

Enriching Lives



Civic Art

PRESS RELEASE

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MEDIA PLEASE NOTE:

No interviews with the minors or photos of the minor's faces are allowed.

Downloadable 300 dpi photos available at <http://www.lacountyarts.org/civkart/projectdetails/id/75>
(scroll to the bottom of the page)

For Release January 15, 2010

CAMP SCUDDER CELEBRATES MURAL CREATED BY TEEN RESIDENTS
Los Angeles County Arts Commission joins forces with
Probation Department and Office of Education to commission
Theatre Of Hearts/Youth First to coordinate mural project.

SANTA CLARITA, CA—January 15, 2010—Residents and staff of the Camp Kenyon J. Scudder probation facility, as well as L.A. County officials, gathered at the camp today to celebrate the mural designed and painted by teens from the camp for their dining hall. The mural project is the first of its kind under Los Angeles County's Civic Art Program administered by the Arts Commission.

Thirty teenage girls from the camp produced the mural after 14-weeks of training with Michael Massenburg, artist-in-residence with Theatre Of Hearts/Youth First (TOHYF). The mural covers a 20 ft. by 50 ft. area in the cafeteria and incorporates images the girls created during the training to represent ideas important to them.

"Involvement in the arts, and projects like this one, give these talented young people a reason to be proud of their achievement and shows them that commitment and hard work can lead to successful productive lives," said L.A. County Supervisor Michael Antonovich.

The Arts Commission's Civic Art and Arts Education divisions; L.A. County Office of Education (LACOE), which administers classrooms at County probation facilities; and the L.A. County Probation Department, which runs Camp Scudder, worked closely with TOHYF, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization that empowers local communities through arts education, on the mural project.

Pauline Starks, Director of Camp Scudder, noted “a significant change in the girls overall attitudes and behavior during this process, both those that participated and the other minors. I really enjoyed watching the girls paint the walls and their proud faces when showing off their accomplishments to visitors. The individuals that participated in the art work also have shown some progress in their grades.”

Michael Massenburg observed, “While participating in the mural project students learned to express their personal history and discover how to imagine a path to success. At-risk youth rarely have the resources or the support to take that first independent step and experience success. Each assignment that they worked to completion gave them a sense of accomplishment.”

During the course that led to the creation of the mural, the girls were introduced to a diversity of artistic styles, from pre-historic cave paintings to a wide variety of contemporary art including public art, fashion, pop culture and logos. They were presented with overviews of the lives and works of artists who took both traditional and non-traditional paths to discover their visual voices and tell their unique stories. Through instruction in the basic skills of drawing and use of materials, they gained the confidence to express themselves visually, first with line drawing, then color and tone. In studying the content and meaning of various works of art, students identified images portraying strength, weakness, beauty, power, tenacity, victory, loss, pain and joy. Students were encouraged to think about the issues that were most important to them. The universal theme that emerged was overcoming adversity and finding success.

In acknowledgement of the work accomplished by Michael Massenburg on the mural project, Supervisor Antonovich and his staff requested that he design art banners for the Camp Scudder campus. The 2 ft. x 5 ft. banners, incorporating images produced by the Camp Scudder girls layered with Mr. Massenburg’s own artwork, were installed in time for the celebration. Fabrication of the banners was donated by Dangling Carrot Creative.

Rebecca Ansert and Alice Schock of the Arts Commission were project managers for the Camp Scudder mural. The budget for the project was \$17,000. Under the County's Civic Art Policy, adopted in 2004, one percent of design and construction costs on new County capital projects has been allocated to a Civic Art Special Fund. The lifespan of the mural is expected to be 10 years.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Michael Massenburg utilizes collage techniques, painted figures, abstract images, and found objects within his work to explore social issues. The artist notes that his goal is to “inform, provoke thoughts or inspire” the viewer. Often Mr. Massenburg relies on incorporating recognizable images from everyday life into his work to convey stories that are reflective of the culture and history of the community. The artist exhibits at the M. Hanks Gallery and has completed several public art commissions including the Rosa Parks Station (with Robin Strayhorn) and the Watts Urban Greenway for the Los Angeles MTA, Mark Twain Los Angeles Public Library, Inglewood City Hall and the American Jazz Museum in Kansas City, Missouri.

Theatre Of Hearts/Youth First, founded in 1987, promotes understanding between people through cultural and artistic forums, and empowers local communities through arts education. The Theatre Of Hearts/Youth First Artist-In-Residence Program provides customized, long term, high quality, fine arts educational workshops at school and community-based sites countywide to help prevent and intervene in youth-on-youth violence. TOHYF curricula adhere to the California State Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts and all TOHYF artists are trained to develop curriculum that integrates those standards. TOHYF is recognized by local, state, and national agencies for its solid history, organizational stability, and quantifiable performance measures as well as for its standards-based curriculum and ability to implement standards-based programs.

The **Los Angeles County Arts Commission**, Laura Zucker, Executive Director, provides leadership in cultural services of all disciplines for the largest county in the United States, encompassing 88 municipalities. In addition to overseeing the County's Civic Art Program, the Arts Commission provides leadership and staffing to support the regional blueprint for arts education, *Arts for All*; administers a grants program that funds more than 300 nonprofit arts organizations annually; programs the John Anson Ford Theatres; and supports the Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar on ExperienceLA.com. The Commission also produces free community programs, including the L.A. Holiday Celebration broadcast nationally, and a year-round music program that funds more than 40 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2009-10 President of the Arts Commission is Araceli Ruano.

For more information please consult the Arts Commission online press kit:
<http://lacountyarts.org/page/pubnewspress>