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Mural Unveiling and Press Conference in the Rockaways

**As New York City Announces NYC Build It Back,
Youth Artists Unveil Vision of Healing and Recovery**

Mural Dedication Ceremony and Press Conference: Thursday, August 15 at 10:30am
Location: Challenge Preparatory Charter School, 710 Hartman Lane, Far Rockaway 11691

Groundswell, in partnership with LISC New York City and Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation, is pleased to announce a press conference and dedication ceremony to celebrate the unveiling of a monumental public mural, entitled “We Rose Above the Challenge.”

This summer, 15 young men participating in Groundswell’s Summer Leadership Institute (SLI) collaborated with renowned street artist Swoon and artists Misha Tyutyunik and Angel Garcia to research, design, and fabricate this 35 ft wide by 5 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 the Rockaways. 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.

The work of these teens is particularly meaningful now, on the eve of the one-year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy and following Mayor Bloomberg’s announcement of the opening of registration for the NYC Build It Back Program. NYC Build It Back provides several pathways to help affected residents return to permanent, sustainable housing by addressing unmet housing recovery needs. New York City residents can register for the program by calling 311 or visiting www.nyc.gov.

“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 press conference, the backdrop of which will be the public unveiling of this mural, is an opportunity for the community to come together to amplify our youth artists’ voices to promote healing and recovery within their own community,” said Groundswell Executive Director Amy Sananman.

About Groundswell

Groundswell brings together artists, youth, and community organizations to use art as a tool for social change. “We Rose Above the Challenge” 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 Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation

The Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation was created with the assistance of NYCHA as part of the Ocean Bay Hope VI plan for neighborhood revitalization in 1996. Ocean Bay CDC is focused on serving its community through advancing economic development goals and promoting revitalization strategies. Through a strong public-private partnership with NYCHA, Ocean Bay CDC has been advancing development initiatives and reinvestment in the Rockaways.

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.

“We Rose Above the Challenge” is made possible with 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, LISC New York City, 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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