

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# PAINT**MEMPHIS**

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## **PAINT MEMPHIS PRESENTS PROJECT TO REVITALIZE NEW CHICAGO/NORTH MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ON JULY 18; PUBLIC ART FESTIVAL AT CHELSEA FLOODWALL**

MEMPHIS, TN—Grassroots organization, Paint Memphis will present a free one-day festival on July 18th to showcase an expansive collection (50+ artists) of public art being painted along .3 miles of the Chelsea Greenline beginning at N. Evergreen and Chelsea, continuing westward. Festival attendees will get an up-close look at the painting process while talented local graffiti writers install their “Revival” themed designs onto a floodwall canvas. While the festival will be stocked with offerings from local food trucks, access to portable restrooms, and family friendly activities, the event will also serve as a catalyst for additional attention and upkeep for the surrounding New Chicago neighborhood.

With assistance from The Urban Arts Commission, Paint Memphis hopes to follow the successful models of larger cities, by turning this and many other Bluff City walls into “permission walls,” granting legal access to graffiti artists in specific locations. Once synonymous with blight, graffiti writing has the ability to beautify areas and promote local pride. “Giving these artists a palette, time, and materials can help them to find a safe and legal space to showcase their talent,” says Karen Golightly, a Paint Memphis event coordinator and street art photographer. Golightly notes that “(graffiti) is the most prominent form of public art,” and when granted space to work, artists overwhelmingly adhere to guidelines for content, omitting profanity and offensive symbols. Paint Memphis will also serve as a monitor, patrolling the wall for objectionable material and doing trash sweeps on a regular basis.

Generous sponsors, donors, and volunteers have shown their support for this project. The Home Depot is a major sponsor of the event, contributing 35 gallons of paint, paint sprayers, and volunteers to assist in priming the massive expanse. The Greater Memphis Greenline is a crucial partner in this project, obtaining permission from the City and Corps of Engineers, and estimates this bicycle and pedestrian pathway will connect Downtown to Shelby Farms by 2017. The Urban Arts Commission also plays a major role in obtaining permission for this project. Other sponsors include Montgomery Martin Contractors, web design by Bill Simmers, professional photography of artist work by Smith Artisan Photography, and various behind the scenes volunteers, including crews of people helping to tape off and preserve floodwall numbers on June 16th, and prime the wall on June 18<sup>th</sup>.

Interested parties can visit [www.paintmemphis.org](http://www.paintmemphis.org) for more information and donations are gladly accepted at <https://www.ioby.org/project/paint-memphis>

Contact Karen@paintmemphis for information about volunteer opportunities surrounding this event.