



Acknowledgments

Art is never the result of an arbitrary intention, nor merely the construction of an object. There is always the need for a heart capable of identifying the forces that converge in the final creation of the work of art to portray the emotions of the artist.

This booklet was created to document the process of creating the collective mural at the Corvallis School District Welcome Center. *Finding Home* was completed in 2019 as a result of community partnerships between the [Determined Art Movement](#), the [Corvallis School District 509J](#), and the [Corvallis Public Schools Foundation](#).

You can watch a video about the D.A.M. project [here](#), or by scanning this QR code:



Sponsorship

The mural was made possible by an award through the Learning Enrichment Grant by the Public Schools Foundation.

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About D.A.M.

The Determined Art Movement was founded in 2014 when a group of Oregon State University students collaborated to develop the first OSU community mural, named *Eye Sight – We See*, in the Centro Cultural César Chávez. The team chose to call themselves the Determined Art Movement, or D.A.M., given that they were all *beavers* determined to complete a mural as a highlight of our global campus community. Since the completion of their first project, the group continued building community through collective art projects aimed at creating dialogue on social justice. Thus, in 2017 D.A.M. was finally established as a 501(c)3k non-profit organization based in Corvallis, Oregon.

After the completion of that first permanent piece, the team facilitated *Nuestras manos, nuestros sueños*, a collective mural at South Shore Elementary, a Title I school in Albany. We then developed *The Heart*, a collective mural at Oregon State University; it was stewarded by international students at the Student Experience Center. *Kalpana*, a collective mural in New Delhi, India, addressed the paradigm of acknowledging the higher beings in each student able to learn from each other. At the Woman and Gender Center of OSU, participants expressed the subtle cycles of transformation, from chaos into cosmos, from vertical into horizontal, from time into eternity, through a frame of gender diversity and women's rights, with the collective mural *Love in Motion*.

Along with the sisterhood between D.A.M. India and D.A.M. in the United States, collective expressions of social justice have been sparked by D.A.M. members in other countries: Thailand, Ecuador, and México.

Our first approach to the Corvallis School District (CSD) in 2017 was a collective sculpture at Linus Pauling Middle School, *Lengua Materna*, which envisions bilingualism as the centerpiece of concentric areas of growth. Our collaboration with The Arts Center and Jackson Street Youth Shelter on a

community graffiti titled *Change in Growth* allowed youth of the CSD navigating homelessness to express their need to cultivate resilience, empathy, and an inner compass.

The Determined Art Movement was very excited to work under the leadership of the Corvallis School District to develop a community mural that conveys the meaning of Welcome, not only in the 58 languages represented among its families, but also through the diverse and unique expression of each individual participant.





contacted office managers, classrooms, and teachers at each school to promote this ongoing project with families. They invited everyone to reflect upon the questions, “What do you love about yourself? What do you love about learning? What do you love about building a diverse community?”



Conceptualizing the Mural

What murals help us become

The reason why D.A.M. chose to facilitate the creation of a community mural with the Corvallis School District emerged from the permanence of muralism over the past 10,000 years. Murals serve as tools to communicate values visually, and the process of designing and painting a mural is a tool for internal transformation for the individual, who gradually becomes aware of a shared consciousness. The physical permanence of murals is also built internally, healing each individual—who can then transform reality.

Where this mural was born

The seed for expressing and acknowledging a welcome to all the families of the Corvallis School District was planted by Marcianna Rivero Koetje. Her converging visions as coordinator of ELL and Equity, SAFE and DELTA’s social justice programs crystallized into 480 artistic pixel tributes from individuals portraying their own meaning of feeling welcome and, thus, belonging to our rich and diverse community, as we all *find home*.

Health navigators, Arabic/Muslim and Latinx student and family advocates, PTOs, PTAs, Club Latino, Art Club and Sustainability Club, interpreters and translators, with the support of board members and administrators from the Corvallis School District,

Finding Home

Students at College Hill enrolled in art classes were among the first ones to share the initial emotions and experiences regarding feeling welcome. They depicted the immense revolution that occurs to participants as they become aware of their power to transform reality.

*“Welcome is a far away illusion,
like a star at night, millions of light years
away,*

*yet the light reaches me.
I feel welcome at night.
I feel welcome when I do not have to
think,
when I can relax my mind.”*

*“Welcome is like a Volcano,
hot rampart energy, color,
but in reality, there is darkness inside.
It is a façade.”*

From initial challenging depictions like these, key paradigms began to converge with

additional colors, values, contrasts, and lines as the mural got its name, “Finding Home.”

*We are all part of a big family
We are all welcomed into this world,
and we welcome everyone as we learn
from each other
We are interconnected with nature
Together we can create a vision to guide
us to new horizons
What is most important in the CSD is that
each of us is precious*





Mural-Making Process

Project description

During the 2018–19 school year, the Determined Art Movement facilitated, coordinated, and designed a community mural at the Corvallis School District Welcome Center. This booklet retains the process and memory of this project, to be archived within both the Corvallis School District and D.A.M.

