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Mural Unveiling in Coney Island

**As Coney Island Completes its First Summer After Superstorm Sandy,
Youth Artists Celebrate Coney Island**

Mural Dedication Ceremony: Friday, September 20 at 4pm

Location: Santos White Garden/Lighthouse Mission, 2114 Mermaid Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11224

Groundswell, in partnership with LISC New York City and Astella Development Corporation, is pleased to announce a dedication ceremony to celebrate the unveiling of a monumental public mural, entitled “Coney Island Rising Up.”

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 mural overlooking the Santos White Garden/Lighthouse Mission.

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 Coney 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.

Following a series of interviews with Coney Island residents and business owners impacted by Superstorm Sandy, the youth muralists utilized expressionist techniques to illustrate the pain and emotion of the experiences shared in these interviews. The design centers around a central mermaid figure, which evokes both the iconic image of the Coney Island boardwalk, and honors the local mom and pop businesses along Mermaid Avenue. Light emanates from this central figure, while movement is created through repetition, in a reference to Swoon’s signature printmaking technique.

“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.

“The young women artists from Groundswell, including those from Coney Island, did an amazing job in visually depicting the resilience of our community following Superstorm Sandy,” said Judi Orlando,

Executive Director, Astella Development Corp. “This mural is a testament to residents, business owners, non-profit agencies, and faith-based organizations all working together in recovery efforts.”

“This mural is for the love of Coney Island – its community gardens, mom and pop shops, vibrant boardwalk, and its people,” said Groundswell Executive Director Amy Sananman. “And this mural is for the future of Coney Island, a hopeful and more resilient future as envisioned by these extraordinary youth artists.

About Groundswell

Groundswell brings together artists, youth, and community organizations to use art as a tool for social change. “Mural Title” 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 Astella Development Corporation

Astella Development Corp. is a not-for-profit community-based organization dedicated to providing affordable housing, commercial revitalization and economic development, and improving the quality of life in Coney Island, Brooklyn. www.astelladevelopment.org/

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.

"Coney Island Rising Up" is made possible with through the generous support of LISC New York City.

Additional support is provided by New York City Council Member Domenic M. Recchia, Jr. Lead scholarship sponsorship support is provided by Con Edison.

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; the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President; and New York City Council Members Sara M. Gonzalez, Letitia James, Brad Lander, and Stephen Levin.

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