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HARLEM CDC PARTNERS WITH CREATIVE ARTS WORKSHOPS FOR KIDS TO SUPPORT AND DISPLAY MURALS BY LOCAL ARTISTS

Artwork Enhances Hamilton Heights and East Harlem with Vibrant Cultural References

Harlem Community Development Corporation (Harlem CDC) and local community partners today announced the unveiling of two new large scale murals in Hamilton Heights and Harlem River Park. The designs – conceived of and created by project participants – are painted on walls facing the Harlem River at East 141st Street and Jacob H. Schiff Elementary School/PS 192 on West 138th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue. Both walls offer vibrant reflections of local culture for pedestrians and park goers alike.

“As Chair of the Harlem Community Development Corporation, it brings me great satisfaction to see another project completed with direct community participation. Harlem’s culture and history is its lifeblood and these murals help ensure children, adults, Harlemites and tourists share in Harlem’s story,” said Assemblyman Keith L. T. Wright.

“Participation in the arts and arts education are essential to the development of our children and community,” said U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel. “The Creative Art Workshops for Kids has done a remarkable job of continuing Harlem’s longstanding tradition of promoting the arts and making them accessible to every child. Each year it serves nearly 2,000 children and teens in a safe, positive environment where they can express themselves creatively, learn team building, and acquire life skills. I am proud to support arts programs that allow our students to grow and become the visionary leaders that they are meant to be.”

“The Harlem River Park Task Force is pleased to partner again with the New York State Department of Transportation and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to bring Harlem-based teaching artists and teenagers from Creative Arts Workshops for Kids to a new wall in Harlem River Park,” said Thomas Lunke, Director of the Harlem River Park Task Force. “Our long-standing partnership has led to eight striking murals on local walls facing the park and the river. With Circle Line now highlighting the murals on their tours around Manhattan and Metro North riders seeing the murals welcoming them to Harlem every day, I’m pleased that our partnership has established Harlem as a premier arts venue for residents and visitors alike.”

These murals are the latest projects in a three-year collaboration between Harlem CDC; its State and City partners; East, Central, and West Harlem communities; and the Creative Arts Workshops for Kids (CAW), a non-profit that uses visual and performing arts to teach life skills to teens while enriching communities. Teaching artists from CAW guided teams of local teenaged apprentice artists through the planning, priming and painting processes.

"I am proud to serve the youth and communities of northern Manhattan with the installation of these stunning, community-driven murals," said Molaundo Jones, Program Director of CAW. "We cannot thank the Harlem Community Development Corporation and Harlem River Park Task Force enough for their support. Our summer youth program participants will forever be changed by the amazing opportunity they have had this summer to use public art as a means to transform their communities."

"The New York State Department of Transportation is pleased and proud to have provided a canvas for the dreams of Harlem's children," said Phillip Eng, Regional Director for NYSDOT's New York City office. "The kids and the CAW teaching artists have once again turned a brick wall into a beautiful mosaic. Their amazing efforts will be appreciated by visitors to Harlem River Park for years to come."

The two new murals represent the last of several mural installations in Harlem River Park, and the first installation in West Harlem. Both works were inspired by the surrounding community and the history of Harlem itself. To the west, PS 192's "Magic with Logic" reflects the magic of the Harlem Renaissance and the beat of everyday life using symbolism to illustrate the intertwining of the two concepts. "Dreams Fulfilled" in Harlem River Park is designed to be a window into the future of the park and Harlem as a whole, juxtaposing the past – illustrated in previous park murals – against things yet to come.

"This work reflects our local culture and continues the tradition of Harlem as a center for the arts, which began during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s," said New York State Senator Bill Perkins. "I applaud Harlem CDC, CAW and their partners for their work supporting the arts in Harlem."

"As a board member of Harlem CDC, I am proud of our partnership with Creative Arts Workshop for Kids and support their latest project: the creation of these two beautiful murals," said New York City Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito, Chair of the City Council Parks and Recreation Committee. "I extend my admiration to the youths who toiled in the hot summer weather, their teachers, Harlem CDC, SelectNY, and the many other community supporters who worked with them. These beautiful works will stand as a testament to what we can achieve when we invest in our youth and in the future of our communities."

"We realize how fortunate we are in having such a colorful and beautiful mural representing our community right in our sights," said Deborah Schaefer, Principal of PS 192. "The process of how these murals came to be paints a picture of optimism, collaboration, and trust in our neighborhood."

PS 192's "Magic with Logic" will be unveiled on August 17, 2011 and Harlem River Park's "Dreams Fulfilled" will be unveiled on August 18, 2011. Both unveilings will be from noon to 1:30 p.m. To access the mural at Harlem River Park, cross the pedestrian ramp over Harlem River Drive at 142nd Street and Fifth Avenue and walk one block south.

Harlem Community Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Empire State Development, serves the greater Harlem community through planning and implementing a range of community development and revitalization initiatives for restoring Upper Manhattan as an economically stable and culturally vibrant community. For more information on Harlem CDC and its role in Harlem River Park, please visit

http://www.harlemcdc.org/Planning/planning_hr_park.htm.



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