

# CONNECT THE LOTS

2016

ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE 2016  
CTL SEASON

CONCERTS & TALENT SHOWS — HORIZON HEALTHY CAMDEN  
CAMDEN FIT — ART & POP-UP PROJECTS — SIGNATURE EVENTS



**CONNECT THE LOTS** IS A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INITIATIVE TO ACTIVATE CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY'S VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED SPACES







**COOPER'S FERRY  
PARTNERSHIP**  
LIVE | WORK | INVEST | CAMDEN

The goal of **CONNECT THE LOTS** is to engage Camden residents in neighborhood transformation, create safe nodes of activity, and to bring vibrancy to Camden's corridors and public spaces. Connect the Lots (CTL) is a collaboration between Cooper's Ferry Partnership and the City of Camden. CTL was piloted in 2014-2015 in the North Camden and Cooper-Grant neighborhoods. Since that time, CTL expanded to additional Camden neighborhoods and incorporating themes of health and sustainability in its placemaking programs, including new partnerships with Get Healthy Camden and the Camden SMART Initiative. The 2016 CTL season is generously funded by the Kresge Foundation, Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, Campbell Soup Foundation, Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, William Penn Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program via St. Joseph's Carpenter Society.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**2 CONCERTS & TALENT SHOWS**

**4 HORIZON HEALTHY CAMDEN**

**6 CAMDEN FIT**

**7 ART & POP-UP PROJECTS**

- + A NEW SPIN AT RPP
- + "OUR SELF"
- + NORTH CAMDEN COMMUNITY POOL
- + "A REAL PAGE TURNER"

**11 SIGNATURE EVENTS**

- + LET'S MOVE! OLYMPICS DAY
- + COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR & CONCERT
- + CAMDEN NIGHT GARDENS
- + CAMDEN JAM

**22 LOOKING FORWARD**



# OUTDOOR CONCERTS & CAMDEN'S GOT TALENT SHOWCASE

Music is a powerful aspect of one's culture and is intrinsically tied to a person's overall health. Music can help soothe people with emotional pain, gets people to dance and sing and improves mental health and sharpness.

Connect the Lots continued its popular Third Thursday Outdoor Concert series in the Cooper-Grant neighborhood and expanded to East Camden with a First Friday Outdoor Concert series. In all, over 300 people enjoyed outdoor music and other family activities at Johnson Park and Dudley Grange Park in Camden. Musical acts included local up-and-coming talent and established regional acts.

As requested by the community, Connect the Lots put on a Camden's Got Talent showcase for one of the Third Thursday Concerts. Sixteen Camden performers showcased their talents to the community and to a panel of judges comprised of local artists and entrepreneurs. Forte Jazz, an instrumentalist group of high school students, won first place at the event.











Foundation for New Jersey

# HORIZON HEALTHY CAMDEN SERIES

The Horizon Healthy Camden Series brought fitness classes, health and wellness education, lunchtime concerts, outdoor movies and family fun nights to Roosevelt Plaza Park. The series was designed to create a healthier Camden by providing families with opportunities for safe, outdoor, active living.

This summer the Horizon Healthy Camden Series provided families with fun and engaging opportunities to get healthy TOGETHER at Roosevelt Plaza Park. On Tuesdays the series offered lunchtime concerts, on Wednesdays the series offered a boot camp exercise class and on Fridays the series offered outdoor movies and family fun nights.









# FITNESS CLASSES & CAMDEN FIT

For the 2016 season, free outdoor fitness classes expanded to four different locations on four days, giving Camden residents a variety of fitness options to enjoy all summer. On Tuesdays, residents could go to Johnson Park to enjoy Yoga classes from the Kroc Center Camden. Bootcamp-style workouts were held on Wednesdays and Thursdays at Roosevelt Plaza Park and Wiggins Waterfront Park, respectively.

On Saturdays, residents could enjoy free Aqua Zumba classes at the North Camden Community Pool hosted by the YMCA of Burlington and Camden counties. Instructors of each class tailored their classes to all types of fitness levels, allowing a beginner and an expert to work out and motivate one another side by side. Additionally, Wiggins Waterfront Park converted into a Fitness Loop trail with over a dozen exercises based upon the Waterfront Bootcamp class regiment. Over 200 residents enjoyed the fitness class offerings in 2016.



