

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY PROGRAM TEACHES STUDENTS TO TILE THE TOWN

Philadelphia's Magic Gardens schools local students on mosaics

January-May 2013

SOUTH STREET PHILADELPHIA—Long celebrated for its enormous mosaics, Isaiah Zagar's creation, Philadelphia's Magic Gardens, is taking its "tile show" on the road this year with the *Tile & Grout: Bonding Community* mural program. This spring, PMG will work with two city schools, George W. Nebinger School and Southwest Leadership Academy Charter School, on mosaic mural projects that will provide both learning and creative opportunities for students, as well as impact the aesthetics of their schools and neighborhoods. These projects have been funded by Public Citizens for Children and Youth's Picasso Project and the Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation.

Since 2009, the Tile & Grout program of Philadelphia's Magic Gardens has provided mosaic mural education for over 350 students, teachers, adult learners, family members, and community volunteers through seven different mosaic projects. Inspired by PMG's onsite visionary art environment and the widespread community artworks of Isaiah Zagar, the Tile & Grout program provides transformative and empowering arts experiences to underserved audiences such as at-risk teens, impoverished communities, and people within the mental health community.

Tile & Grout strives to unite stakeholders through art, fostering positive interactions and visual revitalization in neighborhoods. This in-depth program consists of an onsite introductory presentation, training for key staff of the participating organization, field trips to PMG's main site, a Question and Answer discussion with PMG creator Isaiah Zagar, and mosaic methods instruction from a trained PMG Teaching Artist. The program culminates in a Mural Unveiling ceremony for participants, their families, key staff, and community stakeholders.

From January through May 2013, PMG will work with two Philly schools, George W. Nebinger School and Southwest Leadership Academy Charter School, on mosaic mural projects that will be installed in public view.

Southwest Leadership Academy Charter School is located in Southwest Philadelphia, in an area where the school hopes the mural will act as a catalyst for community revitalization. The school focuses on fundamental concepts of leadership, helping students to believe in their importance, know their potential, and seize their opportunities. This project teaches the 7th grade girls the skills they need to create a mosaic mural, and then allows them to teach what they have learned to the 1st grade girls.

The group will complete a large mosaic mural about the story of The Rainbow Fish in their lunchroom at the end of March. The mural is scheduled to be unveiled April 4 and will be the kick-off of what the school hopes will be many other school-wide art projects.

The Nebinger School serves the South Philadelphia neighborhoods of Bella Vista and Queen Village. While all students receive instruction in Mandarin Chinese and have access to music programs, the school does not have a dedicated visual arts teacher. The school previously completed an indoor mural painting with the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, but this time their mosaic mural will adorn the outside of the school building at 6th & Carpenter Sts. Eighth grade students will work on a mural that educates about the Delaware River Estuary in conjunction with a larger project that is adding green features to the school and adjacent streets to control stormwater runoff. The Environmental Protection Agency, Philadelphia Water Department, and Partnership for the Delaware Estuary are funding this green project as part of their Green City, Clean Waters plan. The Tile & Grout program will help students through the spring to create this mural with a message, scheduled for completion in early June before the students move on to high school.

Funding for these projects was generously provided by the Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation and Public Citizens for Children and Youth's Picasso Project.

ABOUT PHILADELPHIA'S MAGIC GARDENS

Philadelphia's Magic Gardens (PMG) is a mosaicked visionary art environment, gallery, and community arts center that preserves, interprets, and provides access to Isaiah Zagar's unique mosaic art environment and his public murals. The PMG site, Zagar's largest artwork, includes a fully tiled indoor space and a massive outdoor mosaic sculpture garden that spans half a block on Philadelphia's famous South Street. Inside, visitors can view folk art statues, bicycle wheels, colorful glass bottles, Zagar's hand-made tiles, and thousands of glittering mirrors. The installation pays tribute to Zagar's artistic influences, along with community and personal experiences. Open to visitors daily, PMG has become a unique Philadelphia destination, hosting year-round, low-cost public programs within its own distinctive venue and the surrounding community. PMG, a nonprofit organization, inspires creativity and community engagement by educating the public about folk, mosaic, and visionary art. For more information, visit www.philadelphiasmagicgardens.org.

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