



Artwork created by residents is part of youth artwork exhibition on display at the New York Family Court.

Artwork by DJJ Residents Featured in “Festival of the Arts” at New York Family Court

On Friday, June 27th, DJJ held an exhibition of resident artwork at the New York Family Court. DJJ and Family Court personnel who attended the exhibition described it as an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

The purpose of the Art Program was to enable youth to develop constructive outlets for self-expression and to encourage self-awareness, self-esteem and personal growth. The Art Program provided a safe, non-verbal mode of expression for youth to explore feelings, develop self-control, alleviate the stress of awaiting adjudication, and help them handle the disappointment of a remand.

The concept of an exhibition of artwork created by residents in detention originated with Court Liaison Sammie Kizer who stated, “I wanted the residents to share their work and for court personnel to be able to admire it.”

The Department creates opportunities for community-based organizations to connect to youth while in detention through a series of targeted workshops. One of those workshops was the Art Program provided by the African Poetry Theater Inc. and taught by artists Imakhu Mwt Shekemet and Nikki Williams.

Artist Imakhu Mwt Shekemet also known as “Momma Imakhu” taught the youth positively themed cultural art projects, such as “Map to My Future Success” and “My Hands Create My World” using creative and inexpensive supplies. These materials included subway maps, sugar stirrers glitter, cardboard, and magazine and newspaper images.

Artist Nikki Williams incorporated writing into her lessons, as students were encouraged to visualize their poetry by creating works of art