A vibrant poster for 'FITNESS CLASSES' featuring a woman in a purple tank top and grey leggings in a yoga pose. The text 'FREE!' is prominently displayed. The 'CONNECT the LOTS' logo is at the bottom left, and the website 'WWW.CONNECTTHELOTSCAMDEN.COM' is at the bottom right.

**CONNECT the LOTS**

**WWW.CONNECTTHELOTSCAMDEN.COM**

<p>6 PM - 7 PM TUESDAYS (JUNE TO AUGUST) <b>YOGA @ JOHNSON PARK</b></p>	<p>6 PM - 7PM THURSDAYS (JUNE - AUGUST) <b>BOOTCAMP @ CAMDEN WATERFRONT FITNESS LOOP</b> MEET @ WIGGINS PARK MARINA</p>
<p>6 PM - 7PM WEDNESDAYS (FROM JUNE - AUGUST) <b>BOOTCAMP @ ROOSEVELT PLAZA PARK</b></p>	<p>10 AM - 11 AM SATURDAYS (JUNE 25 - AUGUST 27) <b>AQUA ZUMBA @ NORTH CAMDEN COMMUNITY CENTER POOL</b> BATHING SUIT REQUIRED</p>

Logos at the bottom include: City of Camden, Horizon, Rutgers, Cooper's Ferry, Get Healthy Camden, and Camden County.





# ART & POP-UP PROJECTS

Public art exhibits help to personalize impersonal spaces through energetic displays of self-expression and creativity. Connect the Lots curated four large-scale art installations in 2016.



## A NEW SPIN AT ROOSEVELT PLAZA PARK

For the third consecutive year, a pop-up feature was installed at Roosevelt Plaza Park to enhance the great plaza in front of Camden's City Hall. Designed and constructed by the firms Group Melvin Design and Sikora Wells Appel, the new healthy pop-up was a component of the Horizon Healthy Camden Series. Putting a 'spin' on healthy living, the installation allowed users to power treadle pumps to activate water jets and turn fountain wheels made of recycled bicycle parts. The treadle pump feature was surrounded by an edible herb garden containing lavender, mint, and lemon balm, reinforcing the message of approaching health through a wide lens.



## 'OUR SELF'

Connect the Lots with New American Public Art developed a large-scale interactive art exhibition titled 'Ourself'. Ourself is a site specific responsive artwork installation that shares the positive inner voices of Camden using wood and steel. To make the art piece a reality, more than 40 interviews were conducted with Camden residents from various neighborhoods and backgrounds throughout the city. The interviews focused on themes of motivation and ambition, in hopes of inspiring other residents who hear the stories through the installation.

For those visiting the installation at its two locations (Roosevelt Plaza Park and the Kroc Center), 'Ourself' came to life as soon as visitors enter the art piece. By simply stepping inside the unique space, audio clips from each of the Camden residents' interviews were activated and played. From a visual standpoint, the infinite mirrored space that makes up the art piece symbolizes the many voices of the community that define Camden's story and ourselves as residents.





## NORTH CAMDEN COMMUNITY POOL

Vibrant public spaces, even the most unexpected ones, are extremely important for a healthy city. In 2016, Connect the Lots, in collaboration with Group Melvin Design, local community members and a local artist collective, known as the Super Poor Kids, reimagined an urban public pool facility in the North Camden neighborhood with “pop-up” enhancements. The North Camden Community Pool did not feature any public seating or shade, and the gray pool house and cold concrete pool decks did not create a welcoming atmosphere for residents at the pool.

The “pop-up” pool introduced low-cost and easy to implement amenities and programming to give the North Camden community a vibrant place to enjoy. These amenities included a mural designed by the Super Poor Kids, comfortable seating, ample umbrellas, planters and palm trees, and free Aqua Zumba fitness classes on Saturdays throughout the summer. Thanks to these low-cost improvements, neighbors now have a lively and shady place to connect with one another while watching their children swim. Community members can now exercise on Saturday mornings with Aqua-Zumba. The pool now welcomes all users, not just swimmers.



## “A REAL PAGE TURNER”

CTL partnered with the Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts on a project entitled, A Real Page Turner, a sculptural installation to be created in the Art Box using re-purposed books that local libraries can no longer circulate, but do not want to destroy. Each week in July and August, Camden youth from summer camps and community groups contributed to the ever-growing installation inside the Camden ArtBox, by folding a book, embellishing a bird or butterfly, or applying papier-mache. For community groups that did not have transportation, Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts staff brought an “On Tour” version of the program directly to them.

