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Mural Panel Unveiling at Row New York

Teen Artists Unveil New Public Artwork

Celebrating Watershed Stewardship

Mural Dedication Ceremony: Saturday, May 30 at 3 pm

Location: World's Fair Boathouse

30 Meadow Lake Road West, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, NY 11366

NEW YORK, NY – Groundswell, New York City's leading organization dedicated to community public art, and Row New York, the only program of its kind dedicated to teaching young people in under-resourced communities the sport of competitive rowing, unveil a mural banner series celebrating watershed stewardship.

Entitled “House of Knowledge,” “Boat of Success,” and “The Flow of Knowledge,” the series was created by teen artists with guidance from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and will be installed for public display at Row New York's three New York City facilities, including its World's Fair Boathouse on Meadow Lake in Queens, Long Island City headquarters, and Peter Jay Sharp boathouse in Upper Manhattan, to be seen by thousands of participants and visitors each year.

“Like Row New York, Groundswell is committed to empowering talented but underserved New York City teens through innovative, strength-based youth development models,” said Groundswell Executive Director Amy Sananman. “It has been incredibly exciting to build on this synergy over the past year and harness the creativity and collaborative skills of these young people to call for strengthened stewardship of one of our city's most important resources – its water.”

Through this project, 17 teen artists, working under the guidance of Lead Artist Angel Garcia and Assistant Artist Ruth Hofheimer, created the three-part banner series as part of Groundswell's Teen Empowerment Mural Apprenticeship (TEMA), an afterschool program during which teen artists meet weekly throughout the school year to create large-scale public art projects for community-based partner organizations.

“We at Row New York have been inspired and humbled by the thoughtfulness, talent and joy that Groundswell's young people brought to this project,” said Amanda Kraus, Row New York's Founder and Executive Director. “The final products are stunning, but more importantly, they portray the

things we care deeply about: respect and love for our city's beautiful waterways, shared commitment to youth development and exploration, and respect for all backgrounds and perspectives. We're incredibly proud to have been a part of this project."

The group began working on the mural series in October, meeting with New York City Department of Environmental Protection educators, taking field trips to relevant sites such as the Croton Reservoir and Catskill Watershed, and conducting intensive research into New York City's reservoir system. During their research, they learned that each day, more than 1.1 billion gallons of fresh, clean water is delivered from large upstate reservoirs – some more than 125 miles from the City – to the taps of nine million customers throughout New York state. They discussed the important role everyday New Yorkers have to play in ensuring the long-term sustainability of this critical resource. They engaged with Row New York student athletes to discover first-hand the power of recreational water use to positively transform lives and communities.

"Protecting our shared water resources is one of DEP's fundamental missions," said DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd. "The young people who work with Groundswell are continuing a tradition long tradition of bringing attention to our watersheds, and waterways and educating New Yorkers about the nature and infrastructure that make life in the New York City possible."

"We wanted to leverage this three-part series to capture the important role organizations like Row New York and government agencies like the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) can play in strengthening communities and safeguarding our shared resources for future generations," said Lead Artist Angel Garcia. "A vine motif connects the three banners, evoking personal growth and transformation as well as environmental stewardship and sustainability."

In the first banner, to be installed in Harlem at the Peter Jay Sharp boathouse, a figure representative of the NYC DEP holds a wrench and maintains a dam. Above the dam arise the Catskill mountain watershed as it is replenished by rain while beneath it a figure rows toward success.

In the second banner, to be installed at Row New York's Long Island City headquarters, the water cycle, from the Catskill mountains to the water treatment plant, is captured within a single glass. Row New York's commitment to academic success is illustrated through a cityscape made of books and several figures reading. In the image, a large figure in a graduation cap turns a faucet, representing a Row New York alumni returning home to support his or her community.

In the third banner, to be installed at the World's Fair Boathouse in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, the mountains, gears, a faucet, and a dam combine to evoke the complexity of the New York City water system. Three figures hold up a boat containing important Queens landmarks. A lightbulb shines onto a small figure reading in the background, illuminating the path to academic and personal achievement.

This project is made possible through the generous support of the Catskill Watershed Corporation. Major financial support for Groundswell's 2014-2015 Teen Empowerment Mural Apprenticeship

(TEMA) program is also contributed by Altman Foundation, Ethel and W. George Kennedy Family Foundation, Lambent Foundation, Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, Pinkerton Foundation, Sills Family Foundation, and Variety The Children's Charity of New York, in addition to numerous individuals.

TEMA is made possible in part by public funds administered by the New York State Council on the Arts and New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

Groundswell is grateful to former New York State Assembly Member Joan Millman; the Office of the Mayor of New York City; the Office of the Speaker of the New York City Council; the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President; and New York City Council Members Brad Lander and Carlos Menchaca.

Special thanks to education partner the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

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.groundswellmural.nyc

About Row New York

Through the discipline of rowing and rigorous academic and college readiness support, Row New York transforms the lives of New Yorkers, regardless of background or ability. Since 2002, our year-round intensive programs have taught thousands of young people the sport of rowing, and through it the values of tenacity, focus, teamwork and confidence. www.rownewyork.org

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