

Alfred University's Art Force 5 begins New York City summer residency program
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ALFRED, NY Alfred University's award-winning Art Force 5 program today began a summer residency program in New York City. The student team will spend three months in the city, using art as a means of teaching youngsters the importance of embracing creativity as an alternative to conflict.

The Art Force 5 has received national recognition for their unique diversity training and their interactive community-based art. The program, which consists of student "superheroes" who oversee community-based art projects, has a proven record of engaging communities through creativity.

Beginning today (Thursday, May 17), a team of five students is participating in a residency on Governor's Island, providing free activities Thursday-Sunday each week through August 12. Their offerings include action-figure building, cape construction and an expansive comic book exhibit. It will also offer interactive history projects paying tribute to Harlem's 15th Regiment and its contributions to World War I.

The summer residency in New York City marks the first time Art Force 5 has partnered with the State University of New York (SUNY) to put together a to build a statewide team of heroes from SUNY institutions. The Art Force 5 summer program is supported by a grant from the SUNY Performance Improvement Fund, which encourages collaboration across the SUNY system.

The Art Force 5's summer team is made up of five students from SUNY institutions: Imani Graves (New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University), Michael Perez (SUNY Morrisville), Alison Garcia (University at Buffalo), Zaire Anderson (SUNY Purchase) and Marvin Brown (Tompkins Cortland Community College). Four Alfred University students Kelsey Oliveira, Elvira Rodriguez, Katherine Paz and Noah Mitchell are providing behind-the-scenes leadership for the residency.

Dan Napolitano, assistant dean of the Alfred University School of Art and Design and program director for Art Force 5, will supervise the group, which will spend its days on Governor's Island and be hosted evenings at Brooklyn College.

Special school and summer programs are welcome to reserve activity time by contacting artforce5@alfred.edu. No appointments are needed for small groups, families, and individuals. The program is located at Governors Island's Colonel Row Houses (405E) on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (10 a.m. to 8 p.m. after Memorial Day); Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Special holiday hours will be offered on Memorial Day and July 4. Governors Island is accessible by ferries from Manhattan seven days a week and from Brooklyn on weekends. Visit www.artforce5.com for more information and updated offerings.

Founded in 2006 at Alfred University, the Art Force 5 has received national recognition for their unique diversity training and their interactive community-based art and has a proven record of engaging communities through creativity. In 2016, they were awarded the Unite Rochester Challenge grant and designed opportunities for the Rochester Police Department to make art alongside community members.

Throughout 2017, the team conducted a statewide tour building mosaics and raising awareness of 1917's East St. Louis Riots through portraits of the leaders of the subsequent 1917 Silent Parade. The final works were exhibited at both the NAACP National Convention in Baltimore and at the State University of New York (SUNY) Central Administration in Albany, NY.

Members of Art Force 5 participating in the summer program on Governor's Island are (clockwise from back): Michael Perez, Alison Garcia, Zaire Anderson, Imani Graves and Noah Mitchell.