

# Art Installation Unveiled Outside Former B'nai Israel Synagogue

*Community Focus Celebrated in Conversion of Historic Building*

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES, November 11, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Kicking off a series of inclusive community events, local artwork was unveiled on November 10th on construction fencing in front of the historic B'nai Israel Synagogue. The portion of the property that was most recently used as a school is undergoing an \$18.5 million adaptive reuse by developer Beacon Communities into mixed income apartments. The former sanctuary, a distinctive round building now called the Rotunda, will become a dynamic, community-oriented center focused on the arts, neighborhood equity, and inclusion. Fundraising for the redevelopment of the Rotunda is underway.

The Negley Art Fence is the first display of efforts by the Rotunda Collaborative, a group formed by Beacon and its community partner, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, to transform the former sanctuary. With the hanging of the art banners, the construction fencing becomes a platform for creative expression that also beautifies the site. The banners will remain on the fence through 2022. The school building attached to the former synagogue is being remodeled into North Negley Residences, 45 all electric, Passive House certified, environmentally positive apartments for people with a mix of incomes. The development will also include a regenerative farm and a solar- connected battery that will serve as a microgrid and community resiliency hub.

"This is the first step in integrating the community here in the East End into what we hope will eventually be the main function of the restored Rotunda, namely, a community gathering place that will be a home for the performing arts as well as a diverse array of other cultural, educational, and family-oriented events," said Rick Swartz, Executive Director of Bloomfield Garfield Corporation. Swartz thanked Beacon Communities LLC for sponsoring the project and Alyson Bonavoglia and Sara Stock Mayo here in Pittsburgh for their work on realizing the Art Fence project.

Michael Polite, Beacon Executive Vice President and Partner in Pittsburgh, praised the art installation for engaging Pittsburgh artists and students. "It's a symbolic and substantive sign of how this property is evolving into a dynamic community asset," he said. He also thanked the work of D.S. Kinsel and Thomas Agnew from BOOM Concepts, a Garfield-based artist group that is dedicated to the development of artists and creative entrepreneurs representing marginalized

voices.

The selected artists include: atiya jones, Danielle Robinson, D.S. Kinsel, Jameelah Platt, Maggie Negrete, Sara B. Coleman, Sophia Fang, Takara Canty and students from the nearby Pittsburgh Dilworth PreK-5, an arts integration school. The themes of these artworks are in response to questions focused on envisioning a just, equitable and environmentally positive neighborhood of the future.

The Rotunda Collaborative is currently obtaining feedback at on the needs and aspirations of potential community-based users on ideas for programming, renovations and operations of the facility. The Rotunda Collaborative and its partners will provide other opportunities over the next twelve months for people to come together to experience and create art. The team can be reached at [NegleyRotunda@beaconcommunitiesllc.com](mailto:NegleyRotunda@beaconcommunitiesllc.com).

The Negley Art Fence opening celebration event included drumming performances by Sankofa Village for the Arts drummers and the Dilworth World Drummers from Pittsburgh Dilworth PreK-5. Tazza D'Oro and Prantl's Bakery provided refreshments for the event.

#### About Beacon Communities

Beacon Communities is a privately-owned real estate firm that develops, acquires, invests in, and manages multi-family housing. For 25 years, Beacon has engaged in development opportunities ranging from new construction, to historic adaptive reuse, to the renovation of existing housing while working to secure multi-family housing portfolios. Beacon's approach implements creative funding sources and sustainable design features to benefit residents and investors alike. Understanding how to work with partners, communities, and local governments has enabled Beacon to create award-winning communities where their residents are Living Well by Design.

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