

CREATE HERE NOW

CreateHereNow Update

September 16th, 2013

BACKGROUND

The goal of the CreateHereNow (CHN) initiative is to develop new, replicable creative placemaking strategies and tactics in over twenty communities around the state, uniting them through newly empowered leadership, mentoring new leaders and utilizing each community's pre-existing assets, like vacant storefronts and buildings, while leveraging funds from overlooked sources to help achieve each community's placemaking goals.

CHN was originally envisioned as a \$1 million project that was reduced to \$600,000 resulting in a \$500,000 grant from ArtPlace America on June 1, 2013. These monies produced an actual operating budget of \$424,000. CHN is not a regrantee program. CHN partnered with i-Quilt on its application to ArtPlace, resulting in an award from the grant of \$76,000 to the i-Quilt project.

CHN unites this statewide initiative through a sophisticated central website linked to the twenty-plus CHN Alliance members. Each of these communities are then linked to all the other communities, creating a learning and marketing network reaching over 1,700,000 residents around the state.

PROGRAMS TO DATE

The initial CHN pilot project in Bridgeport utilized funds from an existing placemaking grant to launch its pilot before the ArtPlace funding was received. The Bridgeport pilot resulted in:

- Seven new artist/innovator businesses in the historic Arcade on Main Street.
- New community partnerships with the Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District, who have integrated this new business start up program into their services.
- A partnership with local community radio station WPKN. CHN initiated a \$1,000 programming grant from the Bridgeport Arts and Cultural Coalition for WPKN to program music within the Arcade, helping activate Arcade Saturdays and bringing new visitors to the Arcade shops
- CHN co-authored the successful awarding of a \$50,000 NEA Our Town grant for Universal Arts (UArts) with our access partner, City Lights Gallery Bridgeport. UArts is an access-programming pilot that will eventually be implemented statewide for the creation of an artists mentoring program, accessible art studios, centers and storefront sites creating art opportunities for many of our underserved populations. This grant dovetails with a grant from the National Artists with Disabilities Council for \$6,000 in support of UArts and the development of a statewide network of training, learning, and work opportunities to be presented at a statewide forum.



Historic McLevy Hall in Bridgeport, CT

The awarding of an Historic Preservation Arts Catalyze Placemaking (HPACP) \$50,000 grant with a matching \$25,000 cash and \$25,000 match of in kind by the City of Bridgeport to reactivate historic McLevy Hall in the heart of downtown Bridgeport.



The Historic Morrison's Hardware Building in Torrington, CT

Torrington's space reuse project resulted in:

- The repurposing of an unoccupied, former community icon, Morrison's Hardware Store, into a multi-level placemaking center housing a dance school, Artwell, Torrington's oldest artist-run, community catalyst organization/exhibit space/learning center, a textile artist, The Desultory Theatre Club, and a UArts site for a collective of artists with autism from Watertown, CT, known as The Northeast Folk

- A partnership with the owner of Morrison's Hardware. The CHN innovators are working to secure more buildings in which creatives from the tri-state area can be part of an ongoing artist-in-residence program, where ideas, work, and plans are exchanged to "create a place where people want to go and linger. Successful places attract people beyond those required to be there. People lingering is an investment of time in a place and is apt to lead to additional investments" (ArtPlace Principles of Creative Placemaking). The artist/innovator reactivated Morrison's Hardware will continue to serve as a placemaking hub for the entire region, due to tenants recently signing an agreement with the building owner.

- Local 63, a concept developed by Torrington's first artist-in-residence. This program represents a grassroots organization to help artists find work, conceived as a creative union aggregating the artistic talents in the state in order to connect artists with jobs. For example, festival producers are always looking to hire artists, artisans, and performers yet there is no central place to find these arts workers. Local 63 will act as a catalyst to organize the artistic and artisan talent for hire, leading to greater employment opportunities for our native creatives.

New Britain's embrace of the international art movement, PARK(ing) Day on September 20th will result in:

- The announcement of the creative consortium of the City of New Britain, the Mutual Housing Association of Greater Hartford, Inc. (MHAGH), the New Britain Museum of American Art, Central Connecticut State University, Community Central, and CHN to repurpose and reactivate the historic Anvil Space next to City Hall in downtown New Britain.

