

## HANOVER CREATIVE AIMS TO CONNECT ARTS AND REVITALIZATION

By Bryan Evans - October 9, 2019

During a press conference on October 8, 2019, organizations, community members and government officials, expressed excitement and offered words of encouragement with respect to the Hanover Creative project taking shape at 219 Hanover Street in Trenton, NJ.

"Hanover Creative will serve artists, entrepreneurs, start up companies in the broader community and region and serve as a conduit for innovation, creation and free enterprise," said Elijah Dixon, who along with Christien Nicole Brown and a trio of local developers, has partnered with Isles, Inc., Trenton Downtown Association, and the City of Trenton, to renovate the former Studios @ 219 and create a new gallery, artist studio space, and coworking space for creative entrepreneurs. "We have 17 studio offices that will be located here, a gallery, a coworking space, a podcasting studio as well as a flex fitness space and a conference room."

"This project has been a true labor of love in so many ways," said Michael Nordquist, Managing Director, Community Planning & Development at Isles, Inc. "Seeing this project come to fruition and the commitment invested into it has been really exciting."

"I encourage you to stop by Orchard House to see how Elijah has really transformed this neighborhood," said Mayor Reed Gusciora. "It's all about the vision of what's next for Trenton — and this project will spark the revitalization of our capital city. We're really grateful for Isles and all the partners involved, and for Elijah who has really taken the baton to make sure that this project is successful."

"Arts is part of an economic engine that's going to make this city successful," said Trenton Councilwoman Marge Caldwell-Wilson. "And we have such amazing and qualified young people like Elijah and Christien in our city."

"This project will serve as a beacon of promise not just to the residents of this community but to our state," said New Jersey State Senator Shirley Turner. "It's going to take young people like Elijah and Christine to bring the city back to its former glory."

"We have a lot of government, nonprofits, churches, and schools — but I think art may be our niche," said Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman. "We may become the artist colony here in the Mercer area but even in the region. This is creative and innovative and exciting and a manifestation of a collective interest in seeing that this Capital City is on the map for good things."

Building on Trenton's Creek to Canal Creative District's vision, the project: Hanover Creative, aims to embrace arts based communities and economic development as catalysts of positive change and restored vitality. Through this project, Elijah Dixon and Christien Nicole Brown are building on the success of their first project, the Orchid House, which Elijah Dixon started to renovate in 2015.

Orchid House is a mixed use property that features residences upstairs and a rustic venue that is being retrofitted into a Cafe. For the Hanover Creative project, a block away from Orchid House, Dixon and Brown partnered with local developer Trenton Makes, Inc., led by Roland Pott. Trenton Makes Inc. has owned and operated a commercial building at 439 South Broad Street that features studios and creative office space, as well as restaurant and retail space. Dixon, Brown and Pott are all Trenton residents and all live within walking distance of the property.

"It's going to take the entire community of artists, entrepreneurs and residents to really see this to fruition and have it serve its mission and purpose," Dixon noted. "This project would not have been possible without the support Isles and its NRTC Program."

Funding for the project comes from Hanover Creative partners' investment and equity; a grant from New Jersey Manufacturers through the New Jersey Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) program administered by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs via Isles Inc.; a CDBG loan from the City of Trenton's Business Development Loan Program; a Trenton Building Improvement Incentive grant from the City of Trenton; and construction and permanent financing from Brunswick Bank and Trust.

"This building has tremendous history in the arts community," said Tom Gilmour, Executive Director of Trenton Downtown Association. "I believe that arts is going to be the vehicle to bring back Trenton."

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