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Onorato Announces Community Art Project on East Busway

Several communities contributed to mural's design

PITTSBURGH — Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato today announced a community mural project underway along portions of Port Authority's Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway. Local artist Kyle Holbrook and his company, KH Design, have recruited 100 youth interested in pursuing futures in the arts to paint murals in three communities along the busway. National City Bank is the major corporate sponsor of the project, and Port Authority is providing access to the busway.

"This is truly a community-centered project that incorporates talented young people and input from each of the municipalities it touches," said Onorato. "Kyle has combined art, education and beautification in a great effort that will instill a sense of civic pride in a number of areas."

The students and their professional-artist mentors paint from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the 15- to 18-year-olds meet at 8:00 a.m. for a two-hour art lesson at designated sites in Wilksburg, Edgewood, East Liberty, Shadyside and the Hill District.

"These kids have shown outstanding abilities in art and a real interest in their communities," said Holbrook. "We think it's important to give at-risk kids something positive to do during the summer, which also gives them a voice in their neighborhood and the confidence to pursue their dreams."

The murals will feature portraits of people, events and structures that have shaped our region's history. Holbrook organized meetings this spring in each of the communities for local officials and community groups to finalize the designs.

"National City is pleased to be the major corporate sponsor of this exciting initiative," said Stephanie Cipriani, vice president and executive director of National City's Community Development Corporation in Pennsylvania. "At our bank, we feel that taking care of our communities is not just the right thing to do – it is the best thing we do. The National City Bank

Martin Luther King, Jr. East Busway Mural Project will provide a unique channel of artistic expression for these talented students while showcasing the unique identity of our neighborhoods.”

More than 500 students applied for the community art project. Sixty-five will be paid \$1000, and the remaining 35 will earn a stipend for their work. The students are paid by YouthWorks Inc., and the project is funded through donations from several foundations, including: Heinz Endowments; Grabel Foundation; Pittsburgh Foundation; Laurel Foundation; August Wilson Center for African American Culture; Multicultural Arts Initiative; and National City Bank.

“Kyle was also the driving force behind the 1,000-foot-long mural that hung on the Andy Warhol Bridge during the 2006 Major League Baseball All-Star Game, so we know the talent and enthusiasm he brings to each of his projects,” added Onorato. “We’re excited that Kyle’s most recent project will help to beautify and connect the communities along the East Busway.”

The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of summer.

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