- MHAGH, the non-profit owner/operator of the historic Anvil Building, was recently awarded a State Historic Preservation Office planning and reactivation grant to have an architect determine how and where ADA-compliant facilities can be located. These facilities will lead to the highly flexible revitalization of the space with a student-operated coffee shop, an artist/innovator co-work space, community arts center, and general community events center. The four floors of senior housing above the Anvil Space provide an abundance of senior artists and their knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm to the overall project.



The Historic Anvil Building in New Britain, CT

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Waterbury, another City Canvas Initiative community that has completely adopted creative placemaking concepts, will produce:

- The Waterbury Holiday Made Market in its classic, Georgian Revivalist City Hall in an effort to showcase this architectural treasure to residents and tourists that may be unaware of its splendor. It continues the tradition of Black Friday shopping with a “Buy Local” emphasis. Local artisan market producers will curate the show and resituate many of their artists to the State of Makers markets at Envisionfest in Hartford.

- Night of the Welders. Phase two planning has begun for this event that speaks directly to Waterbury's industrial roots and promises to become a signature annual event that will bring together community partnerships with the Mattatuck Museum and artist, welders, and metal sculptors from across the state.



The Historic Anvil Space in New Britain, CT

Hartford's creative placemaking efforts will present:

- The State of Makers on December 5th, an overview of 100 of the most innovative handmade goods by Connecticut artists and artisans. State of Makers will grow “Buy Local” initiatives statewide and found an annual Hartford showcase of handmade talent.
- Business workshops for emerging makers will be held in January. New Year/New Business workshops will teach and provide support for small businesses.
- State of Markers will be held in partnership with i-Connect, Hartford's storefront reuse program.
- Hartford's renowned Real Art Ways will present an artist designed miniature golf project at Envisionfest that aims to become sustainable by bringing Hartford's corporate populations together with the arts, creating income for the golf course as well as alternative income for the artists whose works will be available for sale. CHN and i-Quilt are working together to present artists from five municipalities to showcase their work at Envisionfest, September 21, 2013, held in Bushnell Park that celebrates the i-Quilt master plan for downtown Hartford.

CHN has formed an alliance with the Veterans Art Foundation

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Veterans-Art-Foundation/40569067611> to help promote our veterans participation in all creative placemaking efforts statewide. Their first ever art show took place on September 7th at the Hartford Artspace Gallery, 555 Asylum Street, Hartford.

FUTURE PLANS AND TIMELINE

The grant funding from ArtPlace runs from June 1, 2013 to June 1, 2014. We anticipate working with the following communities to initiate projects, as well as submitting more national grant applications to enable CHN to serve all interested communities and develop even more creative placemaking strategies and tactics.

Additional communities are discussing, planning, and developing their CreateHereNow projects, which will launch in the next quarter and the coming spring. They include Milford, South Windsor, Winsted, Putnam, Willimantic, New London, New Haven, Norwich, Groton, Westport, Middletown, Norwalk, Fairfield and Stamford.

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Upcoming CreateHereNow related events include:

- **September 7th**, The Veterans Art Foundation's first art exhibit of works by our veterans on at the Hartford Artspace Gallery, 555 Asylum Street, Hartford.
- **September 20th**, from 8AM to 5PM. PARK(ing) Day New Britain on West Main Street. Be on hand for this international public arts movement and a special announcement regarding New Britain's next creative placemaking initiative.
- **September 21st**, Envisionfest, Enjoy free admission and tours of museums and performance venues, including the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford Stage and Connecticut Science Center (adults regular price, children are free), landmark buildings and historic destinations including The Bushnell, Old Statehouse and the Travelers Observation Deck. Also, free parking is available at many Hartford Parking Authority lots. See calendar of events at <http://envisionfesthartford.com/line-up-by-venue/>
- **November 2nd**, Arts for Learning Connecticut will partner with the University of Saint Joseph and the Gengras Center in West Hartford for an all day Arts & Abilities Forum filled with workshops, keynotes and performances. Margaret Bodell will be presenting on CreateHereNow and UArts opportunities. <http://yaconn.org/november-2nd-arts-and-abilities-forum/>
- **November 7th-10th**, The 4th Annual Bridgeport Art Trail. <http://bridgeport-art-trail.org/> McLevy Hall exhibitions open.
- **November 29th and 30th**, Waterbury Black Friday Holiday Made Market at City Hall.
- **December 5th- December 31st**, State of Makers showcase on Pratt Street in Hartford.
- **January 2014**, New Year/New Business workshops.
- **February 2014**, UArts Hartford launch.

