

PRESS RELEASE - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park Murals

April 17, 2020

The Town of Carrboro is pleased to announce the installation of the town's newest murals at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.

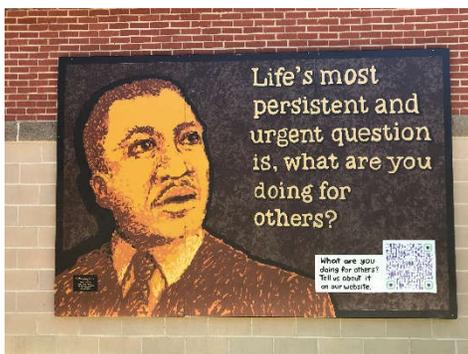
The project was an effort to create murals that would reflect Dr. King's message in the town's newest park. The effort was led by the Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Resources Department in conjunction with the Arts Committee. The department solicited local student artists who were residents of the Town of Carrboro, while the Arts Committee provided funding and served as the selection committee for the student submissions. To recruit the student artists, the department worked with local media outlets, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP, the Carrboro Youth Advisory Board, the Carrboro Youth Council, as well as local schools and art teachers.

The Carrboro student residents who submitted renderings and were selected for the project were Kathy Bolanos-Villanueva, Hannah Ingham, and Lily Reeves.

The town worked closely with local artist and muralist Michael Brown, along with his protégé, Livian Kennedy, a recent arts graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Mr. Brown led the efforts to bring the student artists' concepts and renderings to life, providing his expertise and the use of his studio space which allowed the students to create the full-size murals.

Following their completion, the two murals were framed and a protective cover was added and they were installed by local Carrboro company, Rice's Glass Company. The murals are now displayed on the eastern and western sides of the main building at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, located at 1120 Hillsborough Rd. in Carrboro. One of the two murals contains an interactive component, allowing patrons to share via a QR code to answer the question "What are you doing for others?," to foster a sense of community and share how they are each helping to realize Dr. King's dream. Some of those submissions may be chosen for display on the Town of Carrboro's website and social media platforms.

The following images depict the two murals:



The following are brief bios/artists statements from the artists involved in this project.

Kathy Bolanos-Villanueva, Student Artist



My name is Kathy and I worked alongside four amazing artists to help complete these murals. It took a lot of work, but it was so much fun to be able to paint with others. It helped me connect to people which is what community is all about, and I couldn't ask for a better opportunity to do that. I wanted to thank Anita for allowing me to participate in this event as well as Livian and Michael for helping us along the way. I am very grateful for this opportunity. The project was very collaborative and time-consuming but in the end, it was an amazing experience. MLK Jr. was an important man in this nation's history that worked hard to stand up in what he believed in. His morals were so inspiring that we can see these aspects of what he believed in mirrored into these murals. Kathy Bolanos-Villanueva is a freshman at Chapel Hill High School with a passion for the arts and science. She plays varsity softball as well as a violinist in the school's orchestra. Kathy hopes to better improve her art and make a change.

Hannah Ingham, Student Artist



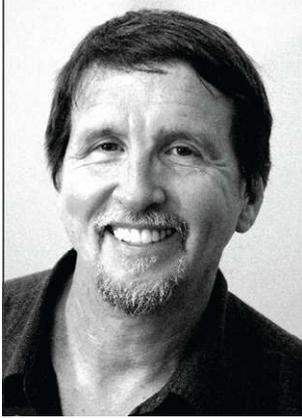
My name is Hannah Ingham and I am a rising senior at Eno River Academy. I am the president of my school's National Arts Honor Society, and have had a passion for art for a while. Being able to work with Michael, Livian, Ms. Jones McNair, and the other girls was an experience I will always remember. Every week, I looked forward to being able to paint these amazing murals and work with my group. It was such a fun time, from Michael dancing to the 80's channel on the tv to me painting a silhouette that looked more like a blob than a human. All in all, they turned out better than I could've done on my own, and I love how everybody had a part of them represented in these designs. My hope is that people will understand the message of the murals and spread it into the community, like Dr. King would have wanted.

Lily Reeves, Student Artist



Lily Reeves is a Junior at Chapel Hill High School and an art enthusiast who was very honored and happy to have been able to be part of this amazing project for the town she grew up in. Lily is glad to have been able to make her mark with her art in a wonderful mural representing the town and wonders of the wonderful Dr Martin Luther King Jr. with her peers and the talented Mr. Brown. This experience is something Lily says, she is immensely proud of.

Michael Brown, Local Artist and Muralist



I very much enjoyed facilitating the creation of this work of public art. The final murals were a true community effort and a great way to enhance a new local park. It was a genuinely collaborative effort where many groups and diverse people contributed, including students, parents, town officials, citizens' committee members, and artists. How well this resonates with Dr. King's Legacy.

Everyone's ideas came together for a great final design, with one wall symbolizing the power of a united community in action and the other wall encouraging individual responsibility. Again, so fitting for a tribute to Dr. King!

I especially take my hat off to the student volunteers for their conceptual contributions and for executing the work. It was an honor to be asked to participate.

Michael has been a muralist for 32 years, completing his first mural in 1988. He has worked with cities across North Carolina and beyond and has received numerous awards for his work. He holds a BFA from UNC-Chapel Hill, where he was named a North Carolina Fellow. He received a two-year resident fellowship at the Fine Arts Work Center in Massachusetts and a fellowship from the National Academy of Design in New York. He has taught in various public and private art schools, including a Guggenheim-funded program.

Livian Kennedy, Local Artist and Protégé



This project was a refreshing and collaborative experience with other inspired artists about an incredibly important social and political figure. MLK Jr. was human -had his flaws- just like anyone else we know, that is what makes what he accomplished so incredibly inspiring. Livian Kennedy is a graduate of the UNC College of Arts and Science, where her focus was on studio and digital art. Upon her graduation, she was chosen as a protégé of Michael Brown, a successful and known muralist. While under his mentorship, Livian has been approached by local restaurants to display her works, students looking for private tutoring, and companies seeking digital design work, which has been one of her specialties ever since arriving to UNC.

For information or questions, please contact the Carrboro Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Resources Department at 919.918.7364 or recparcs@townofcarrboro.org

###