



For immediate release

Contact: Rob Goldman
Center for Creative Development
755 Park Ave. Suite 190
Huntington NY 11743
(516) 848-4790
rob@imatterproject.org

HUNTINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY STAGES “I MATTER” TEEN COMMUNITY ART PROJECT

There’s a new face in town...well, actually quite a few new faces, as an exciting community art project entitled the “I Matter” project transforms Huntington Public Library.

The Center for Creative Development has teamed up with Huntington Public Library and Huntington Tri Community Youth Agency (TriCYA) to present the “I matter” project, a character development and leadership program for Long Island teens. It’s a call to action to educate and inspire teens to make better life decisions and steer clear of destructive behavior, including substance abuse.

The “I Matter” projects at both the Main Street and Station branches of Huntington Public Library will feature large-scale photographic portraits of students accompanied by brief statements of why they each matter. “The project is a way for my peers and I to connect on a personal level,” wrote Samantha Glicker, a junior at Huntington High School. “I’m able to share what matters to me, and why I matter to myself. In high school you are often trying to prove to others why you matter for many superficial reasons, but this project allowed me to share why I actually think I am important.”

Mr. Goldman, along with staff from Huntington Public Library and TriCYA were on hand and provided the cameras and assistance as the teens took photos of one another and created the components of their “I Matter” posters. “Kids interact with each other, face-to-face, sharing their thoughts and feelings, and then engage in a creative group project where they quickly see results larger than themselves,” explains Rob Goldman, Founder and Director of The Center for Creative Development. “They gain a greater awareness that they really *do* matter and that helps them recognize their own worth.” Mr. Goldman adamantly believes that empowerment and earned self-respect are the building blocks for creating socially and emotionally healthy children.

A team of Huntington middle school and high school students is helping to fundraise for the project through an online Kickstarter campaign (imatterproject.org/huntington) that must be funded by May 15th 2014 or the project will be cancelled. “The kids’ hands-on involvement in fundraising for their own project is a significant component in the process,” says Goldman. “They experience a true sense of ownership when they know, deep in their hearts, that they made this possible.” Whether teaching in a college classroom or providing the cameras and tools to help teens channel their creativity, Mr. Goldman believes that destructive decision-making can be curbed by creating opportunities for kids to build self-worth and providing outlets for them to express their emotions.

The “I matter” project encourages vital public discourse as well as community involvement. Both are extremely helpful when addressing uncomfortable social issues such as drug use and abuse. New York State Assemblyman, Andrew Raia, an advocate of Mr. Goldman’s work commented, “Many of these kids could do anything with their lives, they just need to apply themselves. Perhaps with assistance from community-and-privately sponsored programs like this, we can see the shining potential of all of these individuals.” New York State Assemblyman, Chad Lupinacci added, “The “I matter” initiative is an outstanding program to empower our young people.”

The Center for Creative Development empowers teens through community-based, Social Impact Art projects. Its peer-to-peer, project-based approach develops a sense of true purpose through the power of the creative process, uniting teens, business, education, civic, faith and political leaders, as well as community members in a shared creative experience that cultivates positive behavior and constructive decision-making. “We need something like this, the schools need something like this, certainly families need something like this, and most importantly, our kids need something like this,” said Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds, Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Prevention.

An opening reception will be held on June 7, 2014 from 2-4 pm at the Huntington Public Library’s Main Street Branch, 338 Main Street. A presentation will take place at 2:30pm.

To learn more please visit imatterproject.org, to donate visit imatterproject.org/huntington

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