



ART & CULTURAL MURAL PROGRAM

MURAL GUIDEBOOK

I. Getting Started

Planning and painting an “Art & Cultural” mural emphasizes learning by doing and promotes community values to young people, including a commitment to revitalization and understanding and learning cultural significance in a community. Before we start on a mural, this is what needs to be done in advance.

Step 1: Find a Mural Artist

A mural artist is critical to creating a powerful “Art & Cultural” mural and coordinating much of the activities. To start, an announcement should be posted about the project in areas where artists will be sure to see it, such as on the bulletin board of local arts organizations, schools, universities, and government offices. Consider the following criteria as you review and select artists for your project.

- Agree on the fee the artist requires and include the fee in your expenses (estimated price range is \$500- \$50,000).
- Make sure that the interested artists have experience in painting large-scale work (not necessarily murals). Ask to see their portfolio as part of the selection process.
- Ask for references on other clients with whom the artist has worked in a similar fashion.
- Make sure the artist is interested in a collaborative project with the mural team, especially with youth.
- Verify if the artist has teaching experience. It is a plus when working with youth.
- Confirm with the artist the age range of youth he/she is willing to work with on the mural project.
- Be clear about your process of community involvement at every stage in the project, and be sure that the artist is willing to take part in this large-team process.

If the mural artist is not the Project Manager, the HBCRA needs to enter into a contract for the artist’s services. The role the artist will play in the project will need to be clearly outlined and what duties he or she is expected to perform. It is best that the organization be responsible for purchasing and caring materials. The property owner retains full rights and ownership to future use of images on the mural. Several mural artists may be hired to complete the work to obtain different artistic approaches to the design and execution of the murals.

Step 2: Form a Mural Team

The mural team should include the lead artist, a Project Manager to coordinate the team members and volunteers, and, of course, young team members representing youth communities. The recommended ratio teens to instructors are from 10 to 1. If students have special needs such as physical or disciplinary challenges or English as a second language, more supervision may be needed. Consider recruiting high school or college students to fill additional leadership roles. For high school and college students-the work performed will count towards community service credit.

Parents and adult volunteers must sign a waiver form to protect the HBCRA from lawsuits in the event of injuries not covered by personal health insurance. Waivers can also certify that the volunteers are able to participate in planned activities. They can also include authorization to use photographs and quotes from volunteers in mural promotions. The HBCRA Attorney will review the waiver and recommend final participation in the program. Consider any rules regarding child protection that may be applicable.

Step 3: Select a Mural Type

Time, money, and space are key factors in selecting the type of mural for the team. Permanent and temporary murals can be completed in one day to two months and will leave lasting, positive impressions on everyone involved. Following are the details about how to create permanent and temporary murals.

Permanent Murals

A permanent mural painted directly on an existing wall structure or building could last years and have a long-lasting impact in the community. Most permanent murals are larger in size and require extensive planning.

Exterior Murals

Cost: \$7,000 - \$50,000
Size: 100 sq. feet
Difficulty: Most difficult
Life span: 10-plus years

“Art & Cultural” community murals painted on exterior walls will encourage community spirit and pride for years to come. Exterior murals are long-lasting and highly visible and are a powerful alternative to graffiti and billboards.

Planning an exterior mural requires the approval of building owners and, permits from Development services. Written permission from the property owners must be obtained. This process can take from two to six months.

An outdoor mural offers many choices for medium- to large- scale projects. Space should have no windows or views that would be blocked by parked cars, equipment and so on. Ideal surfaces for painting outdoors are smooth concrete block or stucco. Avoid crumbling surfaces that show evidence of leakage or water damage. Finally the site selected should be safely away from traffic areas or other hazardous conditions and provides access to water for cleaning.

The Ideal Exterior Surface

- Easy and safe to get to for planning, painting, and cleanup.
- Highly visible to ensure that the mural can be seen by all in the community. Corner locations are visible from all directions. Areas with row or twin houses are ideal mural locations.
- Facing north is ideal, as the surface is not prone to fading, and the light is more flattering to the colors.

Interior Murals

Cost: \$200 - \$2,000	Interior permanent murals can be placed in neighborhood schools, Community centers, or even libraries. Interior murals are usually smaller than exterior murals and can be painted with high-quality acrylic paints. Interior murals do not require weather-resistant paint and use fewer materials. As a result, working indoors is safer, requires less supervision, and usually costs less.
Size: 10 - 15 feet	
Difficulty: Most difficult	
Life span: 10-plus years	

Find a location that is public and highly visible. This location should allow the most viewing by foot traffic. Examine the surface to make sure it is smooth with no evidence of leakage or structural damage. Concrete block, plaster, plasterboard, and stucco make good mural surfaces. With brick and textured stucco, avoid unpainted surfaces.

The Ideal Interior Surface

- A smooth surface that will not absorb the paint and has no signs of long term water-damage.
- Easy access for planning, painting, and cleanup.

Temporary Murals

Temporary murals are often a great way to introduce this type of public art project to an organization for the first time. Temporary murals require less planning, are easily transported and displayed in many locations, and are then replaced. They are easier to create and are usually less expensive.

WOOD

Cost: \$100 - \$500
Size: 3x5 feet-6x10feet
Difficulty: Moderately difficult
Life span: 10-plus years

Wooden panels made from plywood can be hinged to make an A-frame, creating a two-sided, free-standing surface for a single or larger mural effect. This structural design allows the mural to be moved, either in single panels or as a larger project, to other sites. A wooden panel mural can be displayed in a community plaza, park, or along a traffic corridor. The wood surface needs at least two coats of primer before painting the design, and a good varnish or graffiti guard should be applied on top of the design.

