



celebrating art in the everyday.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCT. 17, 2013

**NEWLY CREATED HOPEWELL VALLEY ARTS COUNCIL
CALLS ON CITIZENS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CELEBRATE ART IN THE EVERYDAY**

(HOPEWELL) – With a call to the citizens of the Hopewell Valley to “celebrate art in the everyday,” the newly-created Hopewell Valley Arts Council is embarking on the first of a series of inaugural initiatives to give all kinds of art a permanent home and high visibility in the Hopewell Valley, starting with a “stampede” of fiberglass oxen that will roam through the Valley.

A grassroots non-profit organization, the Council works to inspire the creation and implementation of a wide variety of arts programs, educational classes, events, performances and celebrations. The Council’s guiding principle is that the arts sustain and enhance the health, happiness and vitality of the Hopewell Valley community and beyond.

The HV Arts Council’s first initiative, “The Stampede,” – a collaboration of big and small, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, schools, families and individuals – is a public art project featuring life-sized fiberglass oxen which will be decorated by professional and amateur artists and placed in public spaces throughout the Valley, which includes Hopewell Borough, Hopewell Township and Pennington Borough.

Artists and the public are invited to attend a meeting Wed., Oct. 30 from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. at the Hopewell Valley Vineyards, 46 Yard Rd. in Pennington, to learn more about the Stampede.

“We want the Stampede to raise awareness of the Hopewell Valley Arts Council, raise funds for our programs, establish a community arts space, bring our communities together around a communal artistic celebration, and celebrate the diversity and depth of artistic talent in the Hopewell Valley,” said Betsy Ackerman, co-chair of the Hopewell Valley Arts Council.

Arts Council Co-Chair Randee Tengi added, “The Hopewell Valley Arts Council cultivates creative exploration and grows awareness through a wide variety of visual, literary, culinary and performing arts events that demonstrate the breadth of talent residing in the Valley... Right now we are pursuing funding and/or creative partners to help us give the arts a permanent home in the Hopewell Valley and help all Hopewell Valley residents celebrate art in the everyday.”

The oxen will be ready for decorating in February 2014, and the first decorated oxen should appear in the summer of 2014, roaming the Hopewell Valley landscape in a variety of public spaces, from quaint downtowns to local neighborhoods and along rural roadways.

“This accessible, fun, highly visible initiative is designed to highlight the diversity and depth of artistic talent in the Hopewell Valley, build community through art, and, of course, to make people smile,” said Ackerman.

Established this year by Hopewell Valley residents who share a passion for the arts, the HV Arts Council is dedicated to using art to nurture a vibrant and involved Hopewell Valley community. The Arts Council’s guiding principle is that art sustains and enhances the health and well-being of a healthy community and everyone who touches and is touched by that community.

The idea for this public art exhibit was born in Zurich, Switzerland, and has been successfully replicated in cities throughout the United States. These projects serve as catalysts for community-building in a fun, non-political way. An ox was chosen as the icon of the Stampede as it is both a symbol of Hopewell Valley agricultural traditions and was made famous by a Super Bowl bet between New Jersey Governor Tom Kean and Colorado Governor Romer in 1987 – a Jersey Fresh seafood vs. Angus steer, depending on who won the game. When the Giants won, Governor Romer chose instead to send a live steer, which was proudly accepted by Kean, who then brought the steer along when he broke ground for the NJ Museum of Agriculture. The steer, dubbed “Giant,” lived out his years at the Howell Living History Farm in the Hopewell Valley, plowing fields and hauling carts.

For information on how to apply to decorate an ox, how to sponsor an artist, or how to volunteer, please email hvartscouncil@gmail.com.

About the Hopewell Valley Arts Council

The Hopewell Valley Arts Council seeks to enrich and unify the existing artistic culture in Hopewell Valley and increase awareness and appreciation of art in the community. HV Arts Council’s programs and events cultivate and support all creative exploration and expression, including the visual, culinary, literary and performing arts. Generously supported by Founding Sponsors Morehouse Engineering, Capital Health, Hopewell Valley Community Bank and Betty Wold Johnson, the HV Arts Council depends on the energy and talents of the residents of Hopewell Valley and encourages participation from both artists and the community in celebrating art in the everyday. For more information, visit www.hvartscouncil.org.

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