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Press contact:

Office of Communications – Chicago Housing Authority
Matthew Aguilar: (312) 935-2646; maguilar@thecha.org;

Murals by Trumbull teens to be displayed at CHA offices *Program made possible by After School Matters and CHA; message of hope parallels that of the Plan for Transformation*

CHICAGO (Aug. 13, 2010) – Adrienne Fox gazed at one of the murals she and 29 other Chicago Housing Authority teenagers produced and smiled.

The look of satisfaction was unmistakable.

“I think it’s beautiful,” said the 14-year-old at Brooks High School. “It came out better than I expected. It shows how much hard work we put into it.”

Fox learned a little about art and a lot about responsibility as part of an eight week After School Matters/CHA summer Mural Project at Trumbull Homes on Chicago’s South Side. The teens officially unveiled their work – with the themes “Hope, Growth, and Unity” - at a special presentation Thursday evening at the Trumbull Park District Field House, 2400 E. 105th Street.

The murals convey a message that parallels that of the Plan for Transformation, as subjects travel the road from despair to achievement in a rich, multi-cultural work of inspiration.

The piece will now be permanently displayed in the CHA executive offices at 60 E. Van Buren (the big red building Downtown).

And that makes the artists, such as 18-year-old Damian Hentz, proud.

“This was a fun experience; I learned some new stuff,” Hentz said. “I learned about mixing colors and creating different shades and making things three-dimensional. I learned about primary and secondary colors. And I think the final product came out better than I expected.”

The program, conceptualized by artist/instructors Martin Garcia and Tim Hartman, and offered through After School Matters, intended to help the teens understand the place of murals in society via a mix of professional instruction and field trips where they viewed existing large-scale mosaics and murals throughout Chicago.

The inspiration for the final murals came from interviews with CHA residents, employees and each other.

Garcia, who began showing his artwork in 1996 and has been represented by the Oscar Friedl Gallery and the Mars Gallery in Chicago and Uncle Freddy's in Hammond, Indiana, said, besides art, the students had a social breakthrough as well.

“A few students knew each other but, for the most part, most of them didn't know anyone else in the program,” he said. “Now, we have some students who go out and do things together.”

Together, he said, they are learning the value of work and responsibility.

The project has convinced Michael Davis, 16, to pursue a career in art.

“I learned how to mix the different colors, and, on one of the murals, I drew the eyes,” he said. “One day I'd like to paint a mural for a museum and sell it to the public.”

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