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**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

For more information contact:

Taylor Bostwick

(423) 320-3834

[taylor\_bostwick@signalcenters.org](mailto:taylor_bostwick@signalcenters.org)

**City of Chattanooga, Signal Centers Unveil 3rd Annual Official Ornament**

*Limited-Time Collectible Chattanooga Choo Choo Ornament supports Hart Gallery*

**CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (Nov. 7, 2023)** **–**Mayor Tim Kelly, alongside officials from Signal Centers and the Chattanooga Choo Choo, kicked off the holiday season today by dedicating the City of Chattanooga’s official 2024 ornament.

This year’s limited-edition, metal die-cut ornament highlights the Chattanooga Choo Choo’s distinctive design in red, yellow, and green resin. Each ornament’s box includes an insert of local Hart Gallery artist Dominique Pruitt’s “Goddess Express” painting that inspired the holiday collectible.

“The Chattanooga Choo Choo is a community icon and its transformation, reinvention and historic preservation embody the spirit of our city,” said Mayor Tim Kelly. “It’s the perfect image for this year’s official city ornament, an ornament that I expect will be treasured on local Christmas trees for generations to come. I’m especially pleased the proceeds will support the Hart Gallery, an organization that uplifts some of our most talented artists, who are also among our most vulnerable residents, by giving them a platform to express their talent and stories.”

Made famous by Glenn Miller’s hit song, the Chattanooga Choo Choo is a historic train station turned entertainment complex and hotel that has become an iconic symbol of the city’s downtown. The Choo Choo ornament will be available for purchase at the Chattanooga Choo Choo’s gift shop, both in-person and online at the Hart Gallery, and at other area galleries and gift shops starting today.

One hundred percent of the proceeds will go to the Hart Gallery. This nonprofit program of Signal Centers provides those living with mental and physical disabilities, experiencing homelessness, fleeing abusive situations, and many other underserved populations an opportunity to create and sell their artwork for their benefit.

“Art gave me an avenue to escape my world of stress, depression, and anxiety and to say, ‘Hey, I love myself. I want to be here.’,” said Artist Dominique Pruitt.

The ornament unveiling is the start to the magic of the holidays at the Hart Gallery. On December 7, visit the gallery during MAINX24 for the Spiked Café and art perusing. Then, plan a night out at one of the many holiday classes on the schedule, such as cookie decorating and wreath making. Visit [hartgallery.org](file:///C:\Users\christamannarino\Downloads\hartgallery.org) for additional information, to purchase an ornament and to view available works.

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**Signal Centers**

Signal Centers has been a cornerstone of the Chattanooga community since 1957. Its comprehensive early childhood education and disability services focus on fostering lifelong learning and independence for all. From one classroom of nine children with cerebral palsy to a statewide organization comprised of 13 distinct programs, the nonprofit’s mission of self-sufficiency remains unchanged. For more information, visit [signalcenters.org](https://signalcenters.org).