

# ARTPLACE



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### **CITY OF ASYLUM/PITTSBURGH Receives \$300,000 Grant from ArtPlace America**

*“Garden-to-Garden” Artway Connector “an exceptional example of creative placemaking”*

Pittsburgh, PA — May 20, 2013: **ArtPlace America** announces today the award of a \$300,000 grant to **City of Asylum/Pittsburgh** (COA/P) for the **Pittsburgh Central Northside Artway Connector**. The “Garden to Garden” Artway was chosen from over 1,200 applications as an exceptional example of creative placemaking.

ArtPlace America is a collaboration of leading national and regional foundations, banks and federal agencies committed to accelerating creative placemaking — putting art at the heart of a portfolio of strategies designed to revitalize communities. This is ArtPlace America’s third cycle of grant awards. With this round of grants, ArtPlace America has awarded a total of \$42.1 million in 134 grants to 124 projects in 79 communities across the U.S. (and a statewide project in the state of Connecticut).

The Artway will be a literature-and-arts-activated walking path between two new City of Asylum/Pittsburgh projects—its Alphabet City literary center, anchor tenant in the former Garden Theater complex, and its Alphabet Reading Garden, located on Monterey Street in the interior of the neighborhood. Through community-based residencies for international writers and musicians, free public multi-lingual literary and musical performances, and temporary and permanent public artworks such as its House Publications, City of Asylum/Pittsburgh will bring vacant properties and public spaces to life in a joyful walkway that celebrates the liberating power of creative expression and draws tourists and residents alike to the community’s redeveloped business district.

“From the Garden Theater to the Alphabet Reading Garden, all along Sampsonia Way, there will be ongoing creative collaborations between our community, artists, and writers,” said Henry Reese, President and Co-founder of City of Asylum/Pittsburgh. “The Artway will deepen our community’s engagement and advance our common project of composing the future together and making a better home.”

“Diversity can be an occasion for empathy or a barrier to understanding. ‘Garden-to-Garden’ will create spaces where diverse neighbors gather and where literature and art challenge and inspire us all to re-imagine and make a better home together,” stated Diane Samuels, COA/P co-founder. “Our community will literally be part of the Artway: Alphabet City and the Alphabet Reading Garden artworks will include actual handwritten alphabet

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samples in over 40 languages, collected by City of Asylum/Pittsburgh over four years from more than 1000 neighbors and audience members.

“The Office of Public Art is thrilled to be working with City of Asylum/Pittsburgh on this exciting project,” said Renée Piechocki, Director of the Office of Public Art of the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council. “The ‘Garden-to-Garden’ Artway will offer a range of projects by visual artists and writers that will make the connection between the literary garden and Alphabet City one of the most memorable walks in Pittsburgh — creating both a resource for the community and a destination for visitors.”

“ArtPlace America recognizes the central role arts and cultural activities can have in the revitalization of American cities.” Said Rip Rapson, chair of ArtPlace America’s Presidents’ Council. “With this grant award ArtPlace America is directing individual project support to scores of creative, high-impact projects throughout the country.”

“ArtPlace America is also continuing to break new ground in drawing together some of the nation's leading foundations to think — in a concerted way — about how these kind of projects can become more widespread.” Continued Rapson.

The 54 organizations that received grants were selected from over 1200 applications. Inquiries came from all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia. Grant amounts range from \$750,000 to \$33,000 with an average grant size of just over \$280,000.

The complete list of 2013/2014 ArtPlace America awards can be found at [www.artplaceamerica.org](http://www.artplaceamerica.org)

## **About ArtPlace America**

ArtPlace America provides grants and loans, supports research, and conducts outreach and advocacy. To date, ArtPlace America has awarded 130 grants totaling \$42.1 million to 124 organizations in 79 U.S. communities (and a statewide project in the state of Connecticut).

Foundations participating in ArtPlace America include Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Ford Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The William Penn Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation, The Surdna Foundation, and two anonymous donors.

ArtPlace America also seeks advice and counsel from close working relationships with various federal agencies, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Education, and Transportation, along with leadership from the White House Office of Management and Budget and the Domestic Policy Council.

ArtPlace America is also supported by a \$12 million loan fund capitalized by six major financial institutions and managed by the Nonprofit Finance Fund. Participating institutions are Bank of America, Citi, Deutsche Bank, Chase, MetLife, and Morgan Stanley.

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## **About City of Asylum/Pittsburgh**

Founded in 2004, City of Asylum/Pittsburgh is a model for arts-based community development, bringing writers, readers and neighbors together through global literature and cultural exchange. Located on Sampsonia Way in Pittsburgh's Northside, City of Asylum/Pittsburgh has redeveloped 5 dilapidated houses to serve both as homes for writers exiled under threat of persecution and as public artworks. It has also presented more than 250 authors and musicians from 42 countries in free readings and concerts on or near Sampsonia Way. *SampsoniaWay.org*, its online journal of free speech, literature, and justice publication serves as a virtual home for persecuted writers and serves a growing global audience online. City of Asylum/Pittsburgh connects and impacts people on our street, in our city, and around the world.

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