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Press Release

Mayor Gary McCarthy, Councilwoman Leesa Perazzo Announce New Anti-Graffiti Effort in Schenectady

SCHENECTADY, N.Y. - Mayor Gary McCarthy and Councilwoman Leesa Perazzo today announced a major new anti-graffiti program in the City of Schenectady. The effort is aimed at stamping out graffiti in Schenectady business corridors.

Councilwoman Leesa Perazzo said, "I'm so thankful to the many agencies and individuals for their willingness to collaborate. This is a comprehensive approach to a problem that needs action now as part of our overall efforts to improve our City. We're starting with business and nonprofits and will move toward neighborhoods in the next phase."

"The City is optimistic about this collaborative effort and I would like to thank Councilwoman Perazzo for pulling this project together," said Mayor Gary McCarthy. "We will be utilizing current inmates, participants in the Alternative to Incarceration Program, and youth serving probation to remove and cover graffiti in our business community. This community service will prove valuable to their rehabilitation process while benefitting the entire community."

Partners in the new program include The Home Depot, Schenectady County Sheriff Dom Dagostino, Schenectady Police Department, City of Schenectady Industrial Development Agency (IDA), Center for Community Justice, Schenectady County Center for Juvenile Justice and Quest.

The new program will be launched in October.

Paint, supplies and other materials will be donated by The Home Depot. The City IDA, which is administered by Metroplex, has committed up to \$10,000 toward program expenses.

The City of Schenectady will identify business, nonprofit and municipal buildings with graffiti that need attention.

Building owners and tenants who have a graffiti issues will be notified of the new program which offers assistance to remove graffiti at no cost to them.

Schenectady County Center for Juvenile Justice will transport youthful offenders to graffiti locations to remove and cover existing graffiti. In addition to supplies, The Home Depot will provide trained volunteers to help those working on probation to properly remove graffiti.

“The Home Depot loves these opportunities. Our community is important to us and we are happy to commit product and elbow grease to making it better,” said Bethany Pignatello, A.S.D.S/Team Depot Captain.

In addition, Sheriff Dagostino will provide assistance by providing inmate labor to help in the graffiti removal effort.

“Probation can often be a critical time in a youth’s life,” said Tim Ferrara, probation supervisor of Schenectady County Center for Juvenile Justice. “It’s not out of the realm of possibility that a youth removing graffiti may have an association to the person who put it there in the first place. We feel this creates a valuable connection and we are pleased to work with the City and the Center for Community Justice on this program.”

“We have been waiting years for a program like this,” said Pam Brucker, director of community service at Center for Community Justice. “It’s a big undertaking. This pilot program has us very excited. When we were contacted to ask if we would participate, I couldn’t say yes fast enough. This is a valuable way for our program participants give back to their community.”

After graffiti removal work is completed, the Schenectady Police Department has agreed to increase patrol in areas where work has been done.

“Our goal is to work toward eliminating graffiti in our city,” said Police Chief Brian Kilcullen. We will be keeping an eye out in the areas that have been cleaned up and we will prosecute offenders to the fullest extent of the law. We want to keep moving forward.”

Finally, a positive expression board will be erected in Jerry Burrell Park. The board will be white-washed monthly and will allow former graffiti offenders to display their work in a way that is designed to add to community expression not damage buildings.

“Quest is proud to be responsible for the upkeep of the mural wall in Jerry Burrell Park,” said Quest’s Executive Director Judy Atchinson. “Our kids already embrace community service projects and we are pleased to be adding this one. Time and time again, the youth of Hamilton Hill step up to fill a need and do so happily.”

The City of Schenectady is now identifying a list of properties that will be addressed by the new anti-graffiti program in October. If you have or know of a business or nonprofit in need of graffiti removal, please contact Councilwoman Leesa Perazzo at Lperazzo@schenectadyny.gov or (518) 334-1346.