The artist used paper and papier-mache techniques to create the low-relief tree. Branches, leaves, small animals, and the tree trunk were added, using the re-purposed books as a primary material, bringing to life a scene from a children’s storybook. The branches extend across the ceiling to allow birds, insects, and butterflies to hang from the branches.

Participating groups included: Respond Senior Center, LEAP Academy, Sumner School: Book Club, Labar Day Care, Fellowship House, The Ramirez Family: Mayra, Angel, Antonio, and Aurora (North Camden), Community participants at Wednesday Open Studio Sessions and Friday Family Fun Nights in Roosevelt Plaza, and at the LEAP Academy Puerto Rican Arts Center Arts Festival. In total, 377 individuals contributed to the art installation, and over 500 people stopped by the Camden ArtBox to view the engaging work during Camden Jam.









## CTL SIGNATURE EVENT

# LET'S MOVE! OLYMPICS DAY

The traditional health fair typically mimics a trade show where participants walk from table to table to collect health information and receive basic screenings. Connect the Lots sought to create a more holistic and lively approach to health fairs that demonstrated simple exercise and healthy eating techniques right at the event. In order to interactively promote and empower families to make the healthy choice the right choice, Connect the Lots, the Camden Promise Zone and Get Healthy Camden held the Let's Move! Olympics Day on Saturday, June 25th – a day of fun activities that promote health and wellness for all people in Camden. The event also kicked-off Camden's commitment to Let's Move!, a comprehensive initiative, launched by First Lady Michelle Obama, dedicated to solving the challenge of childhood obesity by combining comprehensive strategies with common sense.

Throughout the day, attendees enjoyed mini sports games that improved a person's hand-eye coordination, low impact aerobic exercises, onsite health assessments for diabetes, eye health, and blood pressure, healthy food cooking demonstrations and presentations on how people can incorporate exercise into their schedules any time of the day. Giveaways at the event included pedometers, memberships to the Kroc Center and much more.





CTL SIGNATURE EVENT

# COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR & CONCERT

On June 10th, the Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey, Inc. (HFC) hosted its annual Community Health Fair & Concert in partnership with St. Joseph's Carpenter Society, La Parada San Juan Bautista and Connect the Lots. Over 900 people attended this impactful event that provided hundreds of families from the community with education, health-related information, and free health testing opportunities. The day was filled with energetic activities and entertainment that helped bring neighbors together and toward healthier lifestyles.









CTL SIGNATURE EVENT

# CAMDEN NIGHT GARDENS

The event attracts residents and visitors to become a meaningful part of the revitalization that has been achieved through community-driven placemaking in Camden. The event also highlights Camden's recent urban rejuvenation by creating a platform for diverse creative expression and attracting economic activity to the area.







**THE CAMDEN NIGHT GARDENS IS TRANSFORMING THE CITY'S PARKS AND OPEN SPACES INTO NIGHTTIME NODES OF ACTIVITY WITH PUBLIC FESTIVALS & NIGHTTIME TEMPORARY LIGHT, SOUND, AND PROJECTION INSTALLATIONS.**

On May 27, 2016, Camden residents joined outside visitors at Roosevelt Plaza Park at night to celebrate Camden's community pride and its great cultural and artistic capital. This year's Camden Night Gardens moved to Roosevelt Plaza Park for an out-of-this-world "Intergalactic Block Party". The Intergalactic Block Party featured art installations from Nitemind and Idée Fixe with a DJ set by Cosmo Baker and live performances from the Camden High Marching Band, the Camden Sophisticated Sisters and Distinguished Brothers, and the P.A.C.E. jazz ensemble. The evening rounded out with a host of light installations, projection-mapping, community arts activations, a locally-driven car show and the area's best food trucks. The festival succeeded in bringing together a dynamic group of artists, performers, community residents, and local restaurants.

By creating and sharing memories at events like the Camden Night Gardens, Camden residents increase their sense of pride in their neighborhoods, and as a result, the social, environmental and civic fabric of the community gets stronger. These events also dispel negative perceptions and paint a new vibrant outlook for Camden in the region.

