



# TAKES FLIGHT IN FOURTH YEAR

**It was cold and gloomy in March when staffers at the Electric City Barn were brainstorming what projects to bring to Art in Bloom at the Schenectady Greenmarket from May through October.**

“It was great to think about the warm days being at Jay Square last year, especially in June when we had a rainbow theme,” said McCauley Canizzo, executive director of Albany Barn Inc. which also operates the Electric City Barn on Craig Street.

Haylie Dixon, the events and programming coordinator of Albany Barn Inc. agreed.

“When I think of spring, I think of butterflies, growth, and new beginnings,” Dixon said. “Making origami butterflies is a great way to connect with new people and I wanted to share that with Art in Bloom.”

Dixon will bring all the patterned papers people need to create and take home their own version of monarchs, swallowtails, or admirals at the Schenectady Greenmarket May 17. While the popular farmers market takes over the streets around City Hall from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Art in Bloom will end at 1:30 p.m.

“So many of our projects feature painting and we don’t want people to expect they can begin painting at 1:55 p.m.,” said Betsy Sandberg, who chairs the planning committee that dreams up the schedule for weekly art offerings.

All supplies are free, and artists receive stipends for their time, thanks to funding from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and the Schenectady Foundation. Also, a special grant from the Upstate Coalition for a FairGame helps to bring Circus Splendiferous to the June 7 Greenmarket after appearing at the June 6 Kids Arts Festival.



Keisha R. Stovall poses with a few of the 50+ paintings of fireworks displays participants created June 30, 2024.

This special section of the Greenmarket is in its fourth year and Market Manager Ariel White had difficulty describing it. “Art in Bloom is a space to rest, a space to learn, and a space that allows creativity to flow around and through you,” White said, laughing at how one space can be so many things.

That is because Art in Bloom has become synonymous with Jay Square, its home during May through October since 2024. Art in Bloom’s first year of operation in 2023 was on the sidewalk in front of 104 Jay Street, as it was being turned into a green space after sitting vacant since a tragic Jay Street fire in 2015 claimed four lives.

Mary Jane Shave coordinates the community outreach aspects of the Schenectady Greenmarket. She notes that Art in Bloom brings something special for shoppers and vendors of all ages. “It’s a wonderful surprise to see what will happen each week,” Shave said. “Whether it’s sculpture, painting, or music, whether it’s contributing to a piece of community art, or making something you can take home, there is something for everyone.”



Grace Ferris had three activities on one table during an autumn event Sept. 21, 2025.



Eisha Stovall helps children find the correct beads for their bracelets at Art in Bloom in 2025.

Keisha Renee Stovall is one of several city artists who have been involved since the first year. She has helped create mandalas, firework paintings, patriotic streamers, flowers, gratitude trees, and zentangles. A portrait artist since 2000, she believes creating something is a gateway to inner peace.

“So many people are afraid to try painting,” Stovall said. “I really enjoy empowering people of any age, helping people with basic techniques and helping them to focus on something just for themselves.”

Electric Cart Barn will lead a Pride Celebration June 14, which happens to be flag day, so all the supplies needed to create a flag will be available. Textile artist Sarah Boink will coordinate a community weaving project and chalk will also be available for people to decorate the sidewalks.

The Electric City Arts & Entertainment District organizes the activities for the series, held in the Jay Square gathering space across from City Hall.

Hair braiding techniques will be featured on the weekend of Juneteenth — tradition bearer D’Vonne Faulks of Amsterdam will bring a mannequin and demonstrate different braiding techniques to people of all ages June 21.

“Hair braiding is such a vital tradition in African American culture,” Faulks said. Braiding dates back thousands of years to Africa, where hairstyles symbolized community status, age, and identity. New York Folklore is assisting with bringing Faulks to Art in Bloom.

Art in Bloom began April 26 and will continue through Oct. 25 with a special Pumpkin Party. That grand finale is often a highlight, White said. The entire space is decorated for autumn and small pumpkins are available for kids to decorate to take home. At a designated hour, The Trojan Horns lead a costume parade all around City Hall so folks and pets of all ages, can strut their stuff and show off their imaginative outfits.



Bianca DiLella, aka the Paint B, works on community murals. This year she’ll be at Art in Bloom May 24, July 5, and Aug. 9

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