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## **Ribbon-Cutting for Newly Updated Market Square Park**

Buffalo, NY – Oct 20, 2022 – The BRRAlliance will be holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the newly-updated Market Square Park on Friday October 21, 2022 at 5:30 PM to celebrate the completion of improvements on the park that began in 2019. Over the past three years, the BRRAlliance has secured over \$52,000 worth of grants and donations to make this park a usable and user-friendly community green space and a beautiful gateway into the historic community of Black Rock.

The new features added to the park include a concrete stage and wooden benches for seating which will enable the park to be a performance venue and host community events. The BRRAlliance has also added a pollinator garden filled with native plants that will provide for the wildlife in the area as well as beautify the park with flowers during the spring and summer months. Artist Chris Piontkowski was brought back to the park to blend his “We Are…” mural on the west end of the building adjacent to the park with a new mural celebrating the significance of native plants on the environment on the east end, which will also serve as the backdrop for the stage and pollinator garden. Artist Justin Dahl, whose sculptures “The People of Black Rock” grace the park, has added window inserts into the building as well to show the community keeping watch over the park. These windows were funded by a public art grant from North District Councilmember Joseph Golombek.

This year, the BRRAlliance was the recipient of a Lowes Hometowns Grant, a program that provided 100 grants to hometown improvement projects nationwide. This grant was the primary funding source for this year’s enhancements to the park. Lowes also helped to support this project with their Red Vest Days, which brought Lowes employees from their Niagara Falls Boulevard store location to the park to do the installation of the benches and seating area as well as prep and prime the walls for the new mural addition and do some general clean up and maintenance on the property.

Additionally, funds awarded to the BRRAlliance through the Gardens Buffalo Niagara 2022 Lunenfeld Beautification Grant provided the native plants, sourced through Royal Fern Nursery, for the pollinator garden installed as part of this year’s project.

BRRAlliance Executive Director Anne McCooley notes, “The completion of these improvements to Market Square Park, will help the BRRAlliance not only realize our vision for what this park can be for the community, but it perfectly complements the recently completed work along Niagara Street, the storefront renovations that have been occurring in this area and the new development plans for other properties in this part of the city. It makes the park a beautify and fitting gateway into a community ripe for additional revitalization and investment.”

The BRRAlliance first launched this park enhancement initiative in 2019 by commissioning a mural to be painted on the building adjacent to the park and the creation of sculptures in the park. Both the “We Are…” mural by artist Chris Piontkowski and the “People of Black Rock” sculptures by Justin Dahl represent the various cultures and countries of people who have settled in Black Rock and Riverside. They show the beauty of diversity in an area that is one of the most diverse in the City of Buffalo. The BRRAlliance also provided an

oversized chalkboard for the community to express their artistic talents and they installed passive play elements and a Little Free Library for the community.

Market Square Park is part of the historic Market Square District of Buffalo which commemorate and acknowledges the once busy Black Rock Harbor market district that serviced the Erie Canal ships. The BRRAlliance leases this privately-owned park in order to make improvements and help create a community green space such as the Vintage & Makers Market that was held there earlier this month and the Trash and Treat event that they will be hosting there on Saturday, October 23.

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The BRRAlliance, Inc, is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization founded in 2011 with a mission to improve the quality of life for those that live in the Buffalo communities of Black Rock, Riverside, Grant-Amherst and West Hertel. They achieve this goal through their environmental and beautification programs and projects including managing community gardens, creating habitat spaces, installing public art and advocating for environmentally friendly improvements. They also serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development in this underserved waterfront area by leveraging investments for small business owners and by bringing or being the community voice at city infrastructure and improvements discussions. For more information about the updates to Market Square Park or other BRRAlliance programs or projects visit [www.brralliance.org](http://www.brralliance.org) or follow them on social media @BRRAlliance – Black Rock Riverside Alliance.

Lowe’s Hometowns is a corporate-sponsored program that provides grant money and support from the Lowe’s retail infrastructure to enable signature improvement projects in cities and towns across the United States. For more information about the Lowe’s Hometowns program, visit <https://corporate.lowes.com/newsroom/Lowes-Hometowns>.

The Lunenfeld Beautification Grants are yearly grants provided by Gardens Buffalo Niagara that have provided more than \$100,000 in support of beautification projects carried out by block clubs, community groups and nonprofits like the BRRAlliance throughout the City of Buffalo. For more information about the Lunenfeld Beautification Grants, visit <https://www.gardensbuffaloniagara.com/lunenfeld-grants>.

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