



PRESS RELEASE

HARLEM GALLERY OF SCIENCE EXHIBITION – VIDEO GAMES: THE GREAT CONNECTOR

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Harlem Gallery of Science (HGS) launches new pop-up exhibition: "Video Games: The Great Connector" on 2/3/2024 with the goal of inspiring Black and Latinx youth and the adults in their lives to explore the academic and career opportunities in the rapidly expanding global digital gaming industry.

This FREE Exhibition is open to the public February 3 – March 30, 2024, at the Harlem School of the Arts, 645 St. Nicholas Avenue, Manhattan, Monday-Saturday 10 am to 6 pm. Reserve FREE timed tickets at HarlemVideoGamePopup.org.

Access is FREE to all. NYC teachers and administrators can reserve 1 hour and twenty-minute time slots at the Exhibition for class trips by going to <http://harlemvideogamepopup.org/>. The web site also offers educational materials that can be used before and after a visit, both in classrooms and in homes, as well as original interactive and video content that features games and their Black and Latinx designers.

To increase the public's understanding of the important role digital games are playing in the lives of today's youth, the Harlem Gallery of Science has created the Exhibition *Video Game: The Great Connector* to increase visitors' knowledge and understanding of digital games and the expanded educational and career opportunities they provide youth from underserved communities of color throughout New York City. The Exhibition will open to the public on February 3, 2024, at the Harlem School of the Arts, 645 St. Nicholas Avenue, Manhattan. The Exhibition has been created with the assistance of three advisory groups: NYC high school students, community stakeholders, and leaders in NYC's gaming world. Over 1,500 visitors are expected to participate in the Exhibition during its 8-week run.

The exhibit is organized into three sections:

CONNECTING WITH SELF allows visitors to examine how youth use games to shape their identity, manage their emotions, and acquire skills.

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY lets visitors investigate how youth use games to foster community and enhance their awareness of the world around them.



CONNECTING WITH FUTURE gives visitors a chance to explore how youth use their interests in games to connect with careers in the gaming industry.

Throughout the exhibit, visitors will play games, meet historic and contemporary figures in game design and engineering, and uncover the invisible design behind their gaming experience.

New York, New York –

Mayor Adams' administration is committed to increasing New York City's share of the rapidly growing digital game industry. In 2023, the [Worldwide Video Games](#) market was projected to reach a revenue of \$249.6 billion and grow to \$389.7 billion by 2028. In 2023, it is estimated that the [United States Video Games](#) market would reach \$68.27 billion and [employ](#) 268,698 people. Mayor Adams's "[Rebuild, Renew, Reinvent: A Blueprint for New York City's Economic Recovery](#)," calls for the City to become a leading hub for digital game development and growing its contribution to the City's economy beyond 2020, 7,600 jobs, \$762 million in wages, and \$2 billion in economic output.

"New York City has always been the center of innovation, but it is time for New York City to level up and finally become a leader in the digital gaming space," said Mayor Eric Adams in May 2022 when he announced the City's commitment of \$2 million to support the creation of the Gaming Pathways Program at City College. "It's time to take advantage of all the talent we have here in New York by investing in the future of gaming. This \$2 million investment will help us reach more than 1,000 students over the next three years and diversify the gaming field. This is how we get stuff done for our young people and for New York City!"

Eric Adams, 110th Mayor of NYC, Announcing the Gaming Pathways Program at CCNY ([Link to Gaming Pathways Press Conference with Mayor Adams: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r5t5waFYck&t=4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r5t5waFYck&t=4s))

Part of the City's efforts to increase the digital game industry in New York City was the \$2 million investment in creating the Gaming Pathways Program which integrates after-school programs in digital games design in Title I high schools program provided by Urban Arts, supports the development of the first public bachelor's degree program in digital game development at City College and includes an Educational Advisory Board to offer student internships and jobs with wrap around services provided by the Harlem Gallery of Science. The Program will reach more than 1,000 students over the next three years with the goal of diversifying employment in the gaming field.

