



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mural Unveiling in Brownsville**

**Youth Muralists Address Mass Incarceration  
on Wall of Food Bazaar Supermarket**

**Mural Dedication Ceremony:** Thursday, August 28 at 2pm

**Location:** 417 Junius Street, Brownsville, Brooklyn NY 11212

**NEW YORK, NY** – Groundswell, in partnership with Food Bazaar Supermarket, is pleased to announce a dedication ceremony to celebrate the unveiling of a monumental public mural, entitled “P.I.C.T.U.R.E.S Prison Industrial Complex: Tyranny Undermining Rights, Education, And Society,” exploring the causes and effects of incarceration. To follow a youth-driven social media campaign highlighting this project, developed in partnership with WNET New York Public Media, use #GroundswellNYC.

This summer, Groundswell’s all-male Making His’tory mural team made up of 17 young men in Groundswell’s Summer Leadership Institute (SLI) – some with a prior involvement with the justice system – collaborated with Lead Artist Esteban del Valle and Assistant Artist Jose de Jesus Rodriguez to raise awareness around the prison industrial complex and to explore what freedom can mean within this context.

The 18’ by 80’ mural was created through three intensive phases: research, design, and fabrication. During the initial research phase, the project team interviewed experts in the field of justice reform and participated in brainstorming sessions and hands-on workshops. They also visited the Museum of the City of New York, attending a street art exhibition currently on display and gaining more insight on how New York City has historically spearheaded national social justice movements.

“We learned to make the connection between public art history and its strong association with social justice activism,” said youth participant Gustavo Bahena. “Life itself is prison to some people. They can’t survive on the streets due to all kinds of social reasons. This mural is a good way to inspire people to take actions against this phenomenon. We want people with past experience of incarceration to look at this mural and be able to find an escape.”

The research discussions among the youth artists were marked by debates around the structural issues leading to the social and economic imprisonment of certain ethnic and racial populations in the United States. At the center of the mural, a man with a cage on his head symbolizes the imprisonment

of the mind, embodying the group's definition of "prison" generated by rigorous team discussions. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is at the center right adjacent to the man in cage, symbolizing taking action against such problems through proactive social participation. The mural also incorporates imagery of flying books and a ladder, to further suggest the concept of hope through civic participation.

According to the June 2012 National Institute of Justice Journal, African Americans account for less than 14% of the U.S. population but 28% of all arrests. They are even more highly represented in the incarcerated population, comprising almost 40% of those behind bars. Seventy percent of children with at least one parent in jail or prison will become imprisoned at some point in their lives.

"As a place where families convene and community members come together, Food Bazaar Supermarket is pleased to support young people in sharing their perspectives and concerns through the creation of this public artwork," said Spencer An, President of Bogopa Service Corp. "This mural delivers a powerful message for all of us to consider regarding freedom and civic engagement."

"Using public art as a means of expression and civic participation, this mural engages youth artists as agents of social change," said Groundswell Founder and Executive Director Amy Sananman. "Our teen artists look forward to sharing their experience –from the learning they did during the research phase to the aesthetically distinguished completed artwork – with the public at the mural dedication ceremony."

"P.I.C.T.U.R.E.S Prison Industrial Complex: Tyranny Undermining Rights, Education, And Society" is made possible through the Fund for the City of New York. Additional support is provided by the Charles Lawrence Keith and Clara Miller Foundation, David Rockefeller Fund, and Dedalus Foundation.

Major financial support for Groundswell's 2014 Summer Leadership Institute (SLI) is contributed by Altman Foundation, Brooklyn Nets, Catskill Watershed Corporation, Charles Lawrence Keith and Clara Miller Foundation, David Rockefeller Fund, Dedalus Foundation, EILEEN FISHER, Ethel and W. George Kennedy Family Foundation, Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund, Irene B. Wolt Lifetime Trust, Lambent Foundation, M&T Bank, Pinkerton Foundation, Variety The Children's Charity, and William Randolph Hearst Foundations, 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 Office of Public Safety, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 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 New York State Attorney General; the Office of the Mayor of New York City; the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President; New York State Assembly Member Joseph Lentol; and New York City Council Members Brad Lander, Stephen Levin, Carlos Menchaca, and Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito.

**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. This mural was completed as part of Groundswell's flagship program, the Summer Leadership Institute (SLI), which employs over 140 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. To follow a youth-driven social media campaign highlighting SLI, use #GroundswellNYC. [www.groundswellmural.org](http://www.groundswellmural.org)

**About Food Bazaar Supermarket**

Bogopa Service Corp. is a privately owned company that operates 18 full-service supermarkets in the Tri-State metropolitan area (NY, NJ, CT) under the name "Food Bazaar." For more than 25 years we have been providing our communities with the flavors they love and recall from 'back home,' exotic and unique foods as well as basic essentials. We devote aisles of space to international grocery and dairy/frozen items as well as a full-service fish market, a huge selection of local and international produce, a full service deli, bakery and custom butcher. With thousands of products waiting to be explored, Food Bazaar always provides a true culinary adventure. For more information visit the Food Bazaar website at <http://www.MyFoodBazaar.com>.

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