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MARAGARET FOX PHOTOS

Programming for the "Sparking Creativity" project launched with this installation at the Katonah Museum of Art.

Groups are collaborating on 'sparking creativity' project

By JEFF MORRIS

Katonah Village Library and the Katonah Museum of Art, in partnership with the Community Center of Northern Westchester, have launched a major programming collaboration designed to help remedy the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the learning, creativity, and emotions of children and teenagers.

The Sparking Creativity in Community Spaces project is funded by a grant through the federal American Rescue Plan Act from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The goal of this grant, administered through the New York Library Council, is to help children learn about the arts, culture, and health while providing them with opportunities to process their feelings about the challenges they have faced during the pandemic.

"Across our community, children and teens, particularly those from low-income and immigrant families, have struggled with personal loss and financial stress, as well as the challenges of remote schooling, social isolation, and fewer after-school enrichment activities," said Mary Kane, director of Katonah Village Library.

"With this generous grant," she continued, "the library and our



Artist Jella Gueramian created the museum installation, above.

friends at the KMA and CCNW can draw on our combined expertise at multiple locations to offer young people across our community a wide range of exciting programs that will reengage them in exploration, learning, and creative expression."

The library and museum will use a mobile kitchen, recording studio, art installations, and other interactive programs to help children and teens build their knowledge and

share their feelings through self-expression.

Margaret Adasko, curator of education at the Katonah Museum of Art, said, "We are very excited by the collaborative programming that has been made possible by this grant. The paired art installations at the Katonah Museum of Art and Katonah Library, along with unique family programming, will offer great opportunities for our communities to reconnect with the arts and learning."

Programming began March 13 with the opening of an art installation at the KMA and continues through June.

The programming includes:

— The "Charlie Cart," a fully equipped mobile kitchen that provides hands-on food education to youth and families, featuring fun, affordable, healthy recipes that build cooking skills, opportunities to share food traditions from different cultures, creative cooking competitions, and explorations of the connections between food, health, and the environment. Programming will be offered at the KVL, the KMA and CCNW.

— The recording studio, a small, soundproof recording studio/acoustic pod that enables teens to

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A collaboration on creativity

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create, accompanied by a series of free music/film production classes. The recording studio will also be utilized by the KMA to produce audio tours targeted towards families and young adults for future exhibits, and a quiet study room for teens and adults.

— Jeila Gueramian, a multidisciplinary artist known for her whimsical art installations that combine repurposed textiles and technology, will create public installations at the Katonah Museum of Art's Learning Center and the library's front plaza/indoor spaces. Complementary family programming will include a Museum Family Day, Katonah Art Stroll, library workshops and workshops with participants from CCNW led by the artist. Materials will be created in English and Spanish.

— AWE Learning Station, from AWE Learning, provides literacy-focused digital learning solutions for early learners to public libraries. Each AWE station comes preloaded with more than 85 software titles and 4,000 learning activities that aim to inspire enthusiasm for learning, build early literacy skills and support school readiness. The AWE station will include bilingual English/Spanish programs, making it accessible to many non-native English speakers.

— The Katonah Village Library will augment its current collection of play and learn kits with new bilingual kits on engineering, "things that go," and food and healthy eating to help extend the Charlie Cart programming. These kits will be shared with CCNW to provide access for a broader population. The KMA will also develop kits related to the visual arts. The kits will be filled with books related to each topic, along with educational activities and information on early learning.

"KVL went after this grant with tenacity," Ms. Kane commented on Thursday. "The children's librarian, Claudia Uccellani, and I were



MARGARET FOX PHOTO

Another section of Jeila Gueramian's installation at Katonah Museum of Art. She will be leading art activities at several sites as part of the newly-funded project.

determined to make this happen for our community, as we have witnessed firsthand the issues kids have been struggling with due to over two years of COVID."

She said, "We did not have any contacts at the museum but were determined to get this off the ground. And once we got a hold of Margaret Adasko, we all hit the ground running."

The library's portion of the grant is \$99,308, according to Ms. Kane. She said it "represented hope, creativity and hands-on learning."

"We are so grateful that the children and families served by the Community Center will have access to such wonderful and creative opportunities," noted Clare Murray, executive director of the Community Center of Northern Westchester. "After two years of personal losses and extraordinarily difficult challenges for so many, we are delighted to be able to work together with the Katonah Library and the Katonah Museum of Art to provide addi-

tional resources and enriched learning experiences for our whole community."

In July 2021, the New York State Education Department announced the availability of \$6.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds to help libraries and other cultural institutions better serve communities during recovery from the pandemic and address the digital divide. The federal Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded the ARPA funds to the New York State Library to help communities establish equitable approaches to digital inclusion and services from all types of libraries and other cultural institutions. In turn, the state library allocated \$5.5 million from these funds to the state's nine regional Reference and Research Library Resources Councils for collaborative regional projects that advance digital inclusion, encourage library-museum partnerships, and expand student access to digital resources.

Fox Lane ensemble students shine

Two Fox Lane High School small orchestra ensembles recently performed at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's 3rd annual Young Musicians Westchester-Hudson Valley-Con-

