

Garfield's Assemble Turns Art and Technology into Tools for Youth Empowerment

In the heart of Garfield's arts corridor, Assemble is transforming creativity into opportunity through free, hands-on programs that blend art, technology, and learning. With a focus on youth and community, the non-profit is building confidence and reimagining what an equitable future can look like.



EMILY EMBREY
SAFER TOGETHER
COORDINATOR,
ZONE 5



When you come up east-bound Penn Avenue past Allegheny Cemetery and into Garfield, you are instantly greeted by a colorful mural on the side of a building adjacent to a vacant lot. It's a great introduction to the Penn Ave Arts District that has been a foundation of the neighborhood for

decades. And just across the street at 4824 Penn Ave sits Assemble, an arts and technology focused non-profit organization making a big impact.

With galleries, pop-ups, street art galore, and so much creative energy, this is the perfect location for an

organization that uses art, tech, and learning as tools to create a more equitable future. Penn Ave has been home to Unblurred, the city's longest-running art crawl, for almost 30 years, and Assemble has taken the spirit of this experience and created an entire ecosystem open to everyone in the

TOPIC: VIOLENCE PREVENTION

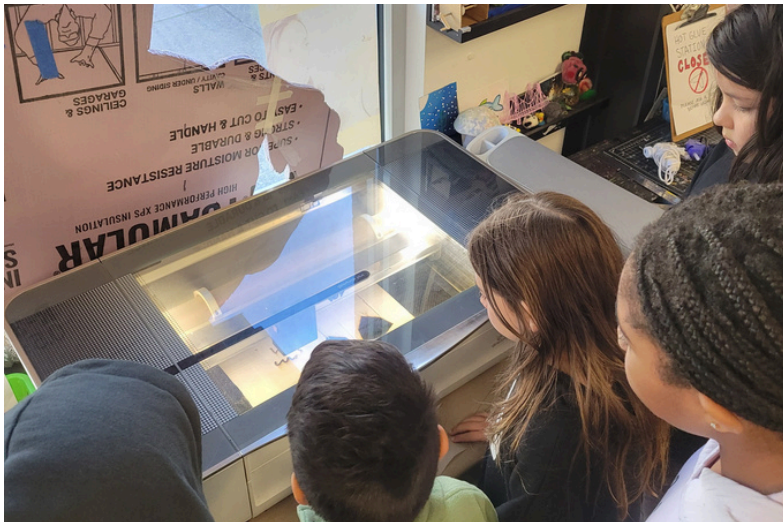
Pittsburgh region.

Assemble's mission is to build confidence through making. It's all about strengthening our creativity muscles to make the future that we want to see: one of liberation and equality. While primarily youth-focused, they also offer programming for adults.

And all of their programming uses science, tech, engineering, art, and math through a culturally relevant and contextually responsive lens.

“To heal versus to hurt (someone or ourselves) is a choice that takes a lot of work,” says Nina

Marie Barbuto, Assemble’s Executive Director and Founder. “It takes imagination, creativity, curiosity, and confidence in trying something different. Healing, creating, and communicating are integral to violence prevention and Assemble's programs.”



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The team at Assemble truly understands the various barriers that different people in the community face when it comes to making the choice to heal. As a result, all of their programming is free of charge to kids in

Garfield, including after-school programs and summer camps. Some events, like their Saturday Crafternoons, are free to all kids as a way to make the joys of expression-through-making accessible to anyone.

Assemble envisions a world where learning and creating are transformative experiences and where all people are equipped with the tools to make a difference, together. Says Barbuto, “We are practicing the future

through afterschool, camps, Crafternoons, and every time we say ‘Hello, it’s great to see you. How is your day today?’”

And they aren’t just connecting with kids at their Garfield location.

Assemble’s team also works in schools to reach kids directly, as well as partnering with other local organizations. “I love what we do because it’s really about what the kids want to see,” says Barbuto. And if you have

the chance to stop by (*maybe at the next Unblurred event on April 3*), you can see that they truly have created an amazing safe space for Pittsburgh’s youth to create, learn, and explore.

COMING UP AT ASSEMBLE: FUN THINGS TO DO

**Saturday
Crafternoons**
1-3 pm on Saturdays

FREE! Kids age 5-10

Come through on a Saturday to make fun things with local artists, eat some snacks, and create!

[Sign up here](#)

**Tuesday, May 19
Afrofuturism Day
Camp**

from 9 am -4 pm
No PPS that day due to primary elections

Let’s explore Afro-futurism as we learn about the past to create the future!

[Sign up here](#)

Thursday, May 21 - Assemble's Afterschool Bash! 3-6 pm

Celebrate creating and STEAM learning for the 2025-2026 School Year! At the event, you can pre-register for our 2026-2027 Afterschool programs.

Snacks and drinks will be available, as well as fun hands-on making activities, music, and a gallery display of all the amazing work made by Assemblers this year! [RSVP here](#)