

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: My Buddy Bench Project “Champions of Bullying Prevention” Unveils Symbolic Art Installation at Peacock Park for Coconut Grove 60th Arts Festival, City of Miami, Peacock Park, February 12th, 2024

Exciting news is on the horizon as the My Buddy Bench Project eagerly prepares for a special endeavor and the unveiling of a Buddy Bench on February 12th at 4:30 pm. The City of Miami, in a demonstration of genuine interest in this cause, will be implementing this meaningful Buddy Bench at Peacock Park in Coconut Grove. This noteworthy development is in harmony with Coconut Grove’s 60th Annual Arts Festival.

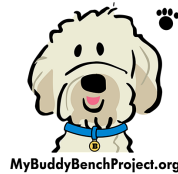
The Buddy Bench, beyond its symbolic representation of friendship, will also serve as a collaborative art installation involving the city's local children and the esteemed artist, DJ Chery. Renowned for his art and love for beautifying the community, DJ Chery will lead the design process, working hand in hand with children from the Peacock Park afterschool program to craft a unique and meaningful masterpiece.

The unveiling event will feature Dr. Alexis Friedman, a Postdoctoral fellow at South Miami Psychology Group, who will speak on the importance of kindness and the crucial role mental health plays in our community. Chris Evans, Director of the City of Miami Parks & Recreation Department, will host and present during this inspiring event that highlights art and the importance of kindness in our community.

About My Buddy Bench Project: The Buddy Bench Project, born out of a heartfelt necessity and fueled by the compassion of a young child, is making waves in addressing bullying and promoting empathy. The initiative, co-founded by a mother-daughter team, aims to create a supportive environment for children through the installation of Buddy Benches, while also advocating for essential education and mental health resources.

The project's roots trace back to a poignant moment when the founder's daughter, Victoria faced bullying in third grade at her new elementary school. Despite her friendly nature, she experienced tears and hurtful incidents on the school playground. The mother, Mary grappling with the harsh reality, initially hesitated to accept the situation. The conversation with Victoria's teacher opened Mary's eyes to the importance of addressing the issues of bullying. The Teacher stated, "What is happening is not okay, and no one deserves to feel or be treated poorly because of the way they look or behave." This sparked a transformative journey, Mary took proactive steps reaching out to school counselors and mental health specialists. This initiated a process of empowerment and healing for both mother and daughter.

Today, the daughter stands victorious, having learned to stand up and speak out against bullying. Encouraged to use her voice, knowledge, and empathy, she now aims to help other children by introducing Buddy Benches. Recognizing the need for a holistic & all-encompassing



approach, the mother-daughter duo founded their nonprofit the My Buddy Bench Project, with the help of their community.

The journey, initially marked by tears of sadness, has now transitioned into overwhelming tears of joy! The installation of the first Buddy Bench at Victoria's elementary school marked a significant milestone. And now with the City of Miami embracing the cause, there is no limit to what is to come for all the children who may be experiencing what she once did. United by the love of a community, we find hope and the strength to overcome any challenge. In the face of adversity, it is the power of kindness that conquers all!

Join us as we celebrate this significant step toward creating a more empathetic and supportive community for children through the fusion of art and the Buddy Bench. Your presence is requested to be part of this inspiring and transformative moment.

Date: February 12th

Time: 4:30 pm

Location: Peacock Park, Coconut Grove (2820 McFarlane Rd, Miami, FL 33133)

Connect with us

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Mary & Victoria

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