

# Phoenix House

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **South Bronx Kids Fight Drugs With Art**

"Young people who choose art as a way to express themselves build their sense of personal identity and that helps them to resist the peer pressure to drink alcohol and smoke marijuana", Phoenix House prevention director Frank J. Negrón said today. "Art can save lives. It can turn around troubled teenagers. It can change attitudes." Fifteen children from the South Bronx have been participating in weekly arts instructions given by the renowned artist Jose Rios, a Bronx native, through the innovative Youth Power Community Arts program developed by Phoenix House. The arts have helped children to improve their academic standings, strengthened their family lives and their bonds to the community.

Phoenix House spearheaded the Youth Power Community Arts Project in collaboration with the Presbyterian Senior Services, Inc. caregivers program in the Bronx for the purpose of engaging the young people in positive activities that helps them to develop their social skills and creative talents while also learning about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. These children reside in one of the poorest areas of the Bronx with a high incidence of drug use, crimes and teen pregnancy. By working with the children, we hope to steer them away from risky behavior that may land them in trouble.

The children's artwork will be on exhibit, and for sale, during July 22<sup>nd</sup> thru July 29<sup>th</sup> at the Gelabert Studios, an international art gallery located at 255 West 86<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City. An Opening Reception will be held on Saturday July 22<sup>nd</sup> from 2:00pm to 4:00pm where the kids will proudly talk about their art work and experiences. The Gelabert Studios, one of New York City's most elegant art galleries, has contributed its space. This Phoenix House community project is supported by the Bronx council on the Arts, the NYS Council on the Arts Decentralization Program, and private donors.

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