



Grand Street Community Arts

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Image: "Downtown Harvest"
Caroline Corrigan, Acrylic on Wood. 2010.
Presented in "BoardedUp" 2010.



March 28, 2016 ALBANY, NY... Three institutions in Albany's Mansion Neighborhood invite the public to attend the first **Alternative Albany Open House** on **Saturday, April 2, 2016** from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. Part of a larger effort to expand engagement with this historic area, and also an invitation for the larger community to rethink the identity of Albany, organizations participating in the event are: Grand Street Community Arts, the Free School, and Radix Ecological Sustainability Center.

“The word ‘Albany’ has become synonymous with political corruption, but Albany is not the government and it is not a problem,” says Alexis Bhagat, Executive Director of Grand Street Community Arts. “Albany is a living, breathing city with so much to offer. This event serves to showcase just some of the wonderfully radical things going on in Governor Cuomo’s neighborhood.”

[Grand Street Community Arts \(GSCA\)](#) located at 68 Grand St., will host an [open house](#) from 12 p.m. until 1 p.m. Enjoy a peek into the historic St. Anthony’s Church and see how it is being transformed (again!) into a center for the arts. This doors of this 12-year old institution have been closed since 2012. From 2004-11, GSCA presented art, music and classes, with a focus on children, youth and families. Since 2012, GSCA has been focused on building renovation and supporting the **YouthFX** summer film-making workshop in expanding into an independent organization with year-round programming. GSCA is working to re-open the building this year, and will serve as a hub for community, arts and culture--a venue for performances, exhibitions and gatherings.

The Albany Free School, located at 8 Elm St., will host an [open house](#) at 12 p.m. until 2 p.m. Founded in 1969 by Mary Leue, the Albany Free School is the longest-running inner-city independent alternative school in the United States. The Free School provides unique alternatives to traditional models of education, offering families a radically child-centered and self-directed approach to learning. Visit to see this [progressive model of education](#) at work and see how it is true community-based schooling. **Come early to enjoy breakfast specials and baked goods at the Free School’s “Sweet Buns Cafe” from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

The [Radix Ecological Sustainability Center](#), located at 153 Grand St., will host an [open house](#) from 1 p.m. until 3pm (or later.) “It is possible to meet human needs while simultaneously restoring ecosystems,” says Radix Center founders, **Scott Kellogg** and **Stacy Pettigrew**. “Good environmental stewardship is rewarded by better health, wholesome food, and strong communities.” The Radix Center teaches practical skills that can be applied to create environmental and economic sustainability. Emphasis is placed on issues of food security, health, and the remediation of contaminated soils. The urban environmental educational center demonstrates environmental technologies and sustainable micro industries in today’s cities. Tour the center and its solar heated bioshelter greenhouse that contains an integrated food production system consisting of fish, plants, chickens, goats and more!

U.S. Attorney for the Southern District, **Preet Bharara**, recently visited Albany this past February and regularly used the word ‘Albany’ as a synonym for a State government marred by corruption. “What’s been going on in New York state government lately is simultaneously heart-breaking, head-scratching and almost comic...” said Bharara, in a WAMC live broadcast according to [The Saratogian](#). “**Albany** is unquestionably suffering from a crisis of corruption and that is part of the reason why I am here talking to all of you.” Contrary to Bharara’s remarks, what’s going on at the alternative institutions of Albany’s Mansion Neighborhood is heart-warming, visionary and sensible. The Mansion Neighborhood is an urban utopia offering solutions for a world in crisis and that is part of the reason why the public should come visit this **Alternative Albany**.

LINKS:

Grand Street Community Arts
<http://grandarts.org/>

The Albany Free School
<http://www.albanyfreeschool.org/>

The Radix Ecological Sustainability Center
<http://radixcenter.org/>

Images:
<http://grandarts.org/about-gsca/press-room/>

Includes Exterior photo of St. Anthony’s, Map of Mansion Neighborhood, and *Downtown Harvest*.