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**Mural Unveiling in Bedford-Stuyvesant**

**Teen Artists Celebrate Youth Resilience  
in Handball Court Mural**

**Mural Dedication:** Monday, August 29 at 1 pm  
Handball Court at Tompkins Houses, Brooklyn, NY 11206

**BEDFORD-STUYVESANT, BROOKLYN** – As part of a citywide initiative inspiring young NYCHA residents, an artist team inspired youth to become community leaders at the **Tompkins Houses** with a new mural that will give young people the inspiration, tools, and agency to accomplish anything. Painted on a handball court, the mural, entitled “**Compass of Dreams**,” illustrates two complementary scenes across the front and back of the handball wall. One side honors young people’s resilience to overcome challenges, and the other celebrates the power of play and imagination.

The mural, created with the nonprofit **Groundswell**, will be unveiled at a dedication Monday, August 29 at 1 pm.

The youth artists worked as part of Groundswell’s two-month long flagship summer youth employment program, the *Summer Leadership Institute*, presented in collaboration with the **Tompkins Houses Resident Association, Inc.**, **New York City Council Member Ritchie Torres**, and **New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)**. In lessons facilitated by **Lead Artist Chris Soria** and **Assistant Artist Michaela Anaya**, the young artists researched, designed, and fabricated the mural.

This mural is part of Groundswell’s larger “Public Art / Public Housing” Initiative, in which five developments identified from the Mayor’s Action Plan (MAP) for Neighborhood Safety, one in each of the five boroughs, have co-created three mural projects, for a total of 15 new public artworks throughout the city.

Given the unique architecture of a freestanding handball court, a viewer can engage with the mural from 360 degrees. On one side of the wall, a young girl and boy embrace. Between their arms, a ship is tossed roughly by a storm. The girl holds a compass, which opens up a bright “portal.” On the other side of the wall, the portal is mirrored to connect the different scenes. This opposite side of the wall depicts the same girl and boy at peace. They celebrate the power of imagination and play. As one youth artist described about the design, “Storms are commonly associated with violence and nowadays it seems as though violence is all we see. But at the end of the storm, there is a new beginning. This beginning is filled with the dreams and aspirations of our own youth, which will lead to a great and prosperous future, no matter how violent the storm.”

“Groundswell's programs, including the Summer Leadership Institute and the ‘Public Art / Public Housing’ Initiative, which engages youth in public housing, have resulted in astonishing murals throughout the City depicting themes of social justice and equality. They truly are inspirational and will leave a lasting impact on public housing developments. Groundswell and the City Council have had a successful collaborative relationship to lift up public housing residents and the results will now be visible throughout the City,” said **Council Member Ritchie Torres of the Bronx**.

“Thanks to the hard work and creativity of our young resident-artists, five developments across New York City are more beautiful than ever before,” said **NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly**. “Vibrant public spaces like these give residents more reason to be proud of where they live – and NYCHA could not be prouder to share these works of art with all New Yorkers. With the leadership of Council Member Torres and the Groundswell team, our residents were able to tell their stories through painting – and those stories will live on at our developments for years to come, creating more connected NYCHA communities.”

“The artists at Tompkins Houses spent this summer transforming a handball court into a monument of young people’s resilience. Throughout the design process, the artists thought deeply about hardships they have faced as well as the struggles facing youth across New York City. The result is a beautiful depiction of overcoming difficulties through community support, engagement, and hope,” said **Groundswell Interim Executive Director Rob Krulak**.

**Youth artist Jason Wu** (17) said, “This is my first job. Before I started working, I had my doubts because I didn’t know what I was getting into. When we finally began to paint, I realized this was beneficial to the Tompkins community as it will inspire people to find success in their lives. It will brighten up the neighborhood, and I feel very proud to be a part of this mural.”

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This project is made possible through the “Public Art / Public Housing” Initiative supported with funds from the New York City Council under the leadership of Council Member Ritchie Torres.

Major financial support for Groundswell's 2016 Summer Leadership Institute (SLI) is contributed by Altman Foundation, Brooklyn Community Foundation, David Rockefeller Fund, Lambent Foundation, Pinkerton Foundation, Sills Family Foundation, Slomo and Cindy Silvian Foundation, and Tikkun Olam 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 State Council on the Arts, New York State Regional Economic Development Council, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City Department of Youth and Community Development Summer Youth Employment Program, the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity Work Progress Program, New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council Member Brad Lander, and New York City Council Member Stephen Levin.

Groundswell is grateful to the Office of the Mayor of New York City.

Special thanks to Leora Keith, Michael Jones, Josephine Bartlett, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, Comunilife, Colgate Enterprise, and all those who helped on Community Painting Day.

**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 Council Member Ritchie Torres**

Council Member Ritchie Torres was elected to office in November 2013 to represent the 15th Council District in the Central Bronx. As Chair of the Council's Committee on Public Housing; Councilmember Torres oversees the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). NYCHA is the largest provider of affordable housing in New York and the largest provider of public housing in the United States.

Only a month into his Chairmanship, Council Member Torres held the first ever committee hearing at a public housing development. His historic oversight hearing played an important role in securing the largest FEMA grant in NYC's history: \$3 billion dollars for the repair and resiliency needs of NYCHA developments damaged by Superstorm Sandy. He also presided over the largest investment of City and State funds in NYCHA in over ten years, directing hundreds of millions of dollars towards vital repairs to the City's public housing stock.

#### **About NYCHA**

The New York City Housing Authority's mission is to increase opportunities for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers by providing safe, affordable housing and facilitating access to social and community services. More than 400,000 New Yorkers reside in NYCHA's 328 public housing developments across the City's five boroughs. Another 235,000 receive subsidized rental assistance in private homes through the NYCHA-administered Section 8 Leased Housing Program.

To fulfill this mission and better serve residents while facing dramatic reductions in traditional government funding, NYCHA is developing new financing options and building innovative partnerships across the public, private, and non-profit sectors. These strategies help NYCHA address many key challenges, from preserving aging housing stock through timely maintenance and modernization of buildings to increasing resident access to a multitude of community, educational, and recreational programs, and job readiness and training initiatives. [www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha)