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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DEDICATION CEREMONY TO BE HELD FOR SECOND PUBLIC ART PIECE
INSTALLED AS PART OF THE 6TH WARD PUBLIC ART INITIATIVE**

READING, PA: A message full of hope, collaboration and renewal has been installed on the exterior of NHS Community Center on Schuylkill Avenue and Buttonwood Street. Please join us for a dedication ceremony of this new mural on Thursday, September 4th at 3:00 PM.

The mural, composed of three panels, was created by Juan Carlos Ruiz, Jr. with assistance from Mike Miller, to convey that the youth have the potential and ability to build and repair a somewhat broken world and build a better future and is entitled Piecing Our World Back Together.

Ruiz, a Reading native, worked with student artists and area residents throughout each phase of the project. During two community art nights held in August at the GoggleWorks, several residents helped create a vibrant work of art which captures themes of peace, respect, and love.

“My hope is that this mural will just give off good vibes to all who view it,” says Ruiz, “I want it to inspire youth to do great things, promote positivity, build self-esteem, and uplift the community while adding beauty to it.”

The City of Reading was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts’ (NEA) *Our Town* program in 2012. This is the second project to be undertaken as part of the 6th Ward Public Art Initiative, which was created in an effort to foster interaction among local residents, youth and artists to create public works of art.

The goal of these activities is to engage residents in developing a vibrant creative community and improving blighted public spaces in a way that reflects the social character and culture of the neighborhood.

A request for artist proposals was issued in April of 2014. After receiving and reviewing the proposals, a panel of community members selected artist Juan Carlos Ruiz, Jr.’s rendering of a mural as the winning proposal. Work on the project began in July, and the project has been a true community effort.

The 6th Ward Public Art Initiative is funded by the NEA and is collaboration between The City of Reading, the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) of Greater Berks, and the 6th Ward Community Association.

Godiva Chocolatier, Inc. has also contributed funding and volunteer time toward the mural.

For more information contact Crystal Edwards, Community Development Manger, at 610.655.6392 or crystal.edwards@readingpa.org.

This project has been supported by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Art works!

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