

Presented by
Amnesty International

PROJECT:

urbanCANVAS

A mural series celebrating the 60th year
of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Press Release

Attention: Community/Lifestyle/Arts
Editors

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MURAL LAUNCH: 30 MURALS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Amnesty International's project combines street art and human rights

What: Unveiling of new mural, one of 30 Toronto murals celebrating United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Who: 5 youth artists (who also depicted themselves in the mural); Mural Routes in partnership with Amnesty International and Midland Park Community Association; plus guests Scarborough MPP Brad Duguid and Scarborough city councilor Michael Thompson

Where: 1163 Ellesmere Road, south-east corner with Midland; in Midland Park area, Scarborough, Toronto

When: Launch 6 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26

Photos of this mural are available:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/amnestyinternationaltoronto/sets/72157622094319310/>

Background:

A team of five young artists, mentored by lead artist Rob Matejka, has spent the month of August painting their vision of Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind."

These young artists have worked together in creating a design that reflects their own ideals, as well as those in the Midland Park Community, to make a 48-foot mural that suggests a journey to harmony through diversity.



The 5 young artists were hired for this summer employment project because of their interest in furthering their art skills. The youths began the project by interviewing local residents on what “community” meant to them. The large outdoor mural painted on the east-facing wall of the plaza is expected to be completed August 21.

One exciting design element: the artists are painting their own faces on the “human pillars” holding up the word “community” in the mural. Since the artists are of different ethnic backgrounds, this is a way of showing the area’s pride in diversity.

This mural has been painted in partnership with Amnesty International Toronto’s Project: Urban Canvas and the Scarborough-based arts organization Mural Routes.

Project: Urban Canvas is now in its second year. This project brings together community groups and artists with the aim of creating 30 human rights murals throughout the GTA, each representing one of the 30 articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

“We are really excited at how artists and the local community hosting the mural are working together to create their vision of what human rights means to them,” said Elena Dumitru, Toronto Regional Development Coordinator, Amnesty International. “We hope that these murals will help foster acceptance among Toronto’s multicultural community, expand individuals’ thinking by evoking reflection about the deeper meaning of the murals and help increase respect for human rights.”

Last summer, 7 murals were successfully created as a part of Project: Urban Canvas. This year, 4 more murals are planned, while the volunteer team behind the project is still looking for artists, community groups and mural hosts to contribute to the completion of murals representing all 30 articles in the UDHR.

Sixty-one years after the UDHR was created, unthinkable human rights violations are still occurring worldwide. Project: Urban Canvas intends to communicate the growing human rights issues to a local, national and international audience through these murals and inspire people to get involved and take action against human rights violations. In addition, this project hopes to create public awareness about the existence, purpose, and practice of the UDHR while bringing colour, positivity, and art to communities in the Greater Toronto Area.

(more)



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To see the colourful murals that have already been completed, plus short videos showing the community groups and mural artists creating them, visit the Project: Urban Canvas website at www.aito.ca/urbancanvas.

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