

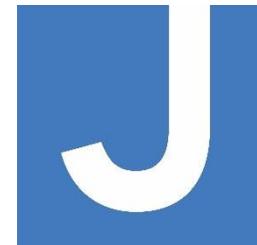
WALL OF RESPECT

A Tangled Roots Project

The Wall of Respect was an outdoor mural created in 1967 by a group of Chicago artists from the Organization of Black American Culture. Inspiring redevelopment and positive political activism, The Wall gave birth to a national Community Mural Movement.

We are marking the 50th anniversary of the Wall by honoring and expanding upon the spirit of its makers. Our outcome will not be a static painting, but rather a unique installation informed by stories from our community and created by selected artists overseeing the work of youth and adults from all over the metro area. The piece will acknowledge the commonalities between and celebrate the unique cultural contributions to Kansas City made by the Native American, Jewish, African American, Latino/Hispanic and Asian communities living among us.

This installation will be portable so that it can travel to a wide variety of venues in the metro area. It will incorporate digital technology enabling viewers to access more information. It will include moveable parts, so that viewers can be co-creators by changing its appearance. It will be accompanied in every venue by professionally developed educational activities and the creation of elements that will be added to the exhibition. Finally, the ethnic images and words will not be segmented, but entirely enmeshed, reflecting our “tangled roots”.



Fast Facts

WHO'S PARTICIPATING

The Jewish Community Center and Interurban Art House

- A team of lead artists from our Native American, African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian and Jewish communities

- Partner agencies and organizations

- Volunteers from each ethnicity and then from the general community

June, 2017

Story Circles: Members of the above communities meet in private homes, workplaces or as part of a special event. Trained facilitators lead them in structured sessions during which they share experiences in response to targeted questions. Story Circles are explained in more detail on the last page.

Notes from Story Circles inform lead artists about what to portray in the installation.

July 2017- January 2018

Lead artists design the structure and lay out the content of the installation, oversee the work of volunteers during several publicized "open creating sessions", and give the installation its finishing touches.

At the same time, educators create lesson plans for use in presenting the installation to people of all ages and in every part of the metro area.

March, 2018
going forward

The installation debuts during a gala at the Jewish Community Center in early 2018, after which it travels to schools, social service organizations, synagogues, churches, mosques, corporations, civic venues and festivals.

Aside From Creating a Thing of Beauty, What Do We Intend to Accomplish?

We intend to address a problem.

Many Kansas Citians are physically, emotionally and/or spiritually compromised because of ignorance and fear of The Other. A major contributing factor is the simple lack of face to face, hand-in-hand interactions. For our poorest residents, this is partly due to the absence of features attracting non-residents to their neighborhoods and their own limited mobility because of financial constraints and the lack of adequate public transportation. Public education responds to the problem, but increasingly, funding for projects exposing students to new people and new ideas, offered in the realm of arts and humanities, are being diverted to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) projects. For whatever reason, many residents, particularly young people, live in homogeneous and isolated environments which confine their thoughts, their skills and their dreams.

One way for individuals and our city to reach its full potential is to invite and empower diverse communities to engage in civic activities. Specifically, we need:

- Accessible, non-threatening opportunities for face to face, hand in hand interaction to reach a common goal.
- Chances for people to create something tangible, enormous, beautiful, and impossible to achieve without the help of others.
- Experiences that simultaneously engender pride in one's ethnic identity and an understanding that this does not make them superior to others.

We intend to achieve successful outcomes:

- At least 80% of members of the five featured communities participating in the project will respond on a survey that
"I feel authentically represented in this mural."
"This mural makes me feel proud of my culture."
- At least 75% of all people who participating in the project will agree on a survey that
"I learned something positive about another culture."
"Participating in this project makes me feel more positively about people from other cultures."
"By participating in this project, I feel that I am contributing something significant to the city."
"Participation in this project makes me feel positively inclined to participate in another civic project."

What Are Story Circles?

Story Circles are a simple way to reveal complicated truths. Participants divide into random groups of eight - twelve. Each group has a facilitator and a scribe or tape recorder to document what is shared. Everyone in the group has an equal amount of time to tell a story in response to a common prompt. The Wall of Respect stories are up to two minutes long. There are three rounds, responding to each of three prompts over a period of 90 minutes. The three prompts we give for Wall of Respect Story Circles are these:

Describe a moment when you became aware of your ethnic community's history.

Describe an experience when your community was made to feel welcome and valued in Kansas City.

Tell a story about a time when you identified with and felt proud of your ethnic heritage.

Guidelines:

- Questions are purposely not provided in advance. We're looking for first responses, which are generally the most authentic. No one should worry about coming up with a story. One will emerge, and every story that is not hurtful to others is welcome.
- A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. This isn't a time to offer opinions or commentary, but to share something that was experienced or observed.
- Listening is as important as speaking; each person receives full attention while telling his or her story. There are no questions, criticisms, cross-talk, or comments allowed and it's not okay to contradict, correct, or embellish someone else's story.
- After all stories have been shared, participants reflect on what was revealed.

QUESTIONS or IDEAS?

Please contact Jill Maidhof, Director of Jewish Experiences at the J
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