Staff

A professional website development company is doing unprecedented technical development and supplying each community with its own CHN website that will be updated by that community's emerging creative leaders, mentored by CHN. Each community site will connect directly with the CHN "Mothership" site as well as with all other member sites of the CHN Alliance.

Coursey & Co. of Hartford, a PR/Media firm, has been retained full-time to build statewide, national and international media campaigns that will, in time, bring great credit to the State of Connecticut, proving that we are, indeed, "Still Revolutionary." They will be instructing communities belonging to the CHN Alliance in successful social media strategies utilizing FaceBook, Twitter, Stumbleupon, and other proven outlets.

CHN has leveraged the following grants to further creative placemaking efforts around the state:

- \$62,000 for the Bridgeport pilot project utilizing a State of Connecticut Creative Placemaking grant.
- \$100,000 for the reactivation of the historic McLevy Hall as an arts and tourism destination, which includes \$50,000 from the State Historic Preservation Office, plus \$25,000 cash match and \$25,000 in kind match from the City of Bridgeport
- \$10,000 Hartford contribution for the production of State of Makers
- Waterbury is raising \$2,500 from local sources for their Black Friday Holiday Made Market at City Hall.
- Torrington's Arts Council awarded \$3,000 from their creative placemaking grant to launch an artist-in-residence program.
- CHN worked directly with Bridgeport partner, non-profit City Lights Gallery and received a \$50,000 Our Town grant from the NEA to pilot UArts, access programming that will eventually be implemented statewide to facilitate creative routes to work for all our underserved populations.
- A \$6,000 grant from the National Arts and Disability Center was received by State of Connecticut Access Coordinator Margaret Bodell to support a mentoring program between artists and those with diversities
- Envisionfest Hartford hired CHN allied artists to be participants in that celebration.



(cont.)

- Community radio station and CreateHereNow ally WPKN was awarded a \$1,000 grant authored by CHN from the Bridgeport Arts and Cultural Center for music programming in the historic Arcade on Saturdays.
- A \$10,000 SHPO planning and reactivation grant for the Mutual Housing Association of Greater Hartford, the non-profit owner/operator of the historic Anvil Building in downtown New Britain, to have an architect determine how and where ADA compliant facilities can be located within that historic structure. The City of New Britain has pledged \$50,000 to enable the reactivation of this vital community center in partnership with MHAGH, CCSU, Community Central, the New Britain Museum of American Art and CHN.

Including the pilot program, CHN has generated income for more than fifty Connecticut artists.

Respectfully,

Margaret Bodell, CVO, CreateHereNow

Rod Frantz, Director, CreateHereNow

Special thanks to Martin O.K. Paul for proof reading and Ann Sheffer for organizational suggestions in the preparation of this document.

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MEDIA

<http://www.ctpost.com/default/article/New-businesses-open-in-Bridgeport-s-Arcade-4527309.php>

<http://www.ctpost.com/default/article/Bridgeport-to-share-in-ArtPlace-grant-4536129.php>

<http://www.ct.com/news/advocates/wttx-createherenow-receives-major-national-art-placemaking-grant-goes-statewide-20130521,0,4083944.story>

<http://www.conntact.com/mainstreet/16088-old-bridgeport-arcade-resurrected.html>

<http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/New-market-coming-to-downtown-Arcade-4360695.php>

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<http://www.westfaironline.com/52008/program-aims-to-foster-placemaking/>

<http://www.westfaironline.com/53943/creativity-bubbling-at-bridgeports-arcade-mall/>

<http://www.registercitizen.com/general-news/20130725/createherenow-opens-in-former-hardware-store-in-torrington-as-home-to-artists-entrepreneurs>

<http://www.registercitizen.com/general-news/20130723/createherenow-expands-building-reuse-program-to-former-torrington-hardware-store-on-july-25>

<http://www.registercitizen.com/arts-and-entertainment/20130829/the-desultory-theatre-club-to-perform-god-of-carnage-in-torrington>

<http://bridgeport.createherenow.org/edit/resources/artscope44mayjun13createherenow-1-1.pdf>

<http://bridgeport.createherenow.org/edit/resources/envisionfest-1.pdf>

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