



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mural Unveiling in Staten Island

**On the Eve of Superstorm Sandy's One-Year Anniversary,
Staten Island Unveils Hopeful and Optimistic Mural**

Mural Dedication Ceremony: Thursday, August 15 at 3:00pm
Location: New Dorp High School, 465 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY10306

Groundswell, in partnership with LISC New York City and Northfield Community LDC, is pleased to announce a dedication ceremony to celebrate the unveiling of a monumental public mural, entitled "You Can Take Our Homes But You Can't Take Our Hearts."

This summer, 15 young women participating in Groundswell's Summer Leadership Institute (SLI) collaborated with renowned street artist Swoon and artists Yana Dimitrova and Jazmine Hayes to research, design, and fabricate this 12 ft wide by 17 ft high mural.

As a response to the devastation caused by Superstorm Sandy, teen artists drew from stories of healing and recovery to create a visual narrative that captures the concerns, hopes, and overall spirit of Staten Island. The mural was created as part of Recovery Diaspora, a collaborative citywide public art installation created by Swoon, together with youth from Red Hook, Coney Island, Staten Island and the Rockaways, among the neighborhoods most affected by the storm.

"You Can Take Our Homes But You Can't Take Our Hearts" illustrates the hope and optimism of the people of Staten Island. The mural takes the form of the human heart, stronger and more resilient as families return and homes are rebuilt. In the mural, a stained glass motif suggests that the school where the mural is installed is also a sacred space, where neighbors helped neighbors in the days and months following Superstorm Sandy.

"This dynamic mural brings to life stories of recovery from the perspective of youth affected by Superstorm Sandy. It highlights the importance of the continuing rebuilding efforts in these devastated, but resilient, communities," said LISC New York City's Managing Director Denise Scott.

"This mural exemplifies how art might be used as a tool to recover what disaster destroys," said Groundswell Executive Director Amy Sananman. "With the destruction of Superstorm Sandy has come the creation of a new community. And with the unveiling of "You Can Take Our Homes But You Can't Take Our Hearts," our youth artists have added their voices and visions to its continued healing and rebuilding."

“This mural from Groundswell to help the community heal represents just one of the many heart-warming acts that we have witnessed in the aftermath of the tragic storm. Northfield Community LDC is using our resources to repair homes that were damaged in the storm and we are pleased to be working alongside many others in the community and those from far away, all lending their time and skills to get families back in their homes,” said Kathleen Bielsa, Deputy Director, Northfield Community LDC. “This unveiling gives us the opportunity to pause and appreciate our neighbors near and far who have come to help. We thank Groundswell for being a great neighbor and we thank LISC for being a great partner, bringing healing resources to the Staten Island community at this time.”

About Groundswell

Groundswell brings together artists, youth, and community organizations to use art as a tool for social change. “You Can Take Our Homes But You Can’t Take Our Hearts” 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 LISC New York City

LISC New York City is dedicated to helping low-income New York City neighborhoods become healthy communities of choice – good places to live, do business, work and raise families. LISC has thirty years of experience developing the infrastructure of community-based organizations by providing technical and financial assistance; building capacity of local institutions to respond to changing community needs; sharing best practices to maximize precious resources; and brokering collaboration among its vast network of partners—government, nonprofit, and corporate—to tackle issues on the community level. Over the last 30 years, LISC New York City has invested approximately \$2.0 billion in more than 75 New York City community development corporations (CDCs) and other local groups. With our support, these organizations have developed over 33,000 affordable homes and apartments and more than 2 million sq. ft. of commercial space. www.lisc.org/nyc/

About Northfield Community LDC

Northfield Community LDC of Staten Island was founded in 1978 by merchants, property owners, and residents of Port Richmond, Staten Island, for the purpose of community improvement and advocacy. Northfield LDC operates a number of programs that benefit individuals and stabilize communities on Staten Island. During its three decades of service, the organization has continued to bring economic development initiatives to the Port Richmond Board of Trade, including ongoing marketing support, building improvement grants, streetscape improvements, and loan services. While economic development activities are focused on local businesses, housing and weatherization programs serve the entire borough. In the past 34 years, Northfield LDC's programs have rehabilitated over 3,500 units owned or occupied by low-income residents and have provided over 300 low and moderate-income families with new or newly renovated affordable housing in which to live.

About Recovery Diaspora

Through Recovery Diaspora, teen participants chose to dedicate their summers to creating four permanent murals for their communities, created in collaboration with renowned street artist Swoon and local partners Astella Development Corporation (Coney Island), Fifth Avenue Committee (Red Hook), Northfield Community LDC (Staten Island) and Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation (the Rockaways). These murals will be tied together by a temporary site-specific mural on the famed Bowery Mural wall, created by Swoon herself. Scheduled to coincide with the anniversary of the storm in October, it will be a testament to both resilience and vulnerability, and by engaging the public in its design, it will serve to highlight the importance of continued relief efforts by and for Sandy’s victims.

Project activities in Red Hook, Staten Island, Coney Island, and the Rockaways are made possible through the generous support of LISC New York City.

“You Can Take Our Homes But You Can’t Take Our Hearts” is made possible through the generous support of LISC New York City. 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, 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.

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