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**Media Advisory: Bike-themed mural celebrates the creation of new bike paths in the Dupont and Dundas neighbourhood.**

Art Starts launches its annual Graffiti Transformation Project led by youth artists.

**TORONTO, ONTARIO (August 25, 2009)** – Art Starts is proud to celebrate the launch of a new 400 foot bike-themed mural at the intersection of Dupont and Dundas with a community gathering on Tuesday August 25<sup>th</sup> from 6pm – 8pm. The event will feature musical performances and snacks. The artists will be on hand to answer questions and provide insights into the mural.

The giant mural, funded through the city's Graffiti Transformation Program, is the culmination of four weeks of work by five youth artists and two lead artists: Joshua Barndt and Jamie Bradbury. The mural is located where the new West Toronto Railpath intersects with Dupont at Dundas and in front of the new bike lanes along Dupont. The mural which has been titled *Strength in Numbers* celebrates the Junction, paying homage to its industrial past rooted in the railway, and highlighting its ongoing development as a diverse family-oriented community. The center point of the mural depicts a diverse parade of cyclists moving forward as one under the banner "Strength in Numbers". The mural declares that only together can we forge a strong, safe and proud place to live.

"What I liked the best of the mural process was stepping back and seeing what we did, from a concept to a large scale mural. It was jus amazing." says Art Starts youth artist, Quentin Vercetty.

The youth worked to conceive and create the mural throughout the month of July with input from local residents. Over one short summer, this intersection has transformed itself from a bleak underpass to an inviting junction of bike lanes, playful mural imagery and gateway into the West Toronto Railpath's new pedestrian & cycling artery through the city.

"This mural is a gift to the residents of the Junction as well as cyclists across the City of Toronto. What was two months ago a derelict underpass has now been transformed into a mammoth outdoor gallery available to everyone 365 days a year. It's truly a beautiful thing!", says Art Starts lead artist and co-coordinator Joshua Barndt. "Working collaboratively with young people and community members on this mural was truly a rewording creative experience." Says Art Starts lead artist and co-coordinator Jamie Bradbury.

Art Starts is a charitable, not-for-profit organization engaged in arts-based community development initiatives across Toronto. Founded in 1992 by artists living in the Oakwood Vaughan area, the organization has pioneered the use of the arts as a vehicle to encourage social change in underserved neighbourhoods. Art Starts has completed many celebrated murals across the city including the nearby Pigeon mural at Davenport and Caledonia.

This project is generously funded by the City of Toronto's Graffiti Transformation Investment Program with additional support from the Toronto Arts Council and the Ontario Arts Council.

**Who:** Art Starts

**What:** Art Starts 2009 Mural Launch

A free outdoor party featuring live music, snacks and the mural artists on hand to present their brand new mural.

**When:** Tuesday August 25<sup>th</sup> 6pm-8pm

**Where:** Along the West Toronto Rail Path @ Dupont and Dundas

