

pArty On The Bridge!

Community Organizations & Artists

Complete Common Unity Banners!



(SCHENECTADY, N.Y), August 20, 2021 – The Common Unity Banner Project, a group of local leaders recently awarded funds by the Schenectady Foundation's Thriving Neighborhoods Challenge, is setting the stage for art that inspires & informs the community.

The stage? The Craig-Main bridge.

“The Bridge today is scary and uninviting. In its current existence, it is more of a barrier than a bridge,” says Mary-Moore Wallinger, Principal of LandArt Studio.

The Common Unity Banners project was inspired, in part, by the many community conversations that came out of the Craig Main Connection Complete Streets Project in 2019 where project leaders recognized unanimous support for improving the bridge.

Project leaders were also inspired by local youth who repeatedly expressed that the height of the bridge and speed of the cars whizzing by on the interstate below make crossing the bridge a scary experience.

“We are calling on the collective imagination of all local artists to address this problem while shining light on relevant resources available to our youth and families in the community.” announced Johan Matthews, Principal + Founder of Mutual Design.

To create the banners, project leaders recruited 7 community artists who worked alongside 7 community organizations.

Community Organizations include: Boys Day Out (BDO) + Working Group on Girls, Boys and Girls Club, C.O.C.O.A. House + Save Our Streets (SOS), Electric City Barn, Hamilton Hill Arts Center, Miracle on Craig Street, and Community Fathers, Inc.

Prior to the creation of the banners, organizations and their assigned artist hosted workshops designed to gather input from local youth and residents who utilize the bridge as well as the affiliated programs.

“This project specifically helps emerging artists in the Schenectady community get exposure that could further develop their business or advance their career” comments Heather Hutchison, Executive Director of C.R.E.A.T.E Community Studios

Community artists include: Oscar Bogran, Obaro Ene, Elona Hope Mitchell-Strong, Raeshelle Frasier, Mallory Schultz, Kristi Isabella, and Dha'Sean SKILLZ Serrano.

The Common Unity Banners received early support from crucial stakeholders such as the Dept. of Transportation(NYS DOT), the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), and the City of Schenectady who have identified the creation of the banners as a great way to maintain community momentum, while taking a first step toward realizing the Craig Main Connection Complete Streets Plan.

“This is a unique opportunity for the community to take the first step in implementing a project of this scale” said Kristin Diotte, Director of Development at the City of Schenectady.

Project Leaders include: Will Rivas, of C.O.C.O.A House, Heather Hutchison of C.R.E.A.T.E Community Studios, Mary Moore Wallinger of LandArt Studios and Johan Matthews of Mutual Design.

“These leaders have teamed up to bring this idea to life because they believe in the power art brings to communities” voiced Will Rivas, Executive Director of C.O.C.O.A House.

The banners are completed and are expected to be showcased at a party on the bridge.

Save the Date: Party on the Bridge, August 31 from 4 to 7pm. There will be free food, live performances and a DJ!

Stay connected to the Common Unity Banners by visiting the Craig-Main-Connection website: www.craig-main-connection.com/common-unity-banners or by emailing: craigmainconnection@gmail.com