

Rail Jam Thursdays at The Avenue Sandwich

By Ali Walsh

Urban culture was in full swing at *The Avenue Concept's* latest rail jam on Thursday, June 6. Over 100 graffiti artists, skateboarders, B-boys and DJ's transformed the skating center at Kennedy Plaza, all at no cost to those who arrived.

People as young as 11 years old grabbed their boards to meet and learn from fellow skaters, without any worry of breaking Providence laws. There is no skate park in the city, which leaves these skateboarders no place to legally do what they love.

Eddie, a Cranston native and local skateboarder, believes events like this are positive for the city. "Having a skate park in Providence would keep kids off the street and out of trouble."

Above the sounds of wheels grazing a rail or hitting the pavement after landing from a ramp, live music filled the air. DJ's Jackson and Micah, Kansas natives, grew up together and moved east to pursue a DJ career. Now they teach workshops within the Avenue Project to mentor and help other DJ's grow.



Next to the DJ booth lay a wooden floor where B-Boys took turns battling: competing, but also encouraging each other.

Across the way, the Avenue Concept contributed free materials for all to use to create a graffiti masterpiece. Both professional street artists and those who wanted to try it for the first time came together to create collaborative art.

Yarrow Thorne, founder of the Avenue Sandwich, created this event so that the youth of Providence had a place to express their "urban culture." Skateboarding or creating graffiti on buildings are illegal in Providence and most major cities. Thorne explains that instead of shutting down these talents, we should embrace them in a more controlled environment.

"We recognize the problem. Instead of ignoring it, we should come together and turn it into a positive," Thorne said.

The event was a great success, despite little advertising - primarily word of mouth. Skate parks are so few and far-between in the state that once one skater catches wind of a rail jam, everybody knows (thank you, social media).

The Avenue Sandwich event occurs every other Thursday in Kennedy Plaza, occurring next on Thursday, June 20. Thorne encourages anyone interested in skateboarding, graffiti, breakdancing or music to "come hang out and enjoy."

Check www.theavenueconcept.com for a full schedule of events