

# Grant-Funded Murals Inspire Nearby Students of Possibilities Through Art

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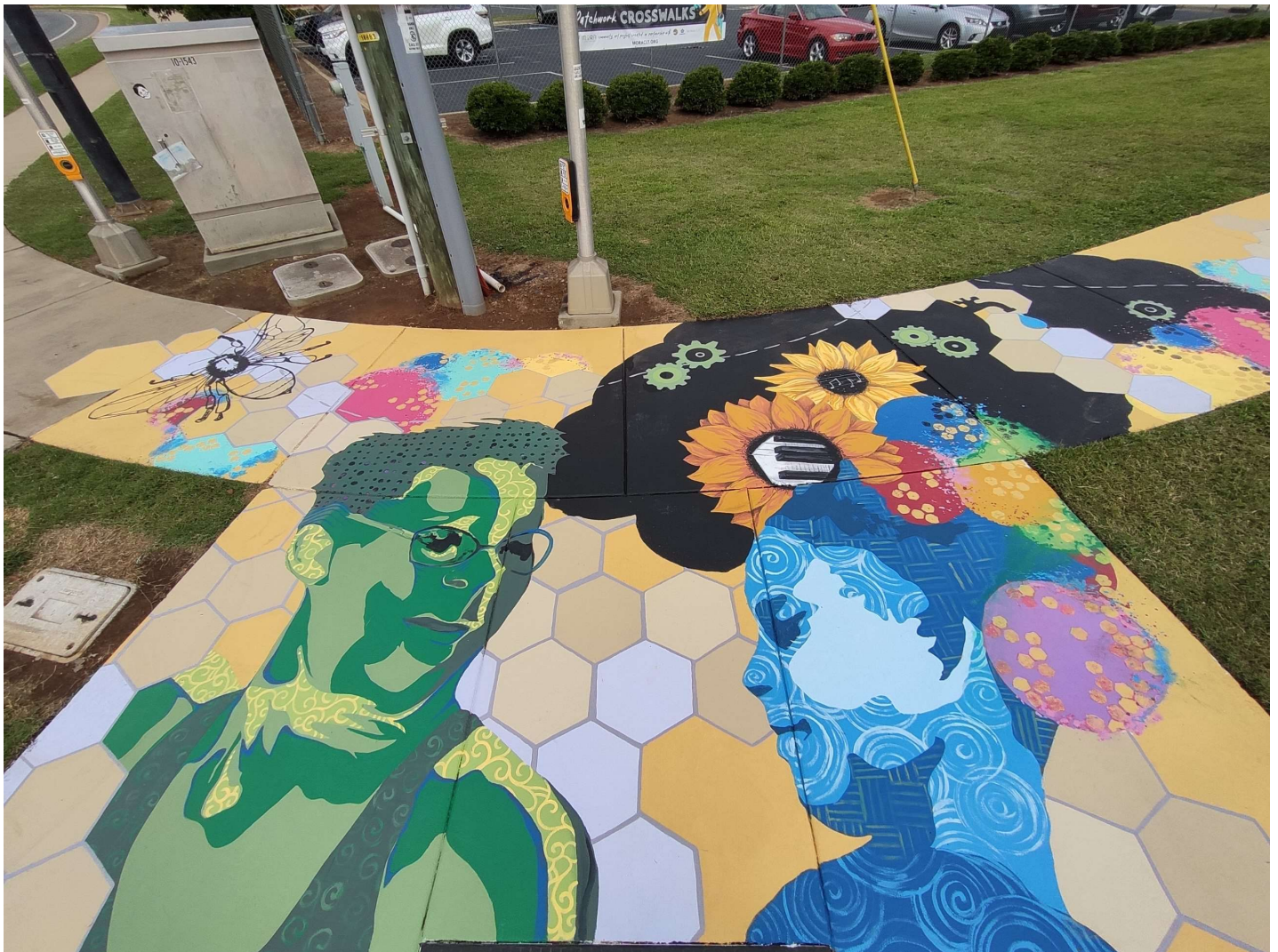
Art has the ability to not only evoke feelings of pride, but also to bring forth a sense of connection. Along Monroe Road, that is exactly what this community needed. The Monroe Road Advocates (MoRA), a volunteer organization with a mission to forge a vibrant community on the east side of Charlotte, was determined to create a project that would allow for its residents to feel seen and appreciated. A \$10,000 grant via the Neighborhood Matching Grants program offered by the City of Charlotte allowed this project to come to fruition.

For this project, several sidewalk murals were created along east Charlotte that shared the stories of its residents' inclusivity and diversity. For it to come together, a great deal of collaboration was required. MoRA collaborated with ArtWalks CLT, neighbors, community partners, and the selected



artists, MyLoan Dinh and Michelle Gregory. It also had an immeasurable impact on nearby school, Oakhurst STEAM Academy.

Principal Angela Blue is an alum of Oakhurst herself. She grew up during the integration of schools, and she understands the importance of inclusion. "I actually grew up off Beatties Ford Road, but I rode the bus 25 to 35 minutes to get to Oakhurst. I valued that experience because it allowed me to become friends, close friends, with others who don't look like me," recalled Principal Blue. Seeing the celebration of diversity through artwork located near the school is special.



The artists reached out to Principal Blue to inform her of the painting and expressed that they would like to somehow involve the school. While students did not participate in the mural, seeds of possibility were still planted.

Students learned that creating a sidewalk mural requires more than simply placing paint on the ground in an organized manner. "[Students learned] the math that was involved with it, because the artist had to create a grid...they knew the sunflower had to be painted here. The faces of the



children and the other members in the mural, they had to be painted here, and so [it] helped the children to understand that it's not just pouring paint onto cement. You have to plan. You have to use engineering. You have to use the math. You have to use the science," Principal Blue shared.



Principal Blue also discovered during the dedication ceremony that one of the artists was a former parent of an Oakhurst STEAM Academy student. Now with this mural close by the school, it serves a constant reminder to students that there is value in the beauty of diversity.

If you would like to spark change within your community via a Neighborhood Matching Grant, visit here for more details: [www.charlottenc.gov/nmg](http://www.charlottenc.gov/nmg) .

