

Mayor Bosse Hosts Youth Mental Wellness Event



Photo courtesy city of Beverly Hills

Mayor Lili Bosse and Madhappy co-founders at the Youth Mental Wellness Event Jan. 29

BY JC CANICOSA

At a mural-making booth where attendees are encouraged to paint their feelings, Teja Wolfe, a seventh grader from Beverly Hills, painted a portrait of the earth as a pupil within the eye. She captioned her piece with

the words “There is a whole universe to explore. What are YOU waiting for?”

Her piece, among many others that local teenage residents painted at the booth, were praised by adults running the booth for their creativity and insight on the world.

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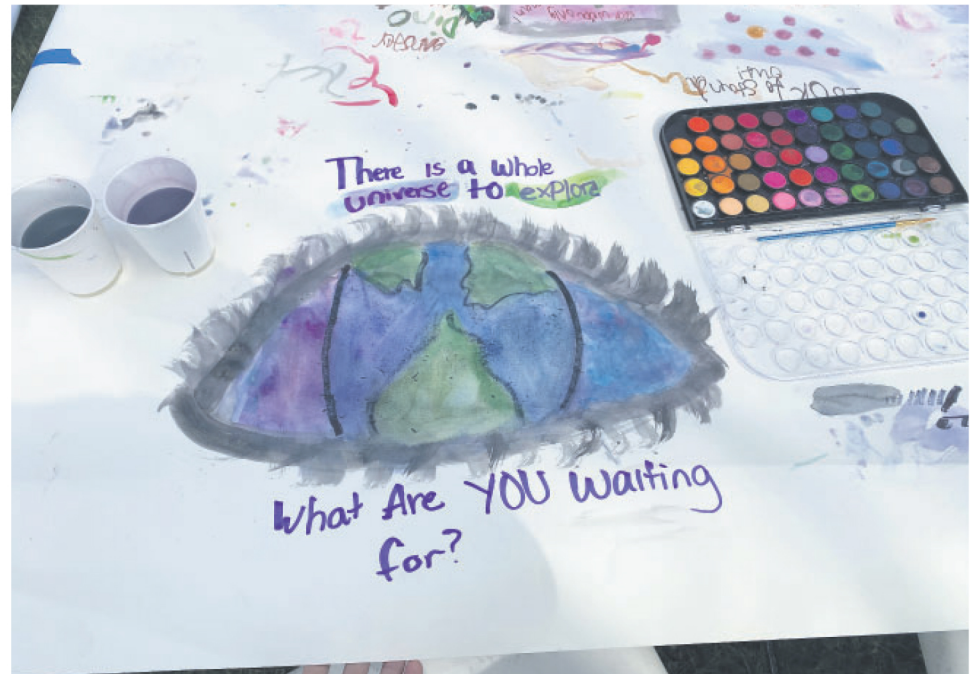


Photo courtesy JC Canicosa

Mural painting artwork from Youth Mental Wellness Event

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“I just kind of painted that to signify, like, I want to go out and explore different places,” Wolfe said.

The mural making booth was one of several arts and culture workshops at Mayor Lili Bosse’s Youth Mental Wellness Event at City Hall in Beverly Hills on Jan. 29.

Hosted alongside Beverly Hills’s Teen Advisory Committee in partnership with Bosse’s Mental Wellness Series, the event celebrated mental health awareness and invited patrons to partake in several kinds of activities and programs – all of which were geared toward allowing people a comfortable, safe space to express themselves and their emotions.

The event also featured a keynote speaker portion, featuring Bosse along with Peiman Raf and Mason Spector, co-founders of Madhappy – a streetwear line founded to encourage discussion about mental health – and alumni of Beverly Hills High. The speakers presented to a crowd of about 50 people at City Hall.

“We noticed there had never been a brand that made it their mission to really make mental health part of daily conversation,” Raf said, so he wanted to create a brand “that makes it cool to talk about your mental health.”

The brand has reached immense popularity, with celebrity partnerships like LeBron James and Cardi B as well as brand partnerships like the New York Yankees and Ugg.

“One of the important things to remember is that even though we all have different experiences, the feelings are the same,” Raf said. “You notice the sad feeling is the same feeling that we all feel whether the situation that happened to us is different.”

Bosse added that she understands the younger generation’s difficulty with opening up about feelings because she felt the same way.

“Even with my closest friends, I wouldn’t necessarily feel comfortable or safe sharing that I’m having a tough day or I’m feeling sad or feeling blue,” she said. “A lot of people still at all ages don’t necessarily have the courage to share when they’re struggling.”

In 2023, about one in five Californian adults reported suffering from mental

of shame to reaching out for help.

“If you can find one person you can confide in, it can change your entire worldview,” she said.

Edward Park, the chairperson of the Teen Advisory Committee, said he believes

illness, while about 4% reported experiencing suicidal thoughts, according to a survey by Mental Health America.

American adolescents reported much higher rates of poor mental health, as 37% of high school students reported poor mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic and 44% reported they persistently felt sad or hopeless, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data from 2022.

Parisa Parnian, an Iranian American multi-disciplinary visual artist who ran the mural making booth, said the goal of her booth was to allow attendees to “connect with their feelings and also a feeling of community and a sense of belonging.”

Attendees were encouraged to paint their own works or continue creating where others had left off.

“I’m blown away at those seventh graders and how powerful their messages are to their art,” Parnian said. “It’s humbling actually to see how the young generation is so tapped into their feelings and have so many empowering messages.”

Parnian said that she hopes visitors of all ages can be inspired and learn from each other’s feelings and perspectives on the world through their art.

While older generations can find inspiration from the perspectives of younger ones, Parnian said she believes older generations can also pass along life lessons that they wished they’d known growing up.

“I really wished that when I was younger, I just knew that I was enough. And that I wasn’t always trying to look outside myself for a sense of worth,” Parnian said. “So that’s what I would offer to the younger generation.”

Marlee Porter, a junior high school student in Beverly Hills who works at Teen Hotline – a hotline for teens to talk about their problems with other teens, also worked on a booth at the event. She said after working on the hotline for about a year that she believes that the biggest reason that there’s so much teenage despair amongst her generation is because “we live in a time where there’s so much societal pressure.”

Porter said that even though resources are available to many teenagers struggling with mental health, the overbearing feelings placed on their shoulders add a level

the event went well and plans to make the street fair an annual event.

“The turnout was great. A lot of teenagers are learning a lot of great opportunities and doing a lot of great activities,” he said. ●