



“ H O U S E S I N W A I T I N G ”

CONTACT:

Lazae LaSpina
 Project Manager, WAAG
lazae@lazae.com
 724-516-2042
waag.weebly.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHITNEY AVENUE ART GALLERY (WAAG) – HOUSES IN WAITING
OPENING CELEBRATION STREET PARTY

Wilkesburg, PA, July 23, 2010 – This summer, the 700 block of Whitney Avenue in Wilkesburg is becoming Whitney Avenue Art Gallery (WAAG), where blighted properties are being transformed into a temporary, outdoor art exhibit. Ten abandoned houses have challenged artist-led community workshops to interpret the theme “Houses in Waiting.” For each of the selected properties, plywood has been cut to size to perform the dual roles of blank canvas and of securing the windows of the houses. The theme “Houses in Waiting” intends the board-up art to act as a placeholder while interest is generated for a wide spectrum of homebuyers to invest in the neighborhood and take advantage of Wilkesburg’s property tax abatement program.



Join Wilkesburg residents Saturday, July 31, 2010 from 4pm to 9pm as they celebrate WAAG’s opening with a street party. Visitors may bring their own T-shirt to be printed for free with the WAAG logo, and are encouraged to bring a T-shirt to donate for printing. While the art boards along Whitney Avenue will be on view indefinitely, a special projection art performance by Carnegie Mellon University student, Zena Ruiz, will take place on WAAG’s opening night. Additionally, those in attendance will have the opportunity to learn about Landmarks Housing Resource Center (LHRC), an initiative of Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. The LHRC will soon launch in the converted former Packard building at 744 Rebecca Avenue and Jeanette Street in Hamnett Place, just a block from the WAAG project site.



Whitney Avenue Art Gallery was conceived by artist and Wilkesburg resident, Lazae LaSpina. Ernest Bey of Wilkesburg’s MAD DADS was Lead Artist for the youth community art workshops. Kate Joranson, a recent exhibiting artist at the Mattress Factory, was Lead Artist for the adult community art workshops. WAAG is indebted to Whitney Avenue Neighborhood Group for their tireless efforts in landscaping the formerly overgrown yards with generous donations from Soergel Orchards & Garden Center and Garden Dreams Urban Farm & Nursery.

This project was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Additional funding provided by Wilkesburg Weed & Seed Initiative, Wilkesburg Municipal Authority and Wilkesburg Commercial & Industrial Development Authority. Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf serves as fiscal agent. Hosanna House hosted the youth art workshop series. Kathleen Connors donated a building near the project site to host the adult art workshops.

For more information visit: waag.weebly.com