

The City of Saint Paul has opened the doors to The Canvas, the city's first arts-based teen center Saturday, Sept. 12, 2009.

The Canvas is a new facility, made possible by a partnership between Mayor Coleman's Second Shift Youth Commission, COMPAS, Hamline-Midway Coalition and the Saint Paul Parks & Recreation Department.

The Canvas is a youth-run arts-based teen center conceptualized by Saint Paul teens as a place they can call their own. Based on promoting personal growth, youth development, respectful relationships and diversity, The Canvas uses art to build community and improve the lives of youth in Saint Paul and surrounding areas. The Canvas offers independent workspace, workshops and seminars in the arts, as well as discussions and events around issues important to young people.

For the past two years, Mayor Coleman's Second Shift Youth Commission has been working with community partners COMPAS and the Hamline-Midway Coalition, along with the Saint Paul Parks & Recreation Department to transform several Hancock Recreation Center rooms into the arts-based teen center.

"In addition to the wide variety of athletic programming we offer, The Canvas center enables us to provide Saint Paul teens greater access to quality arts programming and opportunities," Mayor Coleman said. "With some guidance from our partners, these teens have created a unique space that inspires creativity and fosters a love for the arts. I want to thank all our partners for their substantial contributions over the past two years to make this vision a reality."

The Canvas is largely being made possible thanks to \$46,000 in grants from the Saint Paul and Bigelow Foundations to COMPAS, Minnesota's most widely-used resource for artist residencies and community-building through the arts. Funding will be used to offer premium arts classes, programming and guest speakers at The Canvas.

The Canvas will be open Monday through Thursday from 3:30-8 p.m. for youth, grades 6 through 12. There is no enrollment fee for drop-in users, but some classes and speakers may require a small participant fee.