

CITYarts CELEBRATES its 35th anniversary.
Launching 50 STATES OF PEACE,
a Nation-Wide initiative where youth CREATE and SHARE
PEACE IMAGINED art.

New York, March 12, 2024

“At a time when our nation faces its greatest challenges both at home and abroad, youth in each of our 50 states must be encouraged to conceptualize and share their ideas of peace” says Tsipi Ben-Haim, Founder, Executive and Creative Director of CITYarts (www.cityarts.org), the highly acclaimed public art and education non-profit celebrating 35 years of transforming communities. “And there is no better forum by which to do this than via the universal language of art,” she adds.

CITYarts’ *50 States of Peace*, the organization’s latest initiative, will involve students from each of the states in public art projects collaborating with artists to create Peace Wall murals where they can visualize peace concepts and turn them into actual works of art. It is anticipated that *50 States of Peace* will follow the global success of the *Pieces for Peace* workshops initiative started after 9/11 which has led to 12,000 pieces for peace artwork, created by youth in 122 countries and influencing the creation of [7 Peace Wall murals internationally](#).

CITYarts, through the efforts of its Board of Directors, staff, and network of supporters, has locally and globally created 370 public projects, positively impacted more than 100,000 students and 200,000 volunteers, and engaged more than 600 contributing artists to lend their time and energy to helping these youth transform their communities. CITYarts programs have reached hundreds of thousands of young people not only in New York City, but around the country and the world.

Ben-Haim has been hailed for her leadership in public art and as an effective “Ambassador of Peace” by leaders of the United Nations and heads of countries where CITYarts has developed initiatives. Founder and Chairman of the UN Global Partnerships Forum and former Executive Director of the UN Office for Partnerships, Amir Dossal, stated that “Tsipi is truly a global citizen and a model international diplomat...We must engage our youth in positive projects, so they’ll be actively involved in impacting their future for the better. Her belief has become a reality with CITYarts as the catalyst, and I am honored to call Tsipi our friend.” CITYarts programs are structured to activate the imaginations of youth, providing them with creative platforms to develop greater personal empowerment and real-world connections, amplify their voices, and stimulate their creativity. **“I want to see the voices of our youth on the walls of their schools and communities”**, Ben-Haim has said. Her motto: **“When kids create, they do not destroy; they inspire us all.”**



CITYarts' five major programs encourage youth to consider important civic and social issues through the creation of art. They include *Community Identity* – cultivating youth introspection into who they are, and community involvement to collectively participate in what their neighborhood should look like; *Global HeART Warming* – inspiring youth to voice ideas about the speed of climate change; *Young Minds Build Bridges* – facilitating intercultural understanding by encouraging youth to create art based upon their concepts of peace; and *Kids for Justice* – encouraging critical thinking about social justice through dialogue and artistic expression. Additionally, through the *Windows of Opportunity* program, CITYarts identifies artistically talented youth who participate in CITYarts initiatives, connecting them with arts and education professionals in further cultivating their talents. CITYarts has also been credited as a pioneering guiding force in the contemporary mural movement. The organization has received many proclamations from the City of New York and has received an award from the former NYC Commissioner of Police, William Bratton, for making the City of New York safer for kids. **“There are millions of creative minds out there with a lot of time on their hands and a hunger to do something. It is our responsibility to help them choose the right way,”** states Ben-Haim. **“We must engage our youth in meaningful projects, so they'll be actively involved in impacting their future for the better.”**

CITYarts' most recent projects include a mural project with students at *Voyages*, a second-chance high school in Queens; *Flowers to the Community* at Brooklyn's Middle School for Art and Philosophy; and the *Always in Bloom mural* which involves the revitalization of a public green space on the upper West Side of Manhattan with students from the Urban Assembly of Green Careers. CITYarts has brought youth involvement in the arts to new levels of achievement, inspiring them in transforming their communities and impacting their lives with new hopes to become caring, creative future leaders that are urgently needed.

“The teaching artist did not just teach us to paint. He taught us to live together, to work together, and to help one another.”

– Jennifer, age 14, workshop and mural project participant

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