



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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Shuman Juvenile Detention Center Opens Resident Art Exhibit *"Faces of the Pipeline" on Display at Family Division Courthouse Through April 26*

PITTSBURGH – Allegheny County and the Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania today announced the opening of a Shuman Juvenile Detention Center resident art and poetry exhibit titled "Faces of the Pipeline" that will be on display through Friday, April 26, 2019 in the Allegheny County Family Division Courthouse Rotunda. The exhibit addresses the school-to-prison pipeline, a growing national trend where children are removed from classrooms as punishment and eventually find themselves in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

"We're thrilled that the tremendous work of Shuman residents is available for the public to admire and hopeful that it will bring much-needed attention to this important social justice issue," said County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. "The school-to-prison pipeline leads to overcrowding in our detention facilities, and more importantly, deprives too many of our young people of meaningful opportunities for education, future employment, and participation in our communities. It is imperative that we work together to provide the services and resources needed to help our children achieve academic success and stay out of the judicial system."

Last fall, "Faces of the Pipeline" was on display in the lobby of City Theatre in conjunction with the theater's production of "Pipeline" by Dominique Morisseau. After learning about the exhibit when she was touring Studio Blue at Shuman, the Honorable Judge Jennifer S. McCrady invited the Shuman residents involved in the project to display their works at the Family Division Courthouse. The exhibit opened there with a reception on March 5, 2019 hosted by the Family Division and attended by Fitzgerald, Judge McCrady, the Honorable President Judge Kim Berkeley Clark, Honorable Administrative Judge Kim D. Eaton, Honorable Judge Eleanor L. Bush, Honorable Judge Kathryn M. Hens-Greco, and Honorable Judge Daniel D. Regan.

"The growing school-to-prison pipeline is extremely harmful to children, families, communities throughout the country," said Judge McCrady. "Children are suspended, expelled, and arrested at school, even for minor discretions, at rates almost double that of the 1970s. These disciplinary practices substantially increase the chances that those students one day will end up in a courtroom. It's also an issue of basic fairness and equality, as it disproportionately affects minorities and those living in poverty. I'm very appreciative that the residents and staff at Shuman have chosen to address this significant problem through this educational and enlightening project."

Shuman residents were asked to use recycled materials, such as wallpaper, old artwork, and magazines, and the collage techniques of Dominique Fawn Hill to create decorative masks that represent how they view themselves or someone they view as an adversary. If they chose, residents also could use drawings or compositional writing and poetry to make their personal statements.

In addition to the efforts of Shuman residents and staff as well as Shuman Artist Facilitator and Florida Recycled owner Gerry Florida, "Faces of the Pipeline" was made possible thanks to Judge McCrady, the Title 1 School Program, City Theatre, Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse, and John (Rocki) Oravik.

“This exhibit is an opportunity for Shuman residents to remind themselves of their worth and value by publicly displaying their hopes, dreams, and creativity in the same building that otherwise judges them by their mistakes,” said Florida. “We hope their work awakens people about the stark reality of how the school-to-prison pipeline burdens our society with youth who surrender their identities, self-esteem, opportunities, and beliefs to a complex judicial system.”

This exhibit is just one of the many projects that come from the arts program at Shuman. Florida, who runs the program, began volunteering there in 2009, teaching residents jewelry design before moving on to generalized art. In 2016, she spearheaded the creation of Shuman Center Studio Blue, where residents create art and work on community and empowerment projects. Along with “Faces of the Pipeline,” recent Studio Blue projects have included revamped furniture that was displayed at this year’s Pittsburgh Home & Garden Show at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center and billboards that were shown on Port Authority of Allegheny County buses and in a calendar, which can be downloaded at bit.ly/2019ShumanCalendar.

“Many of our residents had almost no exposure to art to at their schools before coming to Shuman, and Studio Blue provides them with a great opportunity to express themselves artistically and to discover a little bit about themselves in the process,” said Rich Gordon, Shuman Juvenile Detention Center Director. “Gerry has made a profoundly positive impact on many of our residents, and we’re enormously grateful for her dedication and hard work. We’re also extraordinarily proud and excited to have our residents’ artwork on display at the courthouse and thankful to all those who make it possible.”

In addition to the arts program, Shuman partners with local organizations to provide numerous other social services and enrichment programs that help residents adjust to detention while learning new skills. Those organizations include the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, 1Hood Media, Grow Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR), YogaRoots on Location, and Family Links. Shuman also offers programs via City of Pittsburgh Group Violence Outreach and The Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI).

To learn more about the school-to-prison pipeline, download bit.ly/SchoolPrisonPipeline. For additional info about Studio Blue projects and other the social services and enrichment programs offered at Shuman Juvenile Detention Center, visit bit.ly/ShumanPrograms.

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