Themes considered

- ✧ Feeling welcome is one of the most important things
- ✧ An image comprised of words
- ✧ Reflecting openness
- ✧ Bricks building up an open door
- ✧ It takes the whole community to build a truly welcoming environment
- ✧ Growth and achieving dreams
- ✧ Different cultures seeing themselves in the mural in the future
- ✧ A dove to represent peace
- ✧ Wings to represent migration and a community made from diversity
- ✧ A body map of Corvallis
- ✧ To depict discussion and the experience of our students and families
- ✧ A true representation of the student body
- ✧ Words in different languages
- ✧ Arms wide open

Outreach and design

The following questions were shared among community members that participated in the mural design process in order to gather information that would support themes for the art. Here are some samples of the answers we received.

Guiding questions and responses

What I love about myself

- ✧ I love that I like people around me regardless of color, religion, or anything else
- ✧ Mi forma de actuar y mi forma de dibujar (My way of acting and my way of drawing) (Wilhelm)
- ✧ My art

What I love about learning

- ✧ Adds to my knowledge
- ✧ Dibujar (drawing)
- ✧ Growing in confidence and competence.
- ✧ Gaining new skills feels like getting new tools, each one to better equipping me to do what I want to do (Hayley McLaren)
- ✧ Art

What I love about my community

- ✧ Que es unida (that we are united)
- ✧ I love that we have people from different parts of the world with different cultures, languages, colors, and religions
- ✧ Se apoyan y se ayudan (We support and help each other)
- ✧ Families are beautiful

First Brush Strokes

Steps to guide the painting process

Are you ready to paint?

Here are a couple of details to consider before you begin:

Look at the art that stands in front of you; many hands have already moved paint on this wall. Conversations about why to depict things in a certain way—there are many layers of meaning.

When you come to leave your mark, make sure you are doing so in a manner that is considerate of the people working around you, and respectful of what was here before you arrived.

1. Pick your workspace.
2. Select the pixel you will paint.
3. Get your art materials: paintbrush and paint (be sure that the shades of color you pick are compatible with your section), paper and pen.
4. Do you know what you will sketch? (Write a short description of your image and what moved you to select it; include your name on your piece of paper.)
5. Now you may transfer your image to the wall. Have fun!
6. After you are done painting, please be sure you leave your area and materials clean.
7. You can place your signed paper with your image description in the folder.



Witnessing the evolution of this collective mural is a fascinating process!

Be sure to come up close to appreciate the details, but also watch it from a distance to enjoy the bigger picture. We hope to see you again soon!

Learning from students

Description of the project and tangible results

There has been and continues to be a tangible collective mural expression created by participants of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and identities. The project is in constant evolution; its inner mode is that of reinvention. When observed from a close distance, 480 6"x6" pixels have been painted to depict symbols and scenes that convey cultural values corresponding to many of the 58 languages spoken in the Corvallis School District. Perceived from a distance, these individual pixels portray a flock of geese migrating over a bright horizon.

Highlight of activities

- ✂ Fifteen community gatherings from 15 diverse associations have taken place for planning and implementation gatherings.
- ✂ Seven painting sessions 5 hours long each have been enjoyed every Saturday by students, and families from 6 out of the 13 schools from the District have participated.
- ✂ Five art classes on muralism engaged students at College Hill who are enrolled in art.

Measures and evaluations

Direct evaluation criteria include:

- ✂ number of participants and representation of diversity, dialogue among participants, and engagement in the painting sessions
- ✂ involvement of board members and District's staff
- ✂ artistic vision of equity carefully crafted into the logistics of the project

Indirect measurements include:

- ✂ eagerness of participants to share their testimonies in writing or orally about their perspectives and artistic expression
- ✂ interest by participants in the Welcome Center's mission and vision
- ✂ ongoing responses from the CSD communities on social media to CSD's outreach efforts
- ✂ a sense of affinity between the project and a variety of school programs aiming at engagement in dialogue and action on equity: Arab club at Adams, Art class College Hill, Honors Literature and Club Latino at CHS, Dual Immersion program at Garfield, Special Education needs, and SAFE
- ✂ motivation and growing interest among staff at the Welcome Center to enhance the sense of hospitality, open hearth, and service in the interior of the building
- ✂ Russian, Arabic, Spanish, French and Mam languages depicted in the mural

The main results are intangible because each painting does not make an object present;

these individual paintings speak to the soul, and thus each painting connects with each other.