CANVAS

Cost: \$45 - \$200
Size: 3x5 feet-6x10feet
Difficulty: Moderately difficult
Life span: 10-plus years

Canvas murals can be completed in two days to a month and are long lasting and easy to move around. Canvas murals can be displayed in various locations, offering unlimited possibilities for visibility.

Canvas must be primed before painting. Canvas can be purchased stretched and primed, giving your team additional time for planning and development. While canvas is available in cotton and linen, cotton is recommended for beginners. Canvas primed with a layer of white paint called ("jess-oh") before stretching is more expensive but is a step-saver. Another way to save time is to use canvas board, which are primed canvases glued to cardboard.

Lining a series of canvas boards attached to a wall can provide a large mural effect. Canvas boards are easy to cut into shapes as a part of the overall mural design. Use water-soluble paints like acrylic or latex for easy cleanup and safety. When completed, a canvas mural will be moved often, consider leaving the edges unfinished and paint a compatible color border.

PAPER

Cost: \$25 - \$200
Size: 3x5 feet-6x10feet
Difficulty: Not difficult
Life span: 10-plus years

Oversized rolls of paper, available at most office supply and art stores, are a great way to create inexpensive, versatile, and portable murals. Paper murals are especially convenient because they can be done as a group or individual activity and tailored to fit the time schedules and abilities of the group. Paper murals can also be used as an introduction to creating larger, more permanent murals. Consider making a collage and gluing photographs, individual drawings, pictures from magazines, fabric, glitter, ribbons, sequins, or other craft materials to your mural.

Places to Display Temporary Murals

- Art Districts
- City hall/county courthouse
- Schools (in hallways or as a backdrop on a school stage)
- Local libraries or museums
- Religious centers
- Festivals and other outdoor events
- Sidewalks
- Community recreation centers and plazas
- Retail windows of area businesses
- Outside café
- Ground surfaces

Tip Creased paper: Use a low-heat iron to smooth away creases. To increase the size of paper, attach additional sheets with white glue or a glue stick (tape will repel paint) and reinforce it on the back with tape or another strip of paper. Be sure the glue is completely dry before you start on the mural.

Step 4: Scout for a Mural Surface

Searching for the best surface is a fun way to check out possible mural locations and determine their availability. This is a great way to involve the youth on the team in finding possible locations. Make a checklist of the pros and cons of each site and contact the site owners to determine if it is available for the mural project.

Step 5: Secure Your Space

Speak to the owner of the team's first choice for a proposed mural space. Explain the Art and Cultural theme and purpose for selecting the site. When choosing the spot, consider the occupants or activities of the building. The mural, is a very public and visual pronouncement of a belief, will be perceived as "belonging" to whatever establishment occupies the building or structure. Have available a second or third location if approval is not granted for the first location. Once permission to use the selected space is obtained, keep the owner and sponsors informed of the planning and progress of the mural development.

Step 6: Obtain Permits

Permits to do the exterior painting need to be obtained. The HBCRA will help in coordinating and expediting this step.

II. Budgeting Your Mural Project

There are many factors to consider in determining projected budget cost, such as materials, permits, artist fees and expenses, and other administrative items.

Step 1: Determine Cost Projection

A few initial steps need to be considered in the development of your budget:

- A list of materials and activities needed to complete the mural project must be created. These activities may be general or very specific, such as listing supplies needed for painting.
- Divide the list into categories such as types of material- supplies/materials.
- Place a dollar value on each item listed, and be sure to budget for the unexpected.
- Total the dollar value of each item to determine projected budget costs.

Factors to Consider

The largest item on the budget is the artist's commission. The muralist will cost anywhere from \$500 to \$50,000. Often college art students are eager to paint murals and will be less expensive (but they will also know less about murals). The assistant artist may work as an assistant leader or even as the primary youth leader. There should always be someone other than the primary muralist to supervise youth at the mural site. Teachers or leaders who work specifically with your student mural team are usually paid \$8.50 to \$10 an hour. Notice that this budget does not include insurance costs; however, they are reflected in the administrative fees included in the budget.

Step 2: Secure Funding

Now that the cost of the mural is determined, obtaining funds from other sources or in-kind donations should be considered. For example, corporations may be a good source for supplies and materials. After identifying funding gaps, options for getting the necessary additional funds, materials, and volunteers needed to complete the mural should be explored. Grants, in-kind donations, group fund-raisers, and community partnerships with private and nonprofit organizations that have drug prevention grants are key ways to get funds to complete an Art & Cultural mural. Consider the following suggestions to help find a funding source.

Corporate Community Relations Offices or Foundations

Most corporations have community relations or government affairs offices that give money to local organizations.

Libraries or the Internet may help in locating a listing of corporations or foundations with headquarters in the area. Review the company or foundation guidelines to verify if the program meets their grant requirements. Some provide grants specifically to projects that develop art in public spaces, involve youth, or are health related.

To apply for a foundation or corporate grant, a completed application is usually required. The application usually requires a description of the proposed project, samples of previous work, references, and a budget. Most grant applications are similar, so it may be less difficult to apply to several organizations at the same time. After researching the foundation or corporation's grant guidelines, to ensure availability and potential of obtaining a grant, contact the organization's grant administrator.

County Public Arts Programs

Most county and/or city governments have offices of arts and culture and departments of recreation and/or parks that may have money available to fund a mural. State governments also have public art programs and funds to support various projects.

In-Kind Donations

Materials and supplies donated from local businesses, as well as donated time from experienced mural artists can dramatically reduce mural costs. Even small in-kind donