

HEARTS Seeks Help With Spring Festival

The new community organization moves forward with PortFest, a celebration of local musicians and artists.

By Adina Genn

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Plans are now underway for PortFest, an outdoor celebration of local musicians and artists, slated for May 19.

Sponsored by HEARTS (a new community organization whose acronym stands for "Helping Enrich The Arts" in Port Washington), PortFest is envisioned to be an all-day event with stages for live music, and booths showing the works of Port Washington artists, and incorporating each of the district's seven schools.

"We want to celebrate and raise awareness of the arts in Port Washington," HEARTS Founder Damon Gersh said at an information meeting Tuesday at Schreiber High School. "Port Washington has the potential to be known as a cultural center of Long Island."

The group aims to raise \$25,000 to support cultural arts programs in the Port Washington School District. This goal comes at a time when the district is looking to cut \$2.6M from its budget, and likely to affect all programming, including music and arts.

"One-hundred percent of what we do is going right into the schools," said Victor Germain, HEARTS fundraising chair.

School Liason Sheri Suzzan, director of creative arts for Port Washington public schools, said the organization's goals include long-term projects such as renovating Schreiber's auditorium, and immediate projects including a summer music program for students in the community.

In planning PortFest, organizers seek people to head up logistics, art curation and display, and scheduling. While there will be outdoor stages and displays, the festival will also feature performers in the Schreiber auditorium, including Port Washington's All-District musicians. And there will be interactive experiences, including an instrument petting zoo, sponsored by Wright Music. The group is also looking planning other booths, including one where residents can donate unwanted instruments that can be repaired for students' use.

The rain date for PortFest is May 20. Learn more by visiting www.heartspw.org.

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