



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mural Unveiling at VIP Community Services**

**New York City Girls**

**Illustrate a Woman's Road to Recovery**

**Mural Dedication Ceremony:** Friday, May 29 at 11:30 am

**Location:** 716 Fairmount Place, Bronx, NY 10457

**NEW YORK, NY** – Groundswell, in partnership with VIP Community Services, is pleased to announce a dedication ceremony celebrating the unveiling of a new mural, entitled “My Sister’s Keeper.” Designed by a talented team of New York City young women, the mural illustrates the unique challenges faced by women on their road to self-sufficiency and recovery from addiction.

To create this mural, a team of emerging young women artists in recovery participated in an intensive public artmaking program, presented with the support of the New York City Council through its STARS Citywide Girls Initiative. In collaboration with Lead Artist Crystal Bruno and Assistant Artist Lehna Huie, the young women researched, designed, and fabricated this mural installed at a VIP Community Services Women’s Residence at 716 Fairmount Place, Bronx, NY 10457.

“VIP Community Services welcomed this opportunity for our clients to share both their obstacles and their victories on their road to recovery,” said Debra De Jesus Vizzi, President of VIP Community Services. “We were gratified to see engaged participation and the blossoming of artistic expression through the creation of this beautiful mural.”

The mural design is anchored by an image of two women caring for one another as they embark on a pathway to healing and recovery. Through an open doorway, a mother and her child illustrate the supportive community of family and friends awaiting women on this journey.

“In the process of creating the mural, these talented young women not only shared their recovery process with their community,” said Groundswell Executive Director Amy Sananman, “but they strengthened their personal resiliency, artistic and leadership skills, and confidence through the collaborative artmaking process.”

This project is made possible with public funds from the New York City Council through its STARS Citywide Girls Initiative.

The STARS Citywide Girls Initiative, funded at \$1 million by the New York City Council, will offer the City of New York a unique opportunity to support the healthy development of thousands of girls and young women of color in the coming year.

The STARS Citywide Girls Initiative is a collaboration of six leading NYC nonprofits that will help girls and young women of color overcome barriers to success, grow emotionally, academically and physically stronger, and develop as leaders in their communities. The six partners—Girls Write Now, Groundswell, Lower Eastside Girls Club, PowerPlay NYC, Row New York, and Sadie Nash Leadership Project—all leaders in after-school and summer programming, will create 1,000 or more new program slots for girls in all five boroughs by June 2015.

With support and funding from the New York City Council, the STARS Citywide Girls Initiative will develop the life and leadership skills of NYC girls through after-school and summer sports, academic enrichment, STEM, college preparation and the arts. The launch of STARS will provide vital services to communities in all five boroughs to ensure that girls have access to a broad array of opportunities in team sports, college prep, financial literacy and technology--experiences that can prepare them for successful adulthood.

Special thanks to New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council Member Julissa Ferreras, New York City Council Member Laurie Cumbo, and New York City Council Member Ritchie Torres.

#### **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](http://www.groundswell.nyc)

#### **About VIP Community Services**

VIP addresses the consequences of extreme poverty: substance abuse, housing, health care and employment. VIP Community Services is dedicated to changing lives and transforming our community. It offers a continuum of services to individuals with histories of chemical dependency. Its client-centered approach empowers people to take charge of their lives and discover their personal paths to self-sufficiency. [www.vipservices.org](http://www.vipservices.org)

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