

FACES OF THE FRONT

[PARCEL Market at Canal Park](#) is curated and co-managed by husband and wife team [Kelly Towles](#), a DC-based street artist, and [Virginia Arrisueño](#), founder and lead designer of local knit accessories brand DeNada. As DC residents, the creative couple is passionate about providing an engaging community experience for market-goers in the city while supporting and showcasing local small businesses. "As artists and small business owners ourselves," says Ms. Arrisueño, "we're very proud to support and promote DC's creative community and local businesses ranging from designers to artists, musicians, and food purveyors. PARCEL at Canal Park is a wonderful and exciting annual event, and we're so honored to be included in the curation and organization of this outdoor holiday marketplace!"



How would both of you describe the Capitol Riverfront neighborhood to friends and visitors?

The Capitol Riverfront area is a really up and coming neighborhood in DC that has so much to offer! It's perfect for young professionals and forward-thinking families who want a sense of both community and neighborhood with a unique identity. Continued development in this area has fostered small businesses and local restaurants to pop up all over the neighborhood. The riverfront area features extensive water elements in the summer and an ice rink in the winter, which makes a great focal point for all of the activities and businesses in the area. The Capitol Riverfront neighborhood has a very distinct and separate feel from downtown despite the fact that it is so close.

PARCEL Market is back at Canal Park in the Capitol Riverfront for the second year in a row. As curators of the market, what are you most excited about?



Our primary goal is to grow and improve the market each year so that people in the neighborhood and around DC are excited about the new and returning retail and food vendors, interactive art, and music components. We have added new elements to the market this year like DIY creative workshops for both kids and adults, curated by [A Creative DC](#) and an expanded list of local musical talents. Our goal is to engage and connect the community with local artisans, business owners, and overall local creative talents that help distinguish DC from other cities!

What is each of your favorite memory from last year's inaugural PARCEL?

Virginia: I loved seeing our market-goers enjoying themselves at PARCEL. The market is such a great way to spotlight and support local businesses and creative talents. Plus, it's a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together during the busy holiday season and get acquainted with each other, local vendors, talents, and the BID.

Kelly: I had such a great time sitting by the fire at the end of the day with s'mores and listening to killer music.

Kelly—can you give Front Page News readers a sneak peek into your ideas for the interactive art installations at this year's market?

All I am saying for right now is that it will be large and huggable...

Kelly—you've designed and created other temporary public art pieces in the Capitol Riverfront. What do you think temporary public art pieces add to the neighborhood and to events like PARCEL?

I think that art adds life and energy to a neighborhood. Most of all, it gives people a chance to watch and interact with art when they usually can't; that's my favorite aspect.

Virginia—you're bringing 20+ local designers such as yourself, spanning fashion, jewelry, pet toys and apparel, home goods, hand-crafted artwork, to PARCEL Market this year. Why do you think it's important to engage local artisans?

I think that it is extremely important to support local businesses and to provide them a platform to connect with the community. Not only is it a perfect opportunity for brands to share their story to consumers and sell their products, but it's also great for consumers to meet the owner of the brand and hear their story. My goal is to bring people together on a local level. Local artists and locally owned businesses are so important to the culture and identity of the city and events like PARCEL really highlights what DC has to offer.

Virginia—can you tell us about the food and retail vendors we can anticipate seeing at this year's PARCEL Market?

We have over a dozen food vendors participating at PARCEL this year. Dirty South Deli will be there with awesome seasonal and locally inspired sandwiches as well as Maketto with pork buns and ramen. We will also have the small craft brewery Bluejacket featuring local food and beer pairings. Locally made ice cream from Ice Cream Jubilee will satisfy any dessert cravings. Other retail vendors will include Cloud Terre which is a really cool local business that designs unique tableware. You can also expect to see locally crafted beauty and self-care products for men and women from Be Clean as well as functional and chic kids clothes and gifts from Niko and Ava.