



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CREATIVE ART WORKS CREATES MURAL FOR “UPTOWN GRAND CENTRAL”

“HARLEM SUNRISE” HELPS ACTIVATE 125th STREET PEDESTRIAN PLAZA UNDER METRO NORTH VIADUCT.

New York, August 2015

Youth Employees of **Creative Art Works** (CAW), a creative youth development nonprofit operating in Upper Manhattan, are painting a mural on the south side of the 125th Street Pedestrian Plaza under the **Metro North** viaduct at [Park Avenue](#). The **New Harlem East Merchants Association** (NHEMA), applied to the **New York City Department of Transportation’s** (NYC DOT) Plaza Program to transform the underused space into a vibrant pedestrian plaza. NHEMA is spearheading this revitalization project, which will include capital improvements to the area in the future. In addition to the mural, other improvements include moveable furniture and 24-hour lighting to create a brighter and more welcoming public space. The walls, piers and sidewalks beneath the station underwent an exhaustive cleaning process in July to prepare the space for these new amenities. NHEMA is bringing together a number of partners to provide community programs on weekdays, including a local produce program, D.J. sessions and zumba classes.

The mural is being painted by Youth Employees under the guidance of CAW Teaching Artist **Gera Lozano** as part of CAW’s Public Art Youth Employment Program. The mural, entitled *Harlem Sunrise*, captures the vitality of the diverse people who pass through the crossroads of the Harlem-125th Street Corridor. The sunburst motif represents hope for prosperity and makes reference to the metal silhouettes on both sides of the viaduct spanning 125th Street, created by New York City artist Terry Adkins.

The new mural, which was funded in part by the NYC DOT’s Art Program, will be officially unveiled at 1:00 PM on Wednesday, September 2nd. Representatives of NHEMA, the NYC DOT and CAW will host this public event, which is open to all members of the community. Elected officials and representatives from several city and private organizations are expected to attend.

About Creative Art Works

Creative Art Works (CAW) improves the lives of thousands of NYC youth each year through in-school and out-of-school-time classes, community art-making events, and youth employment creating large-scale public art or multimedia projects. Working in public schools, community centers, parks and libraries, CAW provides dynamic visual arts and multimedia experiences. Our programs build confidence, unlock a love of learning, and teach valuable technical and developmental skills while creating profound connections between our constituents, their art and their communities.

Funding for Creative Art Works’ programs is provided, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and the City Council. Additional funding is provided in part by the NYC Department of Youth and Cultural Development, State Street and Structure Tone. CAW thanks City Council Member Inez E. Dickens and Manhattan Community Board 11 for support of the 125th Street project.

About the Public Art Youth Employment Program

The Creative Art Works Public Art Youth Employment Program gives teens and young adults 14-24 years of age full-time summer jobs and part-time jobs after school to create large-scale public art and multimedia projects. Our Youth Apprentices are guided by professional teaching artists and executive staff from the initial concept development through client presentation, to the final brush stroke and public unveiling. Along the way, they gain tangible employment and life skills such as leadership, teamwork, responsibility and the power of taking initiative. They are empowered by the enduring accomplishment in their work of art and its positive impact on the community.

About New Harlem East Merchants Association

The New Harlem East Merchants Association is dedicated to enriching the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the East Harlem neighborhood of New York City by engaging in activities that improve the appearance, safety and customer appeal of the area. www.NHEMA.com.

About the New York City Department of Transportation Plaza Program

DOT works with selected not-for-profit organizations to create neighborhood plazas throughout the City to transform underused streets into vibrant, social public spaces. The NYC Plaza Program is a key part of the City's effort to ensure that all New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of quality open space. Eligible not-for-profit organizations can propose new plaza sites for their neighborhoods through a competitive application process. DOT prioritizes sites that are in neighborhoods that lack open space, and partners with community groups that commit to operate, maintain, and manage these spaces so they are vibrant pedestrian plazas. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/plazas.

About the New York City Department of Transportation's Art Program

Launched in October 2008, the New York City Department of Transportation's Art Program invigorates the City's streetscapes with engaging temporary art installations. The Program partners with community-based organizations and artists to present murals, sculptures, projections, and performances on plazas, fences, barriers, bridges, and sidewalks for up to 11 months. Projects are presented within five program tracks: Arterventions, Barrier Beautification, Community Commissions, Art Display Case, and Site to Site. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dotart.

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