

Mural project celebrates identity

Written by Titilayo Bediako
Monday, 26 August 2013 13:32



Communities throughout the country know what it looks like when people of various cultures are at odds with each other.

The result can be mistrust, name-calling, fights and even death. Often times it is based on misunderstandings and lack of communications.

The Central Identity Project is working to change this dynamic with an innovative mural project that brings together residents of African, Asian, Latino and European heritage, in the Central community in south Minneapolis to create a 2,000-plus square foot mural through a series of paint workshops.



The visionary of this project is Candida Gonzalez, who is the community education coordinator at Green Central Park School. Her middle school students collected the history of the Central

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community by taking pictures, researching the heroes and "sheroes" of the community, learning about their accomplishments and recording the oral history of residents who still live in the neighborhood. The students put together all the information into a sketch that told a story of the Central community.

The project began with a series of community painting workshops at different locations throughout the Central community. Organizations such as WE WIN Institute, the Youth Farm and Pillsbury House, invited neighbors from Central to share food, meet neighbors and to paint together, what will be the largest mural in the Central neighborhood.



Lead artist Gretchen McClain, in partnership with Minneapolis Community Education, the Minneapolis Public Schools and neighborhood organizations, employed a unique procedure that does not paint directly on the wall, but uses an indirect parachute cloth method developed by the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. Until now the technique was never used before in a Minneapolis community mural project. Using a lightweight synthetic material, the mural design will be portioned into various sections to be painted at the different community art workshops and to later be installed on the building. The project also includes apprentice artists who have learned the technique, so they too can create lasting murals throughout Minneapolis.



McLain has 10 years of mural experience and she has traveled the world including Europe and South America studying new and traditionalistic mural techniques. In addition to making many murals throughout the Twin Cities, she has created murals in Argentina, Mexico, France, Memphis and Philadelphia.

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