

Service-Learning students team on restorative art project

Once closed due to concerns about illegal camping, San Rafael's Boyd Park now hosts a mural that homeless and unemployed people helped create in collaboration with Dominican faculty and students.

The project, part of Dominican's "Community Engaged Arts" course, was guided by the idea that art is an important way to cultivate the empathy and mutual respect needed to address issues that impact the health and wellbeing of the entire community.

Students worked alongside members of San Rafael's Downtown Streets Team (DST), an organization focused on serving the homeless. Through the program, homeless individuals work on beautification efforts in exchange for food and housing vouchers.

The visual elements for the Boyd Park mural arose from dialogue regarding experiences of "home," a history of diversity in San Rafael, both people and ecosystems, and shared appreciation of the natural beauty present in the city.

Lynn Sondag, chair of Dominican's Department of Art, teaches the class with Julia van der Ryn, director of Dominican's Service-Learning program and an assistant professor of Humanities.

"The creative process is an opportunity to advocate for the dignity and health of the entire community and move beyond stigmas and stereotypes," Sondag said. "We hope this public art piece will contribute to positive civic interaction around issues that matter to all community members."

Throughout the Spring semester, students and DST members met every Thursday for the "Community Engaged Arts" course. The classes gave Team Members the opportunity to share their personal stories, dispel myths around homelessness, and engage with the community on a positive and empowering level in an effort to end homelessness.

For more information, please read this article in the [Marin Independent Journal](#).

To read reflections by DST members and Dominican students about their participation in this project, please visit <https://restore4all.wordpress.com/>

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