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Young artists offered chance to spruce up graffiti-scarred Bronx overpass

Morris Park mural contest to transform Amtrak eyesore

by [Tanyanika Samuels](#)

For years the railroad overpass at Bronxdale and E. Tremont Avenues. has been a graffiti-covered eyesore.

That's about to change.

Community leaders last week launched The Best of Morris Park Mural Contest, a beautification program to transform the mess into a proper gateway to the Morris Park community.

"This is something that's long overdue," said State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx-Westchester) who is helping lead the effort.

Students at Morris Park schools are invited to submit artwork based on one of four themes: Morris Park history and heritage; Morris Park site and landmarks; symbols of the community; or a design that reflects what Morris Park means to them.

Students from Public School 108, St. Francis Xavier, Public School 83, St. Clare of Assisi, The Van Nest Academy and St. Raymond's School are expected to participate.

Young artists have until January 6 to work on their designs. Each piece will be judged by Klein and a panel of community leaders and artists on originality and its ability to promote pride in the community.

Four winning entries will be selected to be recreated on the railway bridge abutments and walls next spring.

A professional muralist sponsored by the Bronx Council on the Arts will work with students to transform their project into a larger-than-life work of art.

Posters may be submitted to participating schools or to Klein's District Office at 1250 Waters Place, Suite 1202, Bronx, NY 10461.

The overpass is owned by Amtrak. Last week, rail line officials gave their blessing to the project.

"Amtrak is happy to assist local communities remove the blight of graffiti from their neighborhoods," said spokesman Peter Cohen.

Community leaders were equally enthusiastic.

"I think it's a great idea to beautify the community. It will give people pride in what they see," said Al D'Angelo of the Morris Park Community Association. "Hopefully it will be the start of beautifying the entire neighborhood."

The benefits go beyond enhancing the community, said Robert Ruggiero of the Morris Park Merchant Alliance.

"It will be a great project to get children involved in," he said, "[because] it will also provide an opportunity for them to learn more about the community." ■



State Senator Jeff Klein (third from left) is joined by Morris Park community leaders to announce student art contest to transform a graffiti covered site into a source of community pride at the corner of Bronxdale and East Tremont Avenues.

Photo: Viorel Florescu for New York Daily News.