

Peekskill Turns Parking into Works of Art

Guest reporter (and regular Patch blogger) Margaret Steele reports on Peekskill's large-scale public art installation created by artists and local youth groups. December 6, 2011



Jeannie Egel (far right), Mayor Foster and Shannon Bagot, Ian Skalky, Lindsey Holroyd, under their Banner.
Photos: Margaret Steele



Kelli Bickman, Jo-Brody, and Mayor Foster. Photos: Margaret Steele

Peekskill's newest large-scale public art installation, ["The Banner Project"](#) was unveiled on Sunday. Six giant murals are on display on the James Street Parking Garage, with several more due to go up over the next few weeks. These colorful and extremely varied banners were created by Westchester County artists and local youth groups and will remain on display for a year.

The unveiling attracted a crowd of supporters, including artists involved in the project, city officials, local residents and curious passersby, warmed by hot cider and a festive atmosphere. Several of the artists posed for photos under their murals and enthusiastically talked about their creative process.

"The Banner Project" is the latest project of Youth Mural Arts program director, Kelli Bickman, whose goal was to bring together young artists and professional mentors to create a community-engaged art project on a grand scale. Livia Straus and Jo-Ann Brody of the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art collaborated with Kelli Bickman on the project. The designs on the banners were inspired by the HVCCA's current exhibition, 'Circa 1986'.

The youth groups and mentoring artists that participated in the project are: Peekskill Day Camp /Jo-Ann Brody; Peekskill Youth Bureau/Kelli Bickman; Peekskill Salvation Army/Andrew Kaminski; Greenburg Academy/Jessica Fuente; Croton-Cortlandt Center for the Arts/Jeannie Egel; Rye Art Center/Tova Snyder; selected Peekskill Youth/Lana Yu; Peekskill High School/Heather Brown; and the Art Department of Peekskill Middle School.

Funding for the project has come from Arts Westchester with additional funding from NYSCA, the Berg Foundation, Golden Acrylics, the Peekskill Educational Foundation, the Peekskill BID, Designsanything.com, and others. The project hopes to bring on more artists and youth groups as funding allows.

The grand unveiling of The Banner Project was in conjunction with HVCCA's Family Art Day, which included family and youth art activities and a performance by dancer/choreographer Andrea Elam and composer Brian D. Taylor.