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Daniel P. McCoy
County Executive

County Executive McCoy Unveils the “Within Us” Project in Collaboration with Albany Center Gallery & The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy joined with Albany Center Gallery Executive Director Tony Iadicicco, Albany County Department of Mental Health Commissioner Dr. Stephen Giordano, Albany County Department of Children, Youth & Families Commissioner Moira Manning, and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Capital Region New York Chapter Board Chair Dan Egan to unveil 6 murals from phase one and two of the “Within Us” project. This project, funded by a \$34,000 grant through Albany County’s American Rescue Plan (ARPA) program, aims to use art as a catalyst for healing and discourse around difficult subject matters, such as mental health and suicide.

“Too often, our youth feel isolated in their own struggles,” said **Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy**. “This project reminds them that their voices matter, their creativity has power, and their community is here to listen and support them. Art can break down stigmas, spark dialogue, and remind us all that we are not alone.”

As part of phase 1 of this project, local artist Jade Warrick, aka TrashKiD Art, created the mural “Safety is Where I Find Myself.” This mural emphasized community support, and how it can help bring those struggling out of places of darkness. Jade incorporated a community interactive element where anyone could write a word or phrase of encouragement for those who need it.

Phase 2 of the project launched at Albany Center Gallery’s 2nd Annual Summer Art Fest in July. Artists BOOGIEREZ, Ramiro Davaro-Comas, Cara Hanley, Alicia Lea, and Kim Tateo were live painting moveable murals during the festival, with each design connecting to mental health and suicide prevention awareness, while uplifting and connecting the community. These murals will be displayed at the gallery and hope to be placed throughout the community of Albany. Please contact Albany Center Gallery if you are interested in having the murals at your space.

“Within Us connects us. Collaborating unites us. This project showcases the transformative power of art and the ability to help us express, heal, create change, and share our stories. Community art, especially in public spaces, has the unique ability to uplift, inspire, and invite conversation. Our hope is that this

project will resonate with people in personal and meaningful ways, encouraging discussions around mental health and those quiet truths we often carry within. We hope this project creates space for light, reflection, and a sense of hope. Special thanks to the artists and partners who believed in this project and its purpose. Your creativity, commitment, and collaboration made it possible to bring this vision to life. As we always say, more art everywhere, together,” said **Albany Center Gallery Executive Director Tony Iadicicco**.

“Suicide Prevention Month is a time to educate and raise awareness. It is also a time to instill hope. Art in all of its forms reflects our shared human experience and has the power of inspiring hope ... sometimes at the exact point when it is needed most. I am so proud to have been a part of this unique partnership and to have witnessed the creation of these murals that will live on in our community reminding us that help and support is out there for the asking and that it is our shared responsibility to take care of ourselves and each other. “Within Us” exists hope.,” said **Albany County Department of Mental Health Commissioner Dr. Stephen Giordano**.

“It has been a joy to see this project unfold and how the public has reacted to the murals and theme so positively. Art is not only about individual expression, it fosters conversation and a sense of community which supports everyone’s mental wellness overall. We at AFSP are grateful for our project partners, the talented and passionate artists, and the Albany County public who have embraced the project and have shared with us their own mental health journeys.” said **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Capital Region New York Chapter Area Director Missy Stolfi, M.Ed.**

“Working with Albany Center Gallery on this project has been a true honor. Suicide awareness can be a dark or deeply sensitive subject, but it is one we must face with honesty and care - and it is a subject I personally have dealt with myself and with that I see that real change requires more than surface-level gestures; it calls for meaningful initiatives and realistic modes of support, not just a band-aid solutions. In these times, in 2025, the pressures are immense - not only on our youth but on society as a whole. Too many of us struggle with fear, isolation, loneliness, the weight of perfectionism, imposter syndrome, and even hatred for who we are and how we may look like. Projects like this remind us of the urgent need to bring back radical care and radical empathy - in creative ways - so that together we can build a healthier, more supportive, and more compassionate society ,” said **local artist Jade Warrick**.

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