



17801 Detroit Avenue
Lakewood, OH 44107
beckcenter.org
216.521.2540

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 2, 2022

Please contact:

Benjamin Wilson, Communications and Community Outreach Specialist, Court of Common Pleas – Juvenile Court Division at bpwilson@cuyahogacounty.us

Or

Julie Gilliland, Director of Marketing, Beck Center for the Arts at jgilliland@beckcenter.org

Beck Center For The Arts Announces Inspiring Mural Created With Juvenile Court Residents

Lakewood, OH—[Beck Center for the Arts](#) is proud to partner with the [Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court](#) on two completed murals inside the Juvenile Justice Center. [Judge Jennifer O'Malley](#) was instrumental in this partnership between Beck Center instructor and staff with juvenile residents to create two collaborative murals in the center.

Two murals grace the walls at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center on [9300 Quincy Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44106](#) where higher risk youth stay during their delinquency court proceedings. The group of young residents who participated in this creative process had earned access to special activities through their good behavior. [Ryan Finley](#), Beck Center for the Arts Visual Arts Instructor, and professional hand-drawn artist for Marvel and Star Wars, started out as a tattoo artist, a fact which made him a popular choice with these young people for this project. Mr. Finley led the creation of the two murals from brainstorming, several reviews of the design with the residents, approval by the Court, to the final drawing of the murals on the walls in the center, and then created the outlines which residents painted over in a two-week period.

For four weeks Cartooning classes took place on-site at the Juvenile Detention Center, led by Ryan Finley. As these residents grew their visual arts skills, Beck Center and the Court encouraged them to focus on positive images and bring those into these two murals. Their favorite colors, musicians, and sports teams influenced these designs. A strong Cleveland pride theme beamed out from the work. The Cleveland mural is painted on the wall of the Visitation Room. This important space is where residents are visited by their family members, where CMSD graduation ceremonies take place, and walk through this space when they are released. The work was meant to empower these residents and give them a visual voice, build self-esteem, and bring color to their neutral surroundings. The painting process itself gave the residents time to work together creatively, to listen to music, and watch their work come to life in the space. The second mural resides in the curved hallway which residents pass through several times a day. The theme of “hard times don’t last” came from one young resident while others helped design the look.

Resident J.F. said of this experience, “While painting and drawing, it brought out and made me feel different types of ways. While doing those activities it brought everyone together, made positive conversations, and gave laughter to everyone and made me feel free.”

B.K, another resident said, “The Art Program really helped me to focus on something positive. I enjoyed the small conversations that I and the helpers had because it was deeper than the art. It was a nice experience, and I would for sure do it again!”

The youth have shown promise in their artistic talents, and a feeling of pride and excitement for being part of this mural project. This project has been so successful, for both parties, and all involved residents, there is interest in an ongoing partnership to continue cartooning classes, and investigating the start of a recording arts studio for the purposes of giving the residents voice through music. Celeste Wainwright, Deputy Director of Programming for the Cuyahoga County Detention Center avidly pursues community partnerships like ours to offer as many therapeutic, social emotional, and educational opportunities to the youth the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court serves in the Detention Center.

Beck Center for the Arts is proud to be a part of Northeast Ohio’s professional theater landscape, operating under a letter of agreement with Actors’ Equity Association. We are a Small Professional Theater (SPT) based on the number of seats, number of our performances, and the maximum weekly hours of work we provide to actors. We produce every show on our stages, by choosing the play, casting and rehearsing it, building the sets, props, and costumes, directing and performing the live music, and designing lights and sound. We proudly utilize regional resources and talent.

Programming at Beck Center for the Arts is made possible through the generous support of the Ohio Arts Council. Beck Center gratefully acknowledges the generous funding provided by the citizens of Cuyahoga County through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. For more information on Beck Center programming please visit beckcenter.org.

Beck Center for the Arts also offers arts education for all ages, all skill levels, and all abilities with classes and lessons in music, dance, visual arts, and theater, as well as creative arts therapies. Financial assistance is offered for qualified applicants so that these programs can be enjoyed by all.

Beck Center for the Arts is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that offers professional theater productions on two stages, arts education programming in dance, music, theater, visual arts, early childhood, and creative arts therapies for individuals with disabilities, free gallery exhibits year-round, and outreach education programming.

###