



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Weekend Art Springs from Perth Amboy's Raritan River

PERTH AMBOY – Torrent then still, powerful yet serene, the many faces of the Raritan River have served as a muse to generations of artists who dared capture its beauty from the banks.

A few dozen Perth Amboy youth plan to join the ranks of these past visionaries during this weekend's first-ever River Art program.

The collaborative event, hosted by the City of Perth Amboy and sponsored by the Middlesex County Improvement Authority, will feature two free instructional art sessions along the riverfront near the Brighton Avenue Community Center Saturday.

"The Raritan River is such a big part of this town," said resident Randy Convery, a recreation aid for the City of Perth Amboy, who was instrumental in recruiting some would-be artists from the Municipal Alliance Summer Camp. "We interact with it a lot. There's sightseeing and passive and active recreation. We host many of our cultural festivals along the waterfront. It's really used in a way to bring this community together."

Volunteer art instructor Alan DiGaetano will lead two morning sessions, which will cover watercolor painting basics, material care, as well as a group banner project intended for public display in the city. At the gathering, MCIA Economic Development Senior Project Manager Denise Nickel will touch on the significant impact both the river and residents have on each other.

"We want students and participants to talk and reflect on the importance of the river," she said. "It's an interactive experience and we want them to know the pivotal part they play in improving overall water quality."

That may include averting oil from roads or pet waste from the sewer system, sweeping residential sidewalks or even taking shorter baths or showers, Nickel said.

"When we are able to target the kids, through use of repetition, those messages will eventually make their way to the parents," she said.

The River Art program is part of the MCIA's "Days of Fun on Our Raritan River: Things to Do, Learn, and Share on Our Riverfront" and is one of several events coordinated through a New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program grant.

Awarded last fall, that funding has assisted with general estuary use, advocacy and care in municipalities that run along the Raritan, to include Highland Park, Piscataway, Edison, Woodbridge, Perth Amboy, East Brunswick, Sayreville and South Amboy. Each community was given a choice of river-related activities ranging from historic presentations to a stone skipping lessons to estuary bird watching and more.

The River Art program, aimed at children 8-to-11 years old, is open to the public and will begin at 9:30 a.m. and at 11 a.m. near the Brighton Avenue Community Center, 56 Brighton Ave., located off the Sadowski Parkway.

Interested parties can review event details at the "Perth Amboy Recreation Department" Facebook page or register at the city's website at www.ci.perthamboy.nj.us/office-of-recreation.html or by calling 732-826-1690, extension 4325.

For more information on the River Art program or to donate art supplies, contact Nickel at 609-655-5141 or by email at dn@mciauth.com.

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