

# The Art Effect Supports Poughkeepsie Youth to Connect with their Community through Art and Pollution Prevention



## The Art Effect

The Art Effect empowers young people to develop their creative voice to shape their futures and bring about positive social change. Created in 2018 from a merger of two long-standing arts in education and youth development agencies in Poughkeepsie, NY, Mill Street Loft and Spark Media Project, The Art Effect provides integrated visual art and media programs to Hudson Valley youth. The Art Effect prepares young people to succeed in the world through the arts and media, teaching them to solve challenges through creative thinking and active participation, to engage others meaningfully, and to grow into leaders and productive members of their communities. The Art Effect's programming supports the personal and professional development of youth, including many low-income, underserved youth in our community.

## Challenge

The City of Poughkeepsie struggles with many public health risks that stand in the way of equitable environmental, social, and economic development. In particular, community residents endure high rates of drug use, crime, violence, and poverty, while youth struggle with educational attainment. These public health disparities are compounded by the community residents' lack of access to natural resources and urban green spaces, which contributes to a lack of connection to the environment and each other and is evidenced by excessive littering throughout City of Poughkeepsie streets and in the Fall Kill Creek.

## Solution

The Creativity & Connection at the Fall Kill Creek project engaged low-income Poughkeepsie youth and community residents of the Northside Poughkeepsie neighborhood to reduce littering along the Fall Kill Creek through arts-based, youth-led projects and community clean-ups.

## Results

The Art Effect hosted 5 program sessions and a total of 8 clean-up days with well over 100

## Challenge

- Poughkeepsie has public health risks and residents endure high rates of drug use, crime, violence, and poverty.
- The community lacks access to natural resources and urban green spaces.
- Residents use Fall Kill Creek as a dump site and the large quantities of litter detract from aesthetic enjoyment of the resource and cause people to devalue and abuse the creek.

## Solution

- Low-income Poughkeepsie youth and community residents were engaged in a campaign to reduce littering through arts-based, youth-led projects and community clean-ups.

## Results

- 5 program sessions and a total of 8 clean-up days were held with well over 100 youth participants.
- Youth held 3 communications events and created 3 video PSAs and 3 radio PSAs.
- Youth created art pieces and planted shrubs to provide new access to green space.
- 3 community exhibitions were held, and attended by 125 people total, to showcase the work created by the youths

## Testimonial

youth participates in at least one clean-up session. There was a strong desire by youth who participated in the spring session to keep coming back for session after session which provided deeper program experiences to these youth. This helped them become strong, informed, and invested ambassadors for the environment.

Youth in the Media, Arts and Design Lab (MADLab) program created and implemented 3 communications campaigns and created 3 video PSAs, 3 radio PSAs, and graphic design posters about pollution prevention, litter production, and the Fall Kill Creek. Furthermore, youth designed, created, and installed a series of colorful assemblage art pieces, created a sculpture of steel letters that spelled out the word EARTH, and designed an informational sign to be installed on a permanent wooden display stand. In addition, MADLab youth worked with the ecological organization Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribes to plant 66 shrubs/trees on site to beautify the location. With the installation of both art and landscape elements, this provided new access to the green space.

Finally, The Art Effect's MADLab program hosted 3 culminating events, which were community exhibitions showcasing works created during the spring, summer, and fall program sessions. In total, 125 people attended the events.

### Online Media

- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)

*"Partnering with the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute enabled us to leverage our creative engagement and arts-based programs to achieve demonstrable results: we were able to engage our local neighborhood in community-wide litter clean-ups, secure additional partnerships and resources, produce permanent public art, and create a vibrant urban pocket park that is no longer overrun by trash and litter."*

Anna Langdell  
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### The Art Effect

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