

Arts & Culture Commission completes fundraising for public art mural, will pay tribute to Martin Luther King Jr.

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BRISTOL – The Arts & Culture Commission has completed fundraising for a public art mural which will pay tribute to the life of Martin Luther King Jr.

The \$15,000 mural, which will be located on the Primo Press building at 106 Riverside Ave., will begin in May. Connecticut artist Micaela Levesque will paint the mural. The project is being done in partnership with Connecticut's RiseUp Group, which plans to create 39 murals statewide to honor each year of King's life.



The site of the future mural. -The City of Bristol

Erica Benoit, community engagement coordinator with the Department of Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services, said that last September, the Arts & Culture Commission submitted an application to join the "mural tour," which was approved a few weeks later. The Commission then established a steering committee comprised of local stakeholders.

"The Committee's main objectives included fundraising strategies, artist selection, and guiding the mural's design," she said.

Levesque was chosen due to her recent completion of a large-scale mural on the Women's Empowerment Center in Hartford.

"The enormity and caliber her prior work excited Committee members, and ultimately drew them to select Levesque for this project," she said.

The initial design for the Bristol mural, Benoit added, is "underway." It will be the 13th mural created with RiseUp. Matt Conway, RiseUp's executive director, said that there are a half-dozen other murals currently underway statewide.

Benoit said that the Arts & Culture Commission reached their fundraising goal in two months.

"The Commission received nine major, \$500 plus, sponsors and dozens of community donations to reach their predetermined goal of \$15, 000," she said.

Sponsorship kicked off with the Main Street Community Foundation, the project's largest sponsor, supporting the mural with \$5,000.

"The Arts create vibrant communities and this project will not only enhance the City of Bristol, but celebrate its diversity," said Susan Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation.

"We are proud to be able to support this important initiative."

Scott Rosado, who owns Primo Press where the mural will be located, said that he is glad to support the project.

"I am a believer of diversity and inclusion in our community," he said. "I'm very excited to hear the conversations that will take place as people have the ability to visualize moments in history as they are stimulated through the expression of art."

The Arts & Culture Commission is planning to hold "Community Paint Days" in May, inviting the community to be part of this art project. Those who wish to participate are encouraged to follow the Arts & Culture Commission on Facebook for updates at facebook.com/cityartsandculturebristolct.

For more information, visit bristolrec.com.

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