



For Immediate Release
April 5, 2023

Contact: Erica Stanley
erica@stanleystrategies.com

11th Street Bridge Park Unveils New Art Installation at National Children’s Center Urban Farm
Supported by \$8,000 gift from Darryl Chappell Foundation, new mural unifies art and urban agriculture

Washington, D.C. – Today, [the 11th Street Bridge Park](#) – a partnership between the local non-profit Building Bridges Across the River and the District government – unveiled a [new art installation](#) – *Hands in Bloom* – by local artist [Sonia Jones](#) at [National Children’s Center \(NCC\) Baby Bloomers Urban Farm](#), supported by an \$8,000 gift from the [Darryl Chappell Foundation](#).

“The community identified urban agriculture and public art as top priorities for the Bridge Park, and with only one full-service grocery store to serve over 75,000 residents, we’ve invested in a network of SE DC gardens in advance of the Park’s opening,” said Scott Kratz, Senior Vice President, Building Bridges Across the River & Director, 11th Street Bridge Park. “This new mural at Baby Bloomers Farm demonstrates how this single Bridge Park intervention has been the catalyst for amplifying local residents’ voices through arts, culture and food justice.”

The Darryl Chappell Foundation fulfills its mission – to empower Afrodescendant artists to achieve their highest potential – by providing funding for artists-in-residence programs, facilitating an *Artists Talk Series*, curating an online artists marketplace, and supporting public commission art. The goals for the art installation at Baby Bloomers Farm included:

- Address the themes of the Baby Bloomers Farm – to engage students with the natural environment and grow healthy food;
- Incorporate NCC’s mission – To enhance the lives of people of all ages, diverse backgrounds and differing abilities through inclusive opportunities;
- Encourage positive interaction between NCC and local Ward 8 residents;
- Include stories of local community members, neighborhood history, and/or legacy; and
- Bring beauty to the area.

“We’re thrilled to support the *Hands in Bloom* mural at Baby Bloomers Farm, which is both reflective of the Ward 8 community, and serves as an inviting gathering place for its residents,” said Darryl Chappell, Founder, Chairman & CEO of the Darryl Chappell Foundation. “We’re proud to elevate and support Sonia Jones’ work, which is core to realizing the foundation’s vision of building a community of artists who impact the world in exciting and mind-altering ways through art.”

Jones’ concept for the art installation was to incorporate diverse hands that tell a story about the human owner – age, cultural heritage, personal style, etc. – spelling out “Baby Bloomers” in ASL to symbolize the inclusiveness of NCC’s mission. The 12 mini murals incorporate hands from the NCC and Baby Bloomers Farm staff and children, representing the intergenerational relationships, and the literal expression of adults helping children in the garden with helping hands.

“I’m honored to be a part of the story of this innovative space that is tackling food insecurity and creating inclusive spaces for children with special needs, while serving as an anchor for continued community engagement,” said Sonia Jones, mural artist. “As a mother who enjoyed my first harvest from my home garden this year, I wanted to use my artistic talents to support organizations that teach the next generation to be self-sufficient.”

For over 60 years, NCC has provided early learning, intervention, residential services, and workforce development for young people and adults. In the Baby Bloomers Farm, NCC – in collaboration with the Bridge Park – manages 65 garden beds and a beehive that offer healthy fruits and vegetables for the east of the Anacostia River community. A garden curriculum in NCC’s early learning program gives children the opportunity to understand healthy eating options, cooking, growing, and planting.

“The addition of the *Hands in Bloom* mural will help further beautify one of the National Children’s Center’s proudest examples of living our values of inclusion, compassion, and empowerment by providing healthy food and education for one of the city’s most historically under-resourced communities,” said Patricia A. Browne, NCC President & CEO.

“The National Children’s Center has been a pillar in the Ward 8 community for over 30 years,” said Sylvia “Rosie” Williams, Baby Bloomers Garden Coordinator. “It has been rewarding for me to be a part of NCC’s efforts to be not only a place for high quality education and fresh food, but as a cultural gathering place for families.”

The Bridge Park draws on extensive community outreach and a consultative process, anchored by more than 1,000 stakeholder meetings for design, development, and impact. Pre-construction began in 2016, a groundbreaking is expected in late 2023 and the Bridge Park will open by early 2026.

###

About the 11th Street Bridge Park

11th Street Bridge Park, a partnership between the District Department of Transportation and the Ward 8 non-profit Building Bridges Across the River, will be Washington, D.C.'s first elevated public park. Located on the piers of the old 11th Street Bridge, this venue will be a space for healthy recreation, environmental education, and the arts and has been implementing community-driven equitable development strategies since 2016. The project works with community and local partners to invest in the residents and neighborhoods surrounding the Park with various initiatives and support programs. To learn more about 11th Street Bridge Park and receive updates on its design, please visit [here](#).