



## News Release

For immediate release  
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### **Area Youth Strive to Beautify Lansing Community**

LANSING, MI. --- Driving around Lansing neighborhoods one can see the evidence of Michigan's current economic situation – dark windows, for sale signs, boarded up houses. Lansing teens are feeling the stress of the economy along with everyone else, and a group of them has decided to do something about it.

As a part of Global Youth Service Day, youth from Reach Studio Art Center's Teen Open Studio (TOS) Program will be painting murals on large sheets of plywood. These sheets will then be used to board up future houses that meet the unfortunate fate of foreclosure. About a month ago, the youth had a discussion about projects they would like to do with the skills they have been acquiring through the TOS program. The overwhelming response was to use their art for service oriented projects around the Lansing area. "I think it's important for us to get out of the studio and into the community and show that we care," says Savannah Baker, a sophomore at Everett High School. "Even though things are getting closed down and the economy's tight, we want to show that we still stand behind our city." These youth want to have ownership in their community and show others that both teenagers and art can make a difference.

After the murals are completed another teen group, Lansing Teen Challenge, will take them to board up the foreclosed houses. Bill Houghtaling, a Lansing resident, works with the Teen Challenge Program. "We wanted to do something that would beautify the neighborhoods, make them look a little nicer," he said. This project enables these two teen groups to collaborate for the betterment of their communities.

The Global Youth Service Day event will take place Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 to 5:00PM at Reach Studio Art Center located at 1804 S. Washington Ave. Any questions should be directed to Jessica Swisher, Outreach Coordinator at (517) 999-3643.