

SpArc Philly hosts "SpArc Couture," A Music, Art, and Fashion Show at Cherry Street Pier



Participants from the 75-year-old Philadelphia organization flaunted their style and their work at Cherry Street Pier's First Friday event.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, June 2, 2023—Chic and creative participants from SpArc Philadelphia's Cultural Arts Center for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities welcomed their fans today to the much-anticipated SpArc Couture, an art opening and fashion show at Cherry Street Pier in Philadelphia. The artists at SpArc spent months practicing their songs, designing their own fashion, and creating their visual art pieces, many of which were available for purchase with the proceeds going straight to the artists themselves.

"I can't wait to see everybody dressed up in their outfits," said Michael, a program participant, speaking before the fashion show.

"I'm going to be Michael Jackson. Just like him," said Marcos, another program participant.

"Preparing SpArc Couture is an empowering experience for people with disabilities, who often do not get a voice in mainstream society," said Lene Dronen, director of cultural arts at SpArc Philly. "Creating art instills confidence and helps people practice their unique creativity. We're excited to share the exceptional talents of our group of artists with a great audience at Cherry Street Pier."

The Cultural Arts program at SpArc Philly serves adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) by providing classes and experiences that promote creative expression and connections to the Philadelphia arts community. Attendees at SpArc Couture were treated to a performance of live music with original songs written by program participants, a live runway with participants modeling their own designs, and an exhibit of artworks in a variety of media by the participants at SpArc.

Cherry Street Pier, the site of this event, is also home to SpArc Studio, a working studio that is also a marketplace for works by artists at SpArc. It is an important link between the work of the Cultural Arts program and the broader Philadelphia community. In addition to preparing the fashion show and art exhibition, the Cultural Arts program offers classes in ceramics, filmmaking, jazz tap dance, and adaptive movement.

SpArc Philly's Cultural Arts Center's dynamic curriculum includes art, music, theater, ceramics, and movement classes in an environment that fosters creativity and the discovery of a personal voice. Its goal is to bring a love and understanding of the arts to people with

disabilities while connecting them with the world outside of its studio.

"Our Cultural Arts Center is about more than creativity," said SpArc Philly CEO Laura Princiotta. "Our participants are an active part of the Philadelphia community. They have the agency to be full members of the culture and the economy. They have a stake in what goes on around them. The Studio at Cherry Street Pier is a meaningful part of our strategy to be present in the community and invite the public into things we're doing."

About SpArc Philly

SpArc Philadelphia is a family of organizations, including The Arc of Philadelphia and SpArc Services, that provide advocacy and day program services for peo-

ple with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. For more than 75 years, we have delivered services and support that have opened doors to new possibilities, helping individuals reach their personal goals and families find the assistance they need. SpArc Services offers community-integrated services, including employment, community supports, and opportunities for community connections. The Arc of Philadelphia has fought tirelessly for inclusion and equal access for all people with disabilities, helping to empower them with information and choices and providing access to resources that can be life-changing.

SpArc Philadelphia serves 500 people daily at their West Westmoreland Street location and in the community. To learn more about the organization, visit www.SpArcPhilly.org

HopePHL and Community Partners host Men's Wellness Event in honor of Father's Day Weekend and Juneteenth



PHILADELPHIA, PA, June 17, 2023 - HopePHL's Men's Wellness Event is held in June each year, in recognition of Men's Health Month, at the intersection of Lancaster Avenue and Spring Garden Street. This year's event (the 8th Annual) featured blood pressure education and screenings and Stop the Bleed program information. The American Red Cross demonstrated proper CPR techniques. West Philadelphia Promise Neighborhood sponsored a Promise Village that included literacy groups, arts and crafts, and a demonstration of healthy smoothie blending from Farm Explorer and Greener Partners. Community Legal Services and Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity were also on site to offer services.

Event collaborators included HopePHL, the 16th Police District, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, the City of Philadelphia Division of Housing and Community Development, the Neighborhood Advisory Committee Program, Penn Medicine, Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity, and WURD Radio. The event was free and open to the public.

More than one hundred guests attended the event, including HopePHL housing residents, neighbors from the surrounding area, and many others. They enjoyed workout and dance classes; and a fashion show where the models supported literacy by carrying books and refreshments provided by Starbucks and the 16th Police District. The Water Revenue Bureau, Philadelphia Fire Department, Election Commissioner Omar Sabir's office, Bridges to Wealth, and Digital Navigators were some of the groups offering information and resources.

HopePHL™ (pronounced "hopeful") was founded through an integration of two human service organiza-



tions in Philadelphia, PA: People's Emergency Center (PEC) and Youth Service, Inc (YSI). HopePHL's mission is to inspire Philadelphia's children, youth, families, and communities to thrive by providing housing, advocacy, and trauma-responsive social services designed to promote equity, resilience, autonomy, and well-being.

Leveraging 120 years of combined service experience, it is HopePHL's mission to inspire Philadelphia's children, youth, families, and communities to thrive by providing housing, advocacy, and trauma-responsive social services designed to promote equity, resilience, autonomy, and well-being. HopePHL helps over 25,000 community members and residents annually to reach their goals of safe homes, economically secure and healthy families, and thriving businesses.

For more information on the programs and services provided by HopePHL, please visit www.hopephl.org.

Juneteenth Mural

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dozen volunteers, local artists, and more than 400 students from nearby Hill-Freedman World Academy during community paint days. The project was also partially sponsored by Mural Arts Philadelphia and Capital One Café, with the dedication celebration sponsored by a grant from Voices Underground.

The history-making dedication happened during the 17th Annual Juneteenth festival. Attendees enjoyed re-enactments by the festival's Colored Troop Re-enactors, dance and drum performances, and interactive art stations in conjunction with the national Absolute Equality-Juneteenth Mural Project (AEJMP). The AEJMP originated in 2021 in the birthplace of Juneteenth (Galveston, TX) and has expanded to include large-scale murals in other cities, including Chicago, Detroit, Miami, Houston, Dallas, Shreveport, and now Philadelphia. Organizers say by creating murals in different communities, the project is creating a sense of connection and shared history, inspiring conversations and promoting greater unity and understanding.

You can view the mural when you visit ArtHaus, located at 6228 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia. To find more information about ArtHaus and its programs, go to www.gtownarthus.com.