

CONTACT: Pamela Perry
Director of Marketing and Communications
Pamela@thearteffect.org
845-471-7477

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Poughkeepsie Youth Take Over The City With PKX Arts Festival and Mayor Proclaims PKX Day

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY (October 4, 2022) — The exciting beginnings of the new Youth Arts Empowerment Zone spearheaded by The Art Effect can be seen on the streets of Middle Main Poughkeepsie this month thanks in part to the paint the pavement artists from the PKX Festival that took place on September 15-17, 2022. PKX festival featured a gorgeous sidewalk painting designed by students, Jadeen Sampson and Keli Faircloth, and created by local artist Nestor Madalengoitia and students from The Art Effect, a gallery exhibition, teen dance party, musical performances, food vendors, entertainment, and a wide variety of art-making activities from community partners including Hudson River Housing, Poughkeepsie Public Library District, Thinkubator Nutrition, Arts Mid-Hudson, Celebrating the African Spirit, FallKill Creative Works, The YOU (Youth Opportunity Union), Poughkeepsie High School, Boys and Girls Club of Newburgh/PPAA, Marist Liberty Partnership Program, PK Open Studios, Poughkeepsie Farm Project, HUDSY, Nuvance Health, The Dutchess County Chamber of Commerce, SNUG, The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Planned Parenthood, MASS Design Group, and Vassar College.

The festival that brought in more than 700 people over the course of three days was a “Huge Success” says Nicole Fenichel-Hewitt, Executive Director of The Art Effect who also runs the Trolley Barn Gallery in Poughkeepsie, NY. “We are so proud of what the students in our community have helped create. Not only are their futures looking bright, but we got a glimpse into how bright the future of public art throughout Poughkeepsie is and what it can mean for this community,” says Nicole.

The PKX Festival serves as a building block to the development of Youth Arts Empowerment Zone, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant, establishing a youth-led arts district in and around the Trolley Barn Gallery, the only youth-led gallery in the state! “The Youth Arts Empowerment Zone is an integral part of our community. The festival is another great example of how the arts in Poughkeepsie are providing an avenue for people to come together and be proud of where they live,” says Poughkeepsie Mayor, Rob Rolison. The mayor declared September 17, 2022 as PKX Day in the City of Poughkeepsie which will reoccur for each year’s festival.

Over the last eighteen months, PKX Festival Youth Committee consisting of Poughkeepsie High School students and alumni worked alongside artist duo BoogieREZ and Curator Alison M. Glenn to create and curate various art experiences throughout the festival including a public art installation and an artfully curated exhibition. The PKX Committee is one of The Art Effect’s newest youth training programs at the Trolley Barn Gallery where students learn and practice public speaking skills, conduct presentations to government officials and learn about place making – a people-centered approach to planning, designing and managing public spaces.

“Being a part of the Youth Curatorial Team has made me a more dynamic thinker. I feel so much more confident in my idea processing. Also, seeing the [Wonderland] exhibition come together makes me proud of myself and my colleagues, because we put so much effort and heart into this festival and I’m so excited

for the community to experience it." says Jadeen Sampson, Curatorial Team and PKX Festival Youth Member

The Art Effect is interviewing and hiring the next group of PKX Committee youth to help plan the 2023 PKX Festival, "*Droppin' Jewels*" next fall and promises to be even bigger and better with more than 1,000 people in attendance. "Seeing the exhibition come together makes me proud of myself and my colleagues because we put so much effort and heart into this festival," comments Jadeen,. "The main goal is to do it again, we want it to be a success." he said.

To get involved with The Art Effect in the development of the Youth Arts Empowerment Zone, or the PKX Festival, reach out to PKXFestival@TheArtEffect.Org or to see a gallery of photos from this year's festival and stay up to date on the plans for next year, visit PKXFestival.org

About The Art Effect: The Art Effect empowers youth to develop their artistic voice to shape their futures and bring about positive social change. We help youth in the Hudson Valley explore, experience, and excel in the arts, introducing them to visual arts and media, giving them the opportunity to develop real skills in these fields, and guiding them towards achieving their academic and career goals. We believe that the arts have the power to create a more vibrant, caring, and sustainable world led by a generation of youth who value creative thinking, diverse voices, and stronger connections between all people. More information can be found at thearteffect.org.

About the Trolley Barn Gallery: The Art Effect at the Trolley Barn trains youth as leaders who catalyze the community through the arts and re-energize downtown Poughkeepsie. The iconic Poughkeepsie Trolley Barn puts youth in the driver's seat and empowers them to engage the community in transformative arts experiences that they curate.