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THE MUSEUM AT BETHEL WOODS FOSTERS FUN AND ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH SENSORY-FRIENDLY MUSEUM DAYS

Held the second Saturday of each month for guests with autism and other complex developmental disabilities.



Caption: Modifications during Sensory-Friendly Museum Days include the implementation of a Quiet Room – stocked with pillows, weighted blankets, and reading books for guests to decompress and retreat if they are experiencing sensory overload.

April 6th, 2021 (BETHEL, NY) – Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, located at the historic site of the 1969 Woodstock festival, is pleased to announce their new initiative, **Sensory-Friendly Days at The Museum**. Made possible with support and collaboration from The Center for Discovery and New Hope Community, individuals of all ages with autism, complex developmental disabilities, or sensory sensitivities are welcome to experience the Main Exhibit, gift shop, and cafe during special early-morning hours before The Museum opens to the general public.

Beginning April 10th and occurring on the second Saturday of every month, trained staff and volunteers will be positioned throughout The Museum to engage visitors in sensory explorations, direct them to quiet spaces if needed, and answer

questions about the displays. The Museum's sound and lighting features will be augmented to allow for a more enjoyable experience and to help reduce sensory stimulation.

Bethel Woods has also created the following materials specific to the Main Exhibit to encourage familiarity and comfort. The **Sensory Map** helps visitors navigate by indicating areas of high stimulation, including noisy, dark, crowded, or bright spaces. A **Social Narrative** will help guests adjust to a potentially new social situation by describing The Museum environment, highlighting important cues, and offering examples of appropriate ways to respond. Copies of the Sensory Map as well as the Social Narrative will be available at the Welcome Desk every day that The Museum is open, in an effort to support the diverse spectrum of visitors to The Museum outside of designated Sensory Days. Materials can be downloaded in advance from the Bethel Woods website in preparation for these visits.

"Cultural institutions across the country are realizing the importance of building inclusive environments for underrepresented audiences, including those with autism and other complex disabilities," said Suzanne Morris, Senior Director, Museum Education and Creative Programs. "We know that inclusive museum experiences help nurture the social and cognitive development of these community members by promoting interaction, communication, learning, and sharing," she continued.

"It is our hope that this program will help to foster individual and community connections to Bethel Woods' historic site and cultural heritage. It's a great step for us in demonstrating our commitment to providing the public with physical and intellectual access to our museum and its resources," added Eric Frances, Chief Executive Officer.

Sensory-Friendly Museum Days will take place the second Saturday of each month from 9-10:30 AM. Reduced admission is \$10 per person with complimentary admission for caregivers or group facilitators. Tickets, health and safety regulations, and more information available online bethelwoodscenter.org/accessibility.

Museum Hours:

April 3-December 31: Open 7 days a week, 10 AM – 5 PM

Please note The Museum will open to the public at 10:30 AM on the second Saturday of each month because of Sensory-Friendly Museum Days.

During Peace, Love & Lights (November 19, 2021 – January 2, 2022): 10 AM – 10 PM.

Funding for education and creative programs has been provided by Bethel Woods members and donors and through generous gifts from foundations, individuals and agencies including: The American Gift Fund, Annelise Gerry and Family, Robyn Gerry, Nellie and Robert Gipson of the Tianaderrah Foundation, the William and Elaine Kaplan Family Foundations, and the Rhulen Loughlin Family – in memory of Trevor John Loughlin. Program specific funding has been provided by Robyn Gerry (for free Sullivan County student admission to the Museum during Explore the '60s); the Guenther Family and the Rea Charitable Trust (for P.L.A.Y. the Classics); the Phillip and Edith Leonian Foundation (for Project Identity Photography); and the John N. Blackman Sr. Foundation (for P.L.A.Y. Theater).

View a copy of our [annual report](#) or visit our website at bethelwoodscenter.org for a list of our many members and supporters.

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About The Center for Discovery

The Center for Discovery (TCFD) is a leading provider of healthcare and education services for more than 1,200 children and adults with complex conditions, medical frailties and Autism Spectrum Disorders, located 90 miles northwest of New York City. Named a Center of Excellence in 2016, TCFD has long been a leader in developing new models of care for individuals with complex conditions. Located on 1,500 acres of land in Sullivan County, TCFD houses school campuses, residences, medical and research facilities, organic and biodynamic farmland, and leased private businesses offering meaningful employment opportunities. Deeply focused on an individual's personal potential and possibilities, rather than a disability, TCFD strives to create better care and unique and challenging opportunities for the most vulnerable populations. For more information about TCFD, please visit www.tcfid.org.

About New Hope Community

New Hope Community is a not-for-profit human services organization providing supports for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Established in 1975 to serve as a nurturing and caring alternative to large institutions which were found to have violated the most basic human rights and conditions, New Hope Community has become recognized as a leading provider in the human services field. In January 2020, New Hope Community merged with Select Human Services, Inc. (SHS) of Pleasantville, NY, a not-for-profit voluntary agency providing services in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties. New Hope Community's breadth of services includes clinical and nursing care, residential services, day programming, community habilitation, self-direction, support brokers, service navigators, education, recreation and leisure activities, a robust supported employment program, summer programs for youths, and so much more. New Hope Community has always maintained a person-centered approach toward enhancing the lives of people with disabilities, and actively advocates for individual choice in a person's efforts to live, work, and participate fully in his or her community. New Hope Community and SHS, combined, provide services to over 800 people and employ more than 1,200 staff. Learn more at www.newhopecommunity.org

About Bethel Woods Center for the Arts

Bethel Woods Center for the Arts inspires, educates, and empowers individuals through the arts and humanities by presenting a diverse selection of culturally-rich performances, popular artists, and community and educational programming. Located 90 miles from New York City at the site of the 1969 Woodstock festival in Bethel, NY, the lush 800-acre campus includes a Pavilion Stage amphitheater with seating for 15,000, an intimate 440-seat indoor Event Gallery, the award-winning Museum at Bethel Woods, and a Conservatory for arts education programming.

Through the in-depth study and exhibition of the social, political, and cultural events of the 1960s, as well as the preservation of the historic site of the Woodstock Music and Art Fair, Bethel Woods educates individuals about the issues and lessons of the decade while inspiring a new generation to contribute positively to the world around them. The not-for-profit organization relies on the generous support of individuals, corporations, and foundations to develop and sustain programs that improve the quality of life in the region and beyond.

For more information please visit www.BethelWoodsCenter.org.