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DEP Dedication of “Water is the Life of NYC” Mural

Groundswell’s Summer Leadership Institute Youth Paint Important Message on Value of Water to New York

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Groundswell Community Mural Project held a dedication today of the “Water is the Life of New York City” mural. The four–story mural, 38 feet high and 28 feet wide, is located at 209 4th Avenue in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn.

Fourteen young people, ages 14–21, working with professional artists assisted in the creation of the mural as part of Groundswell’s Summer Leadership Institute. Prior to creating the large–scale mural, the youth group met with DEP staff to learn about New York City’s drinking water supply system. They toured DEP’s Croton Reservoir in upstate New York, researched how water circulates through the City and its management, and how to care for it as a valuable resource. The discussions with DEP allowed the young muralists to incorporate the research into their design. Painting of the mural started in late July and was completed on August 14th.

“It is wonderful to see how the subject, New York’s drinking water, has been brought to life by these talented muralists” said DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd. “Every day we will be reminded of our high quality drinking water and the role we each have in keeping it so. The combination of an educational message and creativity in this large scale artwork is a perfect example of raising awareness through beautification of public space to enhance quality of life. Without sounding boastful, I think I can safely say the quality and taste of New York City’s tap water is widely admired. Most recently, at this year’s New York State Fair, New York City’s water emerged victorious in a tasting competition.”

Groundswell is a New York based nonprofit organization dedicated to using art as a tool for social change by bringing together professional artists, community organizations and youth to collaboratively create over 100 public art projects in communities across NYC. “The site

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called out for a mural. The project was an excellent example of government, non profit and private collaboration—with the youth participants acting as ambassadors of community activism,” said Groundswell’s Executive Director, Amy Sananman. In the last 12 years Groundswell has developed partnerships with community-based and educational institutions, serving thousands of youth and community members with whom we have worked to visually transform New York’s urban landscape.

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection manages the City’s water supply, providing more than 1.1 billion gallons of water each day to more than 9 million residents throughout New York State through a complex network of nineteen reservoirs, three controlled lakes and 6,200 miles of water pipes, tunnels and aqueducts. DEP is also responsible for managing storm water throughout the City and treating wastewater at 14 in-City wastewater treatment plants. DEP carries out federal Clean Water Act rules and regulations, handles hazardous materials emergencies and toxic site remediation, oversees asbestos monitoring and removal, enforces the City’s air and noise codes, bills and collects on City water and sewer accounts, and manages city-wide water conservation programs.