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JOY ENGINE ANNOUNCES 2022 COMMUNITY CHALLENGE GRANT WINNERS

THE PUBLIC ART NONPROFIT HAS AWARDED SIX ARTIST ORGANIZATIONS WITH GRANTS TO CREATE PROJECTS THAT INSPIRE ‘JOY’ ACROSS MILWAUKEE NEIGHBORHOODS

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN (September 08, 2022) — Public art nonprofit, JOY ENGINE, is thrilled to announce the winners of its 2022 Community Challenge grants. A total of $50,000 will be awarded to six artist organizations to support creative projects that inspire ‘joy’ throughout the city of Milwaukee. The 2022 grant awardees are:
Joy Engine
activating creative community spaces

- **BloomMke Inc.**, an organization focused on promoting enrichment for residents of low-income housing in Milwaukee using community gardens as resources for engagement, education, and relationship building; The organization will be engaging area students and gardeners to design four new accessible garden beds. Additionally, students will be hosting an immersive public history field school at the garden and hosting events around storytelling and art.

- **La Familia de Arte**, a grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to using public art to help the community thrive by spreading hope, beauty, and love in Milwaukee’s neighborhoods; A group of ceramic artists who live and work in the Clarke Square neighborhood will design and install five tiled concrete bollards inscribed with messages of optimism aimed at nurturing joy and hope in both English and Spanish.

- **Homeworks: Bronzeville SPLASH!**, a cultural development initiative that supports growth and activity in the community. SPLASH! Is a community-based, variety show that explores culture in Milwaukee; Creative curator and lead artist Mikal Floyd-Pruitt will produce a series of workshops that will lead up to an interactive community art-making game show, SPLASH! The process will be documented via video and a final abstract painting will be displayed in the Bronzeville neighborhood.

- **Riverwest Radio**, whose mission is to provide a community platform for education, advocacy, and creativity through podcasting and radio; Riverwest Radio has partnered with its neighbor, the Daily Bird Café, to develop The Alleyway Studio. The group plans to host music, poetry, art, radio, comedy, roundtable discussions, and educational programming in the space and broadcast the events live on 104.1 FM.

- **Gothic Milwaukee**, a historical attraction led by author and creator of the Walking Milwaukee self-guided tour, Anna Lardinois; Lardinois will bring the past alive by developing a history and architectural program and creating a new entertaining way for Milwaukeeans to explore their neighborhood. The walk will be available via a free app download, as well as online.

- **Out There Series**, an organization that creates intimate, outdoor music performances in the Riverwest, Washington Park, and South Side neighborhoods; The Out There Series will create thoughtful outdoor shows in harmony with their natural environment, free from alcohol. The events are aimed to bring joy from the harmony of art with nature and a focus on deep listening to the performers, including musicians and poets.
The inaugural Community Challenge program was created as part of JOY ENGINE’s mission to serve as a positive, unifying force in Milwaukee. The artist organizations selected for the grants represent a diverse array of neighborhoods, demonstrating the group’s commitment to creating an equitable and sustainable arts community.

Applicants were strongly encouraged to creatively explore ideas that used “joy” as a central theme to improve underused spaces or design innovative and tangible projects geared to boost neighborhood pride.

Following a call for artists earlier this summer, JOY ENGINE received more than 50 applications for the grant opportunity. The submissions were reviewed by a panel of community artists and stakeholders, including Thea Kovac, Nirmal Raja, Mutoppe Johnson, Lajwanti Waghary, Debra Brehmer, and Margaret Czaplewski.

“In a year of economic and political challenges, we’re excited to uplift local artists’ work and focus on bringing these organizations together to creatively express feelings of joy,” said Steph Salvia, JOY ENGINE executive director. “We were blown away by the number of submissions for our Community Challenge, but unsurprised by the level of creativity and talent demonstrated in the applications. From the discussions we had with our judging panel, it was an extremely difficult exercise to narrow down their list to the winners.”

“JOY ENGINE is proud to support arts and cultural organizations from all corners of the city with these grants,” said JOY ENGINE president and co-founder, Doug McDonald. “To have so many wonderful neighborhoods and unique perspectives represented in these projects is a reflection of how rich and diverse Milwaukee’s arts community is. We’re excited to watch our winners bring these creative projects to life.”

The grant awardees will have until July 31, 2023 to complete their projects. Learn more about JOY ENGINE at https://joyengine.org/.

About JOY ENGINE

JOY ENGINE is a public art organization curating intentional, immersive art experiences to connect, uplift, and inspire the Milwaukee community. We partner with local and international artists to reimagine urban spaces through wondrous, larger-than-life installations and other art events — expanding perceptions of how citizens engage with art and advancing community viability and inclusion through creative expression. Learn more at: https://joyengine.org/