Results and looking to the future

- ✂ Participants moved into supporting each other and in solidarity
- ✂ Creation of archives
- ✂ Story behind the process documented and available soon in digital version
- ✂ Unveiling ceremony in fall 2019 with artist testimonies
- ✂ Muralism class continued at College Hill in school year 2020

Testimonials

A discursive story on the visual art of this project begins by wondering how much we can learn from what we see in each pixel. This painted story represents the cultural expression of identity. The collective mural provided students with the opportunity to create a vision for the development of a new culture that embraces welcoming and equity.

Through this mural, we see the experiences of those students most often invisible in society:

- ✂ Participants see themselves as builders of family unity.
- ✂ Participants see themselves also as youth celebrating awareness of gender identity.
- ✂ Participants also see an extraordinary expression of their physical and metaphorical experience of living as migrants.

Conclusion

The significance of project *Finding Home* is the consideration of social justice as an art, and the opportunity to exhibit it as a celebration of equality. This art expression was created as a process of re-definition, embracing possibilities of insecurity and, in some depictions, as transitional characters made into pixels, which are open for their re-interpretation: something that may have been originally an agitated image, could cease to be seen as one.

Finding Home reflects a process of construction more than a final composition. Although its physical limits are given by its length and width, the mural implied transformation of conditions alluding to diverse human dimensions. *Finding Home* is a process emerging from the individual into a community-organized collective.

The basic structure for this process was key: elaborate on the emotions of being welcome and the space to depict them on the wall of the Welcome Center facing the Corvallis School District office. The process of this mural nurtures a culture of diversity.



Appendix-Timeline

Collective Mural at the Welcoming Center

Themes for pixels: Family, Nature, Learning and Diversity

Overall design: a flock of geese migrating toward a brighter horizon (representing the 58 languages and cultures of students and the families of the CSD)

Planning-information sessions

**NOVEMBER
30**

- ✧ Garfield PTA—Invitation to coordinate with Garfield Elementary PTA Hispanic Families Information sessions, and logistics



**JANUARY
23**

- ✧ Imagine Coffee workshop definition of themes by parents, teachers, and students

**FEBRUARY
14**

- ✧ Welcome Center definition of themes by students, teachers
- ✧ Staff from the Welcome Center (OLU, Casa Latinos Unidos), to fine-tune timeline

21

- ✧ Adams Elementary/Arab Club information session





APRIL

10

- ☞ DAM CDS 509J

17

- ☞ Imagine Coffee paint night

26

- ☞ Garfield Elementary PTA Hispanic families

MAY

9

- ☞ DAM-ELL and Equity Coordinator

10

- ☞ DAM meeting

13

- ☞ CHS/Honors Literature information session incorporation of interviews

17

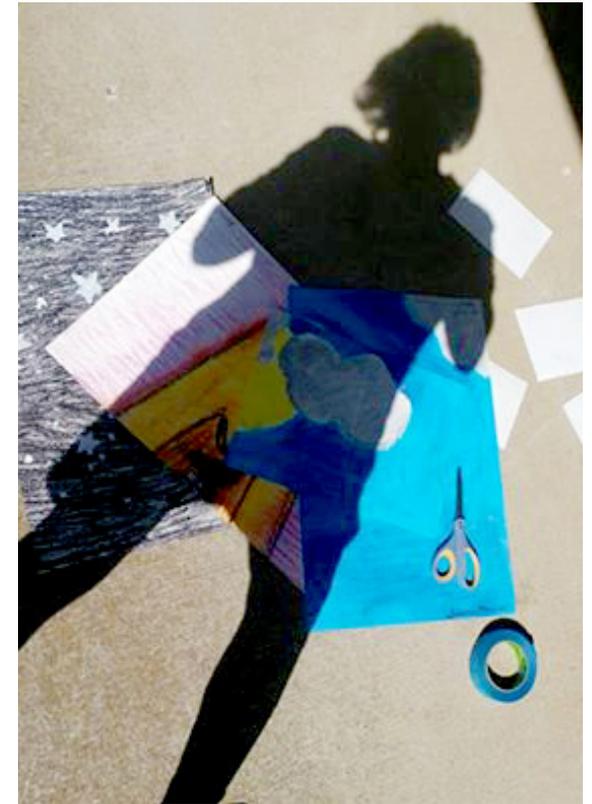
- ☞ Franklin visit to every classroom invitation session

20

- ☞ Mt. View information session with principal and OM

24

- ☞ Wilson Elementary Assembly information session



JUNE

1

- ☞ DAM members

4

- ☞ DAM CHS bilingual advocate, Art Club, Chess Club, and Club Latino

Painting sessions

MAY

1—College Hill Art Class

Meaning of “Welcome” to you

- ✧ Distant constellations twinkling light from far, far away
- ✧ A volcanic explosion beginning with amazing light, still an explosion, could cause disruption
- ✧ A straightforward road with an abrupt, unanticipated turn. Forest and wilderness make me feel welcome in Oregon
- ✧ Not a wide, yet a celebration of diversity, colors, different music notes
- ✧ Mexican food offered personally from a Mexican person (rice, beans and panuchos), colorful papel picado, symbolizing festivity
- ✧ I do not share the feelings of welcome and I do not welcome people into my life
- ✧ Pizza, cartoons (Goku Z)
- ✧ Blue sky with clouds here and there, allowing the sun to come out and shine only partially



