 young people participating in Groundswell’s Summer Leadership Institute (SLI), some with a history of court-involvement, collaborated with artists Chris Soria and Don Christian Jones to research, design, and fabricate this 55 ft wide by 35 ft high site-specific mural.

In the mural, a central constellation of individual portraits overlooks historic Pitkin Avenue. Together, these individual portraits highlight the strength and diversity present in Brownsville, while creating a positive shared identity for the neighborhood’s 116,000 residents. The image is a powerful reminder of the critical role each of us has to play in transforming our community and promoting the livability of our streets. Text along the bottom reads “Respect,” “Pride,” “Fortitude,” and “Compassion.”

The unveiling of this mural is particularly meaningful as the City of New York announces a \$100,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), awarded to Groundswell to support the presentation of a transformative mural project in Brownsville entitled “Transform/Restore: Brownsville.” This participatory public art project will engage high-risk young adults, local businesses, and community members in creating visible and permanent change in one of New York City’s most challenged neighborhoods.

“With a little paint and a lot of imagination, students are transforming their neighborhood streets into more inviting places,” said NYC DOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan. “This colorful narrative educates New Yorkers about working together to make our streets even safer.”

“The Pitkin Avenue BID has been thrilled to be a part of this project, together with our partners Groundswell, NYC DOT, and the Brownsville Justice Center, which will benefit the entire

community,” said Daniel Murphy, Pitkin Avenue BID Executive Director. “We are also proud to announce that this will be the first of several mural projects along Pitkin Avenue that we will complete in order to positively transform the space where so many of our neighbors spend their time and energy.”

“The Brownsville Community Justice Center is very pleased to be a partner in creating this mural,” said Program Coordinator Benjamin Smith. “Though young people in Brownsville face many challenges and are more likely than other youth to have contact with the justice system, they are a great asset to their community and it is the young people involved with this project who are truly responsible for creating this amazing mural and promoting a vision of community identity, respect, and safety for all.”

“Groundswell is delighted to unveil this monumental mural which highlights the role each of us can play in achieving shared, safe, and vibrant streets,” said Groundswell Executive Director Amy Sananman. “Through this collaboration, Groundswell and our partners not only added to the beauty and livability of historic Pitkin Avenue, but we empowered New York City teens to contribute their time and talents to strengthening their neighborhood as well.”

About Groundswell

Groundswell brings together artists, youth, and community organizations to use art as a tool for social change. “Intersections Humanized” was completed as part of Groundswell’s flagship program, the Summer Leadership Institute (SLI), which employs over 100 youth each summer as paid apprentices on mural projects that beautify neighborhoods and give voice to ideas and perspectives that are underrepresented the public dialog. www.groundswellmural.org

About the New York City Department of Transportation

NYC DOT’s mission is to provide for the safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods in New York City. NYC DOT’s Office of Safety Education and Outreach runs programs and provides services that promote traffic safety for children, parents, educators, and senior citizens. www.nyc.gov/dot

About the Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District

The Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District is an organization dedicated to creating and maintaining a clean, safe, vibrant and thoroughly liveable space within Brownsville Brooklyn's Main Street. The BID supplies supplemental sanitation services, helps maintains public safety, creates and implements public space beautification projects, stages special events, works to attract new and diverse retail and promotes local retailers. The Pitkin Avenue BID was founded in 1996. Pitkin Avenue has been one of Brooklyn's most popular shopping destinations since 1896. www.pitkinbid.org

About the Brownsville Community Justice Center

Currently in the pilot phase, the Brownsville Community Justice Center seeks to reduce crime and the use of incarceration in Brownsville while at the same time restoring local faith in the justice system.

In particular, the Justice Center is focusing on producing better outcomes for young people who come in contact with the justice system, reducing violence, and improving neighborhood safety.
www.courtinnovation.org/project/brownsville-community-justice-center

“Intersections Humanized” is made possible through the generous support of NYC DOT and Pitkin Avenue BID.

Additional support is provided by the Center for Court Innovation and the Brownsville Community Justice Center through the Justice Community Program of the New York City Department of Probation, the Center for Economic Opportunity, and the Mayor's Young Men's Initiative.

Major financial support for Groundswell's 2013 Summer Leadership Institute (SLI) is contributed by Altman Foundation, Charles Lawrence Keith and Clara Miller Foundation, David Rockefeller Fund, Dedalus Foundation, Ethel and W. George Kennedy Family Foundation, Irene B. Wolt Lifetime Trust, Lambent Foundation, LISC New York City, M&T Bank, Variety The Children's Charity, and Winifred Johnson Clive Foundation, in addition to numerous individuals.

SLI is made possible in part by public funds administered by the National Endowment for the Arts, New York City Department of Youth and Community Development Summer Youth Employment Program, New York City Department of Education, and New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

Groundswell is grateful to the Office of the Mayor of New York City and the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President.

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