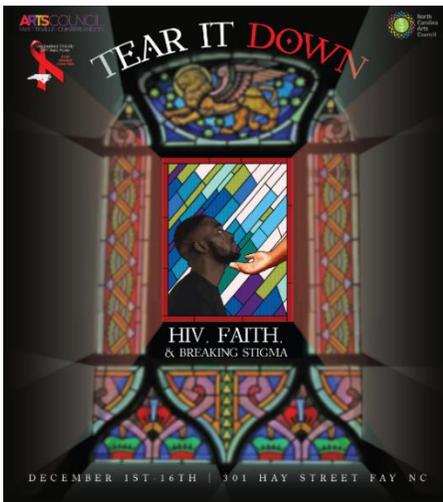


RELEASE DECEMBER 2, 2022

Initiative aims to break the stigma between Faith Communities and HIV/AIDS with the “Tear It Down” exhibit



[Fayetteville, North Carolina] – In partnership with the COMPASS Initiative Faith Coordinating Center at Wake Forest Divinity Center and the Cumberland County HIV Task Force, the Arts Council of Fayetteville|Cumberland County is supporting a community-wide initiative focused on breaking the stigma between Faith Communities and people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

In recognition of World AIDS Day, experience the works of talented artists who aspire to change the narrative and perception of HIV/AIDS in the south by encouraging community-wide healing and solidarity through the arts at the “**Tear It Down: Faith, HIV & Breaking Stigma**” exhibit that will be on display December 1 – 16, 2022 at The Arts Center, 301 Hay Street in Downtown Fayetteville. The exhibit is free and open for public viewing.

“I find it amazing that in 2022 we are still battling *stigmas*,” says Jovon McLean, curator of the “Tear It Down” exhibit. “There must be more education and campaigns centered around breaking stigma and ending the HIV epidemic. The time is present for Health Care and Faith Communities to bridge the gaps when it comes to care in our community. For most people of color, their Faith is held in high regard. Imagine the kind of change we could spark if our Faith Communities and Health Care communities actively worked together. We’d be able to bring about healing for many people; holistically.”

Art is *INFLUENTIAL*. As communities gather to experience the artwork featured in the “Tear It Down” exhibit, the stories depicted through the images on a canvas can redirect narratives by initiating dialogue with Faith Communities that may be at odds with the viewpoints, beliefs, and lifestyles of the LGBTQ community and people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Art is *HEALING*. The artwork helps to bridge the interconnectedness of Faith Communities by challenging them to ‘*break the stigma*’ through opportunities and resources for physical, emotional, and financial health and well-being accessible to LGBTQ communities and people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Art is *EMPOWERING*. The “Tear It Down” exhibit seeks to build compassion for the differences that make each individual unique. Viewers will connect with the artwork depicting personal trials, tragedies, and triumphs of the artists and people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

For more information, visit WeAreTheArts.com/stigma.

Exhibit Supported By



ABOUT THE ARTS COUNCIL OF FAYETTEVILLE | CUMBERLAND COUNTY

The Arts Council of Fayetteville|Cumberland County is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization based in Fayetteville, NC that supports individual creativity, cultural preservation, economic development, and lifelong learning through the ARTS. As a primary steward of public and private funding for arts, cultural, and historical activities in the Cape Fear Region, all affiliated programs of the Arts Council exemplify our 5 core values: Excellence, Accountability, Transparency, Collaborations, and Innovation. theartscouncil.com

In the year 2021-22, the Arts Council distributed almost \$1 million in grant funds and allocations to Cumberland County arts and culture non-profit organizations, artists, and municipalities.

Grants, programs, and services of the Arts Council are funded in part by contributions from community partners, and through grants from the City of Fayetteville, Cumberland County, and the N.C. Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources. ncarts.org