8—College Hill Art Class

- ✧ Welcome for another culture

15—College Hill Art Class

- ✧ Advertising collective mural
- ✧ Note: rest of time for each of the 2-hour-long painting sessions at College Hill was paid for by The Arts Center

16—Arabic Club

- ✧ Romania mountain range and flag, hand palms

18—CSD Board Franklin

- ✧ Grid calculations

22—DAM

- ✧ Rusty her dog
- ✧ Grid
- ✧ Mexican flag
- ✧ Explosion, abstract dripping, purple and pink, pixel lines
- ✧ Abstract dripping
- ✧ Interviews with participants
- ✧ Welcome interviews with migrants
- ✧ Foster kid and parents:
 - Alligator as the symbol pet of Adams school, sun, and tree
 - Girls and mom



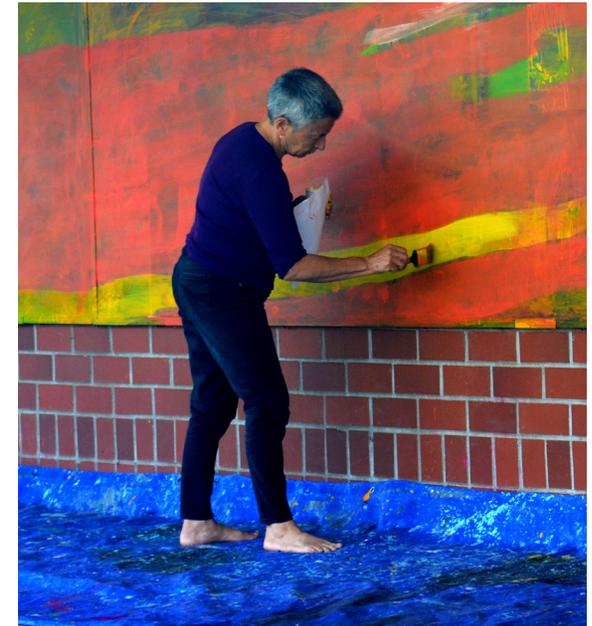


25—Autism

- ☞ DAM: Pixels
- ☞ Welcome in Russian, geese
- ☞ Family
- ☞ School of fish with bubbles
- ☞ Spiral flower, table with glasses and bottle
- ☞ Two easy chairs and a coffee table, flower petals blooming

28—SAFE

- ☞ Mari-o (“just” my name)
- ☞ Back-to-back men (blood spilled and dripping)
- ☞ Happy face (exclamation mark and skull close to each man’s head. This is happening in America, not everyone is welcome, and lives are being taken as we paint.)
- ☞ Sun
- ☞ Music notes on pentagram
- ☞ Build each other up
- ☞ See us
- ☞ I love all of you (duality), all in you



JUNE

1—Gender identity, CSD neighborhood, DAM

- ☞ Trees
- ☞ Lead with your heart
- ☞ Favorite stuffed animal companion platypus eating a shrimp
- ☞ Ordering geese
- ☞ Penguin
- ☞ Corn, goose
- ☞ Rescued farm animals (rooster, lamb)
- ☞ Desert, forest, moon
- ☞ Horse
- ☞ Cat
- ☞ Pineapple symbol of welcoming in an Italian neighborhood
- ☞ An open book, a trail “follow me”
- ☞ The Cross of Malt

8—Translators and interpreters

- ☞ Chinese, Polish, and Spanish words, goose
- ☞ Musical instruments
- ☞ Dinosaur
- ☞ Wild mare galloping
- ☞ Pokémon, black whale
- ☞ Fish, feather
- ☞ Geese
- ☞ Words in German
- ☞ A paradise island
- ☞ Platypus adjustments
- ☞ Comunidad
- ☞ Sandía, orange, guitar, chiles, rain, moon, sun, fresas
- ☞ Courthouse
- ☞ Smile



11—Arabic Club (Adams)

- ☞ Hand palms

12—DAM

- ☞ Adjusting color value for distance perspective effect

13—DAM

- ☞ Session for the District Health Navigators
- ☞ Title brainstorm
- ☞ Proposed name: *Finding Home*
- ☞ Collective mural at the Welcome Center
- ☞ Themes for pixels: Family, Nature, Learning and Diversity





HOY



Breathe

Open



peace
♥



WOLLA DANKS

你

LISTEN



Willkommen

I LOVE ALL OF YOU



回家



nach Hause zu FINDEN

SZIAO