

A Red Circle Opens Creative Spot in Ferguson: A Youth Arts & Wellness Center Rooted in Restoration

As Ferguson nears 10 years of reflection, youth open a joyful new space for art, healing, and leadership with a public celebration May 2–3.

FERGUSON, MO, UNITED STATES, April 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the 10-year anniversary of the Ferguson uprising approaches, a new generation is making its mark—not through protest this time, but through creation. A Red Circle's Creative Spot, opening May 2–3 at 414 S. Florissant Road in Ferguson, is a youth-led arts and wellness center built for healing, joy, and community power across North St. Louis County.

The two-day event begins on Friday, May 2, at 3:00 PM CST with a ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring Ferguson movement leaders and city officials, hosted in partnership with the Greater North County Chamber of Commerce. Media are welcome to attend either Friday's ribbon-cutting ceremony or the full public celebration on Saturday, May 3, from 12:00 to 4:00 PM CST.

The two-day celebration will feature music, live mural painting, storytelling exhibits, youth-run pop-ups, and performances by teen artists and movement veterans alike. Hands-on creative stations, a preview of The Community Peace Song, and installations from A Red Circle's Nexus youth storytelling collective will anchor the event. The Creative Spot's opening signals something deeper than a ribbon cutting: a return, a reclamation, and a step forward.



A Red Circle, a North St. Louis County-based nonprofit advancing racial equity through food access, education advocacy, and community wellness.

Friday, May 2, 2025 A Ribbon Cuts, A Movement Continues

The youth are leading this. As they always have.

On Friday, A Red Circle's Creative Spot will open not with a schedule, but with a shift. Youth artists, organizers, and storytellers will gather with community members to honor a decade of resilience—and to declare what comes next. The ribbon cutting will mark more than a facility's debut. It marks the passage of leadership from the streets to the studio, from uprising to infrastructure.

These are the same voices that helped shape history in 2014—many of them just teenagers then. Today, they step forward as muralists, musicians, wellness advocates, and program leaders. Jessica Johnson, now Creative Spot Coordinator, was only 19 during the Ferguson uprising. She is now leading the vision for what this space becomes.

The evening will include youth performances, community reflections, and a guided tour of the facility—featuring early exhibits and a preview of The Community Peace Song, an original track created entirely by youth inside the space.



Erica R. Williams, Executive Director of "A Red Circle" nonprofit organization and national food justice advocate.

“

A Red Circle's Creative Spot is where a paintbrush becomes protest, a drumbeat becomes healing, and youth reclaim their power through art. This is what community restoration looks like.”

Erica R. Williams, Executive Director, A Red Circle

Saturday, May 3 – The People's Celebration: Joy as Infrastructure

Saturday's public celebration is more than a grand opening. It is a generational declaration of what's possible when youth are trusted and resourced to lead. Attendees will walk into a living exhibition—murals taking shape, poetry in motion, youth entrepreneurs selling original work, and families reclaiming space built with them in mind.

Creative Programming Ahead:

A Red Circle's Creative Spot will offer ongoing programming designed to nourish, connect, and

empower:

- Weekly Creative Drop-Ins – Fridays from 12–5 PM beginning May 9
- Drumming 4 Peace – A summer music and wellness camp, July 14–18
- Kwanzaa Stage Show Rehearsals – Leading up to The Village It Takes on August 16
- Art Healing Workshops – Launching January 2026

Programs center creativity as care, storytelling as leadership, and culture as community defense.

Why Permanent Spaces Matter:

The Creative Spot isn't just a place to make art. It's a permanent sanctuary for voice, for memory, and for youth expression—especially in times of uncertainty. During the Ferguson uprising, with schools shuttered and grief swelling, young people found refuge in libraries and ad hoc classrooms where art became language. The need for creative space wasn't temporary. Neither is the solution.

That permanence came to life recently when a lead artist didn't show up for a session of The Community Peace Song. Youth participants didn't wait. They stepped in. They led. A poem turned into a chorus. A baby's laugh became rhythm. What emerged was community healing in real time—and that's exactly what this space is built for.

A Movement Grows Up:

Many of the young people who marched in 2014 are now leading the systems they once protested. Jessica Johnson was 16 when the Ferguson uprising began. Today, she co-leads programming alongside her mother, Erica R. Williams—founder of A Red Circle and a nationally recognized voice in food justice and racial equity.

"This isn't about commemorating a tragedy," Jessica said. "It's about claiming joy. It's about investing in the everyday magic of our kids and showing them that healing is their birthright."

"I get to paint my story on the wall," said Layla, 14, one of the muralists featured in the opening exhibit. "Now people see my work and ask me what it means. That makes me feel like I matter."



Jessica Johnson, Director of A Red Circle's Creative Spot, takes the mic to record vocals for "The Community Peace Song"—an original youth anthem rooted in unity, healing, and Black joy. (photo credit: Caitlin Ung)

The opening of The Creative Spot reflects a generation that never stopped organizing—it simply evolved. From marches to murals, from grief to growth, the spirit of the Ferguson movement lives on in every paint stroke, lyric, and lesson being shaped within these walls.

A Model for the Nation:

A Red Circle has secured more than \$3 million in investment across its ecosystem of programs, including The Creative Spot. With support from national foundations, local partners, and community donors, the organization is actively sharing its [sponsorship packet](#) with funders and partners while preparing a public impact report and short film documenting the center's first year.

The space stands as a national model for what restorative infrastructure can look like—especially in places still carrying the weight of protest and displacement.

The spirit that carried the Ferguson movement ten years ago remains at the core of this work: It is our duty to love and support one another. That belief lives in this space—in color, in rhythm, and in the leadership of those who never stopped showing up. A full [digital press kit](#) is available upon request.

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