The Intergalactic Block Party turned out to be the most successful Camden Night Gardens yet. Survey results show that the Intergalactic Block Party was well attended by both residents and visitors to the City of Camden with over 4,000 attendees enjoying the festivities at Roosevelt Plaza Park. An overwhelming majority of survey respondents gave positive reviews about the festival's theme, location, food, and activities for all ages. The trip to Roosevelt Plaza Park was a first for an estimated 400 attendees. Businesses on Market Street that normally close after 6 pm stayed open and reported positive sales on this night.

**4,000**

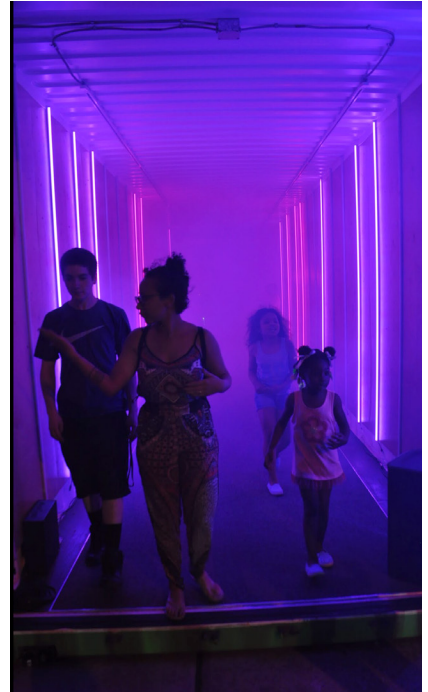
**PEOPLE ATTENDED  
CAMDEN NIGHT GARDENS**

147 people responded to a survey about the event. ¼ of people heard about the event through word of mouth. An additional ¼ heard about the event through Facebook and Instagram.



48% of people used a car to get to the event. 36% of people walked. Only 2% of people used bike or taxi to arrive at the event.















CTL SIGNATURE EVENT

# CAMDEN JAM

On Saturday, September 10th, Roosevelt Plaza Park transformed into a music, arts and cultural hub as the City of Camden, Mayor Dana L. Redd and the Connect the Lots Initiative, with the support of Cooper's Ferry Partnership, hosted the second annual Camden Jam: Arts and Music Festival – a free community celebration featuring continuous music, dance and spoken word performances.

This year, approximately 3,000 people enjoyed Camden Jam. The festival was once again hosted by Dyana Williams of Old School 100.3, and featured performances from new headlining acts – the dynamic Kindred the Family Soul and the legendary reggae group, The Wailers. Additional performances included: Nadja Nicole from NBC's "The Voice," Elvis Alvarez, Camden's Got Talent showcase winners, the Trenton Circus Squad and more. A variety of food vendors and organizations making a real difference in the City of Camden and surrounding region were also present at the festival.

Camden Jam featured a wide variety of fun, family-friendly activities for children to enjoy. The festival's Kids Zone featured bounce houses, face painting, activities provided by Camden County Library, interactive arts and crafts projects and live aquatic animals and activities from the Center for Aquatic Sciences at Adventure Aquarium. The festival also included a Health Zone, encouraging healthy family habits, as well as an Eco Zone, highlighting sustainable practices and anchored by the new interactive pop-up park space and healthy living attraction in Roosevelt Plaza Park.



# 3,000

**PEOPLE ATTENDED  
CAMDEN JAM**

110 people responded to a survey about the event. ¼ of people heard about the event through word of mouth. An additional 15% heard about the event through flyers and posters.



**35%**

of people came alone to the event



**23%**

of people came to the event with children

**76%** of respondents attended at least one other CTL event.

**22%** of respondents attended last year's Camden Jam.



“CAMDEN JAM IS ONE OF THE MANY ENGAGING COMMUNITY EVENTS THAT NOT ONLY CELEBRATES OUR CITY'S DYNAMIC ARTS AND CULTURE SCENE, BUT ALSO SHOWCASES THE EXTRAORDINARY TALENTS OF OUR LOCAL ARTISTS...”

