

A New View Camden, Hosts Community Event

By Alfred J. Dansbury, Sr.

The smooth jazz melody of the band, Forte Sound drifted through the air, as children painted pumpkins while their parents enjoyed apple cider and donuts. Other community residents drifted by vendor's tables, occasionally stopping to view the beautiful arts and crafts on display. This was the scene Saturday at the community event of A NEW VIEW CAMDEN. The event took place at 5th & Erie Street in North Camden.

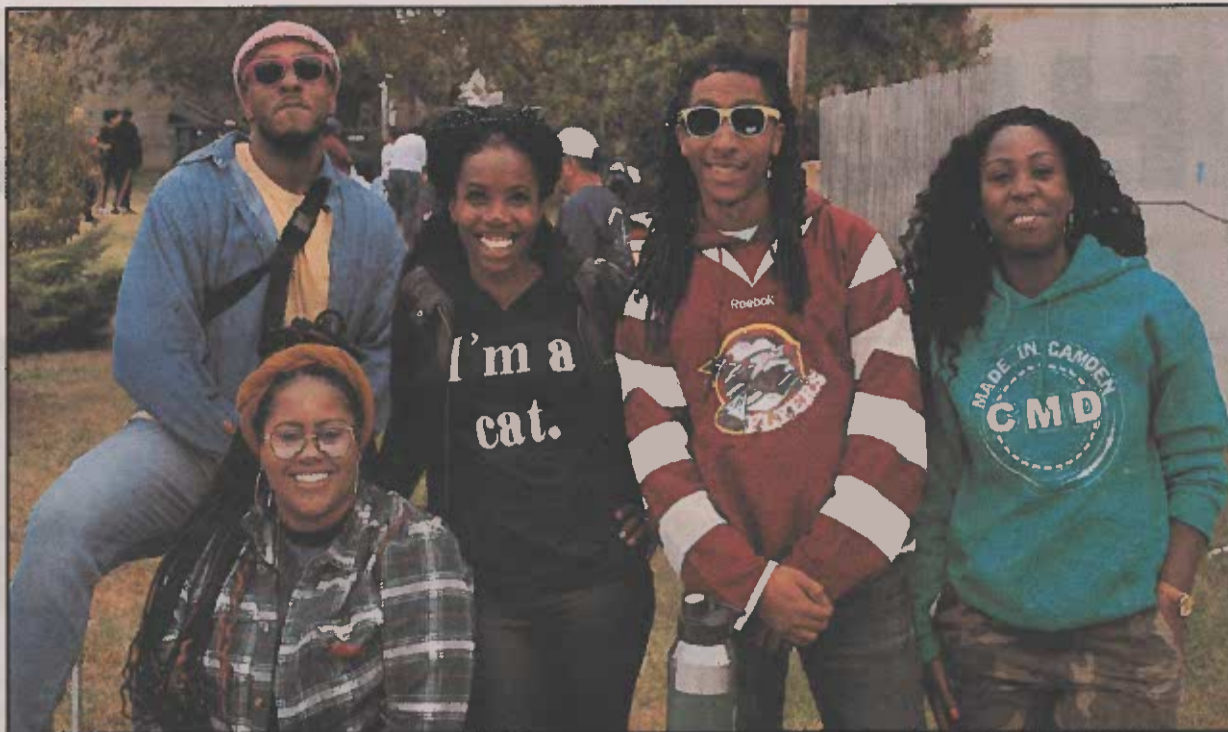
Saturday's N. Camden event brought out several artists and performers from the area. In addition to the band Forte Sound, artists Donna Dodson, and Andy Moerlein - The Myth Makers were there. Camden Preparatory High School students, The Free Thinkers performed poetry during the open mic session. The Free Thinkers belong to the after-school writers club at Camden Prep. Also, singer Joe St. Claire, and rapper David Barnes performed for the audience. DJ and sound mixers Lester London, Leo Vega and Justin Deguzman gave a masterful performance. They also gave a demonstration showing volunteers from the audience how to create, and record music using random items from the trash. They showed a young boy how an empty glass bottle can be used as an instrument to create music.

A New View Camden is an initiative between the City of Camden, Cooper's Ferry Partnership, and Rutgers - Camden Center for the Arts designed to stop illegal dumping in Camden. Illegal dumping has been a chronic problem in Camden for generations, but despite increased law enforcement efforts, the problem continues to plague our city. Records show the city spends \$4 million dollar a year to clean up this environmental problem in Camden. The focus of the project is to bring public awareness to this problem and mobilize residents to actively take a role in helping stop illegal dumping, and in beautifying and having pride in their neighborhoods.

A New View Camden is funded by a grant from the Bloomberg Philanthropies Foundation Public Arts Challenge. The foundation states, "The program supports temporary public arts projects that celebrate creativity, enhance urban identity, encourage public-private collaborations, and strengthen local communities." Camden was given a \$1 million grant earlier this year after being chosen from among applications from 250 cities. The project will transform six known illegal dumping sites into art spaces to be enjoyed by community residents. Mayor Frank Moran recently commented on the project saying, "A New View Camden is all about envisioning a future for the city, with art playing a central role in reinforcing Camden as a place for creativity and innovation. This public art program will not only help bring local are to the forefront, but it will also shine a bright light on the negative impact of illegal dumping."

The grant will fund temporary art installations, including materials, artist fees and reclamation. The sites for the art include N. Camden, Gateway, Whitman Park, East Camden, along the PATCO Speedline and Camden Greenway. The artists chosen for the project will be selected by two independent curators who will identify eighteen semifinalists who will present their work to the public. From these semifinalist, six will be selected. The deadline for artists to apply for the project was August 28, 2019. Site installations are planned for early 2020.

This event took place on Saturday and sponsored by the "A New View Camden." This initiative is funded by \$1 million grant from the Bloomberg Foundation. Photos are included.



L TO R: AYINDE MERRILL, VEDRA CHANDLER (WITH CAT MAKE UP), REET STARWING, SHANIQUE BILES, RACHEL SCARBOUGH



CRAFT TABLE



DAVID BARNES RAPPER



DJ LESTER LONDON, SAX - CARLTON, DRUM - JAMAR, KEYBOARD - ISAAH

