

FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 31ST ANNIVERSARY WITH HORSES AND ARTS FOR ALL AGES

More than 50 groups will help kids of all ages paint, sculpt, dance, sing and celebrate horses, 12-4 p.m. Saturday, June 7. The downtown festival encompasses Jay Street, the area around City Hall, and the Jay Square gathering place at 104 Jay St.

For the 31st anniversary of this family favorite, organizers decided to celebrate equines in several special ways, noting that the Belmont Stakes Racing Festival is happening in Saratoga on the same weekend. "People can help collage a life-size horse, create horsehead ornaments, paint a mural or even engage in some horseplay with the YMCA," said Betsy Sandberg, chair of the Kids Arts Festival planning committee. "We'll be horsing around with new activities."

A new photo selfie station celebrates the bicentennial of the Erie Canal, with artist Bianca DiLella. "The Mule Named Sal" is a community-based participatory project, facilitated by DiLella and brought to the festival with the support of miSci, which will incorporate the artwork into other community events later in the year.



The Schenectady Greenmarket will offer flower pots for painting.

Attendees may also:

- Get the feel of a pottery wheel, run by CREATE Community studios.
- Learn how to play an electric guitar with Alec, Michael and Raya from the Be the Best you Can Band.
- Create butterflies and dragonflies with Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- Learn how to drum with Zorkie Nelson and members of the Pan African Youth Orchestra.
- Create their own pin-back button at Bear + Bird Boutique.
- Learn about colonial crafts with the Schenectady County Historical Society and make a whirligig to take home.

In the Jay Square gathering space, imaginative performers and student groups are booked to entertain the crowd. The Oneida Middle School Guitar Club will open with a concert at 12 p.m. followed by a short performance by dancers from Myers Ballet School. Myers hosts an open house at their 418 Liberty Street site from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Other groups at Jay Square include Zorkie Nelson and members of the Pan African Youth Orchestra, performing several songs from their repertoire; dancers from Narthana School of the Arts; circus artist Benjamin Domask-Ruh; and Hamilton Hill Arts Center youth showcasing clothing they designed or adorned.



A songwriting station pairs musicians with kids who have lyrics that just need a melody.

Chris Thomas and the Ongwe'hon:wehkah Dancers provide the finale to the day, performing Haudenosaunee social dances. These dances, such as the round dance, rabbit dance, old moccasin dance and canoe or fishing dance, honor the traditions and culture of the Haudenosaunee.

Presented by the ElectriCity Arts and Entertainment District, all activities are free thanks to funding from the New York State Council on the Arts, a Schenectady County Legislature Arts and Culture Grant, MVP Health Care, The Schenectady Foundation, Stewart's Shops, dozens of businesses and more than 60 individuals.

The rain location is inside Proctors at 432 State Street.

Complete activities, entertainment and sponsors are on the festival website at www.kidsartsfestivalschenectady.com. Franklin and Jay streets around Schenectady City Hall will be closed to traffic and parking during the festival. Complimentary parking is available along nearby streets, in public parking lots and at the Broadway garage.

For parking locations and information, visit www.parkschenectady.com.



Educators with the Hamilton Hill Arts Center will bring a variety of projects for people to make.



The Schoharie River Center brings samples of water and the things that live in our waterways with special telescopes for kids to see them up close.

Kids Arts Festival



Maureen Neufeld of the Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corp will again have all the materials people will need to make tissue paper flowers.