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PA Turnpike and PA Council on the Arts Expand Arts Sparks Program to Riverview School District

Latest arts creation, "A Wonderful Day in the Neighborhood," unveiled at Oakmont Plum Service Plaza.

(Oakmont, PA – Nov. 9, 2017) — Today, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) unveiled a new mosaic, designed and created by students at Riverview Junior and Senior High School. This is the second art piece created through Art Sparks, a partnership between the PCA's Arts in Education residency program and the PTC to bring student-created artwork to service plazas across the PTC's 550-mile system.

Coordinated through the PCA's regional Arts in Education partner, Pittsburgh Filmmakers & Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, students worked with teaching artist, Laura Jean McLaughlin, and art teacher, Glenn Garrison, to design and create the piece, which depicts an assortment of iconic Pittsburgh landmarks and personalities. The Riverview School District also hosted parents, students, community members and local elected officials to assist in laying the tens of thousands of tile, mirror and glass pieces that compose the final 9 x 21.5 foot art piece.

Today's unveiling at the Oakmont Plum Service Plaza included a community celebration. "It can never be said that art is not engaging and exciting," commented PTC CEO Mark Compton who kicked off the day's remarks. "We will now have a wonderful mosaic gracing our plaza. Additionally, we have students, teachers, the community and even a band here to celebrate it!"

"It's truly a joy to stand here with students, artists, educators and community members who helped create this mosaic," said PCA Executive Director Philip Horn. "This mosaic is a beautiful example of how creativity lives within us all and will serve as a visual welcome for the countless visitors who stop here in the years ahead."

After students helped to remove the curtain from the newly installed mosaic, Dr. Margaret DiNinno, Riverview School District Superintendent, expressed her thanks for selecting the school district for this creative collaboration. "Our small school district takes pride in being able to provide our students with opportunities that extend beyond the walls of the classroom and prepare them for their future," said DiNinno. "The opportunity that Art Sparks and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission have provided for our students and our community will serve as a memorable and valuable learning experience for each of them."

The Art Sparks program is a partnership between the PTC and the PCA. The program pairs K-12 art students and teaching artists from the PCA's Arts in Education roster with the goal of installing a local, student-created artwork in every service plaza, system-wide, over the next five to eight years. Schools in close proximity to each respective service plaza host 20-day teaching artist residencies led by a local PCA teaching artist. Students work with the artist and members of the community to create artwork

that reflects the region. The King of Prussia and Somerset service plazas will be the next sites for Art Sparks art pieces in spring 2018.

For more information on Art Sparks, visit <http://www.paturndpike.com/artsparks> or <http://www.arts.pa.gov/Pages/Art-Sparks.aspx>

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