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GARY, INDIANA HOSTS MICHAEL BLOOMBERG FOR A CONVERSATION ON COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH THE ARTS

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson and artist Theaster Gates showcase ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen, created as part of the inaugural Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge

GARY, Indiana – Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson and artist Theaster Gates today hosted Mike Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg LP, Bloomberg Philanthropies and Mayor of New York City (2002-2013), at ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen, for a conversation about entrepreneurship, community building, and using non-profit culture as a driver of urban revitalization.

The Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge supports cities undertaking temporary public art projects that foster creative collaboration, address civic issues, and support local economies. In 2015, Bloomberg Philanthropies selected the city of Gary as a winner in the inaugural round of the Public Art Challenge.

Since opening in November 2016 at 411 E. 5th Ave in Gary, ArtHouse has served as a civic center featuring commissioned works of visual art, offering culinary training and business development workshops, and providing cultural programming that uses food as a medium for community engagement.

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson said, “I am proud to collaborate on arts and cultural projects that play a vital role in Gary’s development and place-making.” ArtHouse has helped to fuel entrepreneurship and innovation in the city that complements our ongoing rebuilding efforts in areas like jobs, infrastructure, education and public safety.”

“Cities across the country are exploring new ways to foster community and create jobs -- development in which local art can play an important role, as Gary is proving,” said Mike Bloomberg. ArtHouse stands out as a powerful example of the value of partnerships between city governments and the creative sector.”

The City of Gary partnered with artist Theaster Gates to create ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen, transforming an underutilized downtown building into a civic hub that showcases visual and culinary arts. Gates, an internationally renowned American artist, is also a professor in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago.

“My inspiration for this project was recognizing that Gary, a city of around 70,000 people, had roughly only 30 restaurants because there had been so much disinvestment in its community, said Theaster Gates. “But there is a great food culture in the city. So, the idea of creating a cultural center that was going to do music and visual arts, but also was going to celebrate food as a cultural form, was unique and compelling to me. And by working together with local businesses, artists, chefs and members of the community, the City of Gary has created something truly special.”



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The Public Art Challenge is part of Mike Bloomberg's American Cities Initiative, a suite of investments that empower cities to generate innovation and advance policy that moves the nation forward.

In addition to Gary, Bloomberg Philanthropies' inaugural Public Art Challenge supported creative projects in Los Angeles, Calif., Spartanburg, S.C., and a collaborative team from Albany, Schenectady and Troy, N.Y. These four projects together catalyzed \$13 million for local economies, 10 million views, 245 partnerships, and 490 public programs. Bloomberg Philanthropies recently [announced](#) the 14 finalist cities for the 2018 Public Art Challenge. The foundation will select at least three winners from among these finalists later this fall to receive up to \$1 million each to execute their projects.

Today

<https://www.bloomberg.org/press/releases/mike-bloomberg-visits-gary-ind-conversation-community-building-arts/>

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