Key Leaders in NYC have commented on the Harlem Gallery of Science and this Exhibition:

Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) Pat Swinney Kaufman said:

"Congratulations to the Harlem Gallery of Science on their upcoming exhibition, *Video Games: The Great Connector*, which celebrates the positive impact video games can have on young people's lives. This exhibition amplifies the work this administration is doing to support the digital games industry in NYC, including the creation of the Gaming Pathways Program with the \$2 million investment in the City College of New York's new bachelor's degree program in digital gaming. These efforts will create more equitable growth in the gaming field, increase job opportunities and continue to make New York City a global hub for digital gaming development."



Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, has said:

“I am proud of the innovations and advances in technology that take place in Manhattan and the immense potential these technologies have to invigorate our economy, expand educational opportunities, revolutionize healthcare, and unlock novel avenues of creativity. The growth of the digital game industry in New York City provides opportunities to redress the biases that have led to underrepresentation of people of color in this field. This Exhibition and other initiatives of the Harlem Gallery of Science are helping our youth to understand that there are tech jobs within their reach and that through the Gaming Pathways Program they can join the ranks of college graduates who have meaningful and well-paying jobs in STEM fields.”

NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo, has said:

"Digital games represent an arena full of potential to engage young people's imagination and creativity. Beyond entertainment, they offer opportunities for artists, writers, designers, and other creative workers to express themselves while earning good pay. With leadership from Mayor Adams and our partners in the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, NYC is working to attract digital gaming companies to New York City which bring with them thousands of jobs for which many of our young people are eager to train for."

President of the City College of New York, Vincent Boudreau, has said: “I am thrilled that the Harlem Gallery of Science is launching the Exhibition Video Games: The Great Connector to inspire the youth and adults in our communities to explore academic and career opportunities within New York City’s dynamic digital gaming industry. We at City College, with NYC’s support, are pleased to have created the Gaming Pathways Program, which is offering classes and workshops in video gaming design. The Program is on the way to establishing the first public access bachelor’s degree in video gaming in New York City. This new degree Program will open many doors for our students to meaningful, well-paying careers in this and related industries.”

Nick Fortugno, Director of the City College of New York Digital Game Development Program and co-founder of Playmatics has said “When industries aren't diverse, especially industries and entertainment or storytelling, they end up telling stories to the same people and that ignores whole markets of storytellers and whole kinds of stories.”

Chairman of Science and Arts Engagement New York, Inc. DBA Harlem Gallery of Science Dr. Brian Schwartz has said: “The Harlem Gallery of Science, since its founding in 2016, has been at the forefront of bringing to the communities of Harlem, Upper Manhattan and South Bronx innovative exhibitions and programs to reach and engage the youth of these communities. This Exhibition: *Video Games: The Great Connector* is an important educational and cultural offering, enabling students, parents and teachers to learn more about the opportunities that are available in NYC’s growing video gaming industry.”

About Science and Arts Engagement New York, Inc. (SAENY), is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization **dba the Harlem Gallery of Science**. *Its mission is to increase the number of underrepresented Black and Latinx youth living in underserved communities like Harlem, Upper*



Manhattan, and the South Bronx in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields by creating culturally relevant programs, exhibitions, and opportunities such as the Gaming Pathways Program. HGS encourages and supports their pursuit of a career in NYC's growing technology sectors and produces a more inclusive, equitable, diverse, and multi-cultural workforce.

About the City College of New York

Since 1847, The City College of New York has provided a high-quality and affordable education to generations of New Yorkers in a wide variety of disciplines. CCNY embraces its position at the forefront of social change. It is ranked #1 by the Harvard-based Opportunity Insights out of 369 selective public colleges in the United States on the overall mobility index. The Center for World University Rankings places CCNY in the top 1.8% of universities worldwide in terms of academic excellence. [Labor analytics firm Emsi](#) puts at [\\$1.9 billion CCNY's annual economic impact on the regional economy](#) (5 boroughs and 5 adjacent counties) and quantifies the “for dollar” return on investment to students, taxpayers and society. CCNY is as diverse, dynamic and visionary as New York City itself.

The Exhibition: *Video Games: The Great Connector* is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, the Harlem Community Development Corporation, government grants and other philanthropic foundations, industry, and individual donors.

For more information, please visit www.hgs-ny.org