- CAMDEN MAYOR DANA L. REDD



*Kindred The Family Soul*



*Universal Dance & African Drum Ensemble*



*The Wailers*

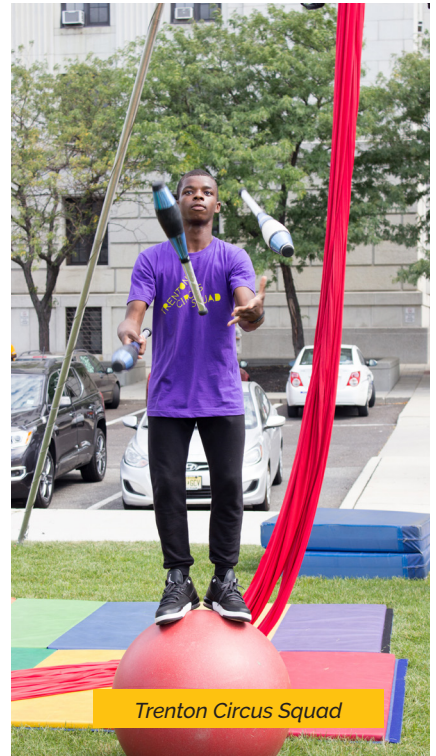


*Elvis Alvarez y la nueva fuerza de la bachata*





Camden High Marching Panthers



Trenton Circus Squad



Camden Intensity Cheer Squad



Trashzman





## LOOKING FORWARD

The 2016 Connect the Lots season was our most successful to date. With 18 distinct activities, weekly offerings of 4 fitness classes, and 2 art installations, in 8 locations throughout the City of Camden, CTL 2016 engaged over 10,000 residents—over 2,500 more people than 2015 (year 2), and over 6,080 more people than our first year. Utilizing the lessons learned each year, we look forward to continued growth of the Connect the Lots initiative as we continue to provide a positive outlet for engaging activities in the arts, health, and environment.

Looking forward CTL is exploring ways to:

- increase event/program sponsorships
- extend CTL season to include fall/winter indoor activities
- improve outreach and marketing to Camden residents
- partner with other growing resident-based programs such as the Block Supporter Initiative
- include more sports-related activities
- increase the opportunities for "amateur" resident participation
- incorporate live music into other CTL events (other than concerts)



# THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



## CTL 2016 PARTICIPANTS

Camden Sophisticated Sisters – P.A.C.E. Band – Adventure Aquarium Center for Aquatic Sciences – Dubway Reggae Band – Yung Poppa – Jazz4Soul – Maria Leonetti – Forte Jazz – Roshad Williams – Camden High School Marching Panthers – Camden Intensity Cheerleaders Dance Team – Cintron Band – Michael Hill's Blues Mob – Coast 2 Coast – Saffire Chantal- Normal Chaos – Trio Renacer – Marel Hidalgo and Friends – Trenton Circus Squad – Luis Reyes – Jay Reyes – American Born Rebels – Natalie Bermudez – Juan Gonzalez – The Wailers – Jah Dark Lamb – Elvis Alvarez y la Nueva Fuerza de la Bachata – Nadjah Nicole – Kindred the Family Soul – Rutgers Center for the Arts – Rutgers Camden Civic Scholars and Honors College Students – Respond Culinary – Trazshman – Strength – Trinity Echevarria – UCC African Dance and Drum Ensemble – Maria Smith – Volunteers from TD Bank – Cooper Medical School Students – La Unique Bookstore – CMD Clothing – My HeartBeatz Clothing – Artsy Fartsy Facepainting – Prime Expressions – Caricatures by Schay – DJ Big Chris – Lashonda Carter – F.O.O.D., Wayne Shareef – Wild Dogs International – PWI Entertainment – Camden PowerCorps – Camden County Technical School – Urban Promise BoatWorks – Sustainable Haddon Heights – Camden County Office of Sustainability – Camden County Girl Scouts – US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2 – Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority

## CTL 2016 PARTNERS

Camden County  
Camden County Police Department  
Camden County Library  
Camden County College  
Camden City Fire Department  
Camden City School District  
Camden County Library  
Camden Parking Authority  
Camden Promise Zone  
Camden SMART Initiative  
Camden Special Services District  
City of Camden - Human Services  
City of Camden - Public Works  
City of Camden - Mayor's Office  
Cooper Grant Neighborhood Association  
Cooper Hospital EMS  
Covanta  
Get Healthy Camden  
Hispanic Family Center  
New American Public Art  
Salvation Army Kroc Center - Camden  
Save Our Waterfront  
St. Joseph's Carpenter Society  
Respond, Inc.  
Rutgers University-Camden Campus  
Rutgers - Rowan University Board of Governors  
YMCA of Burlington and Camden Counties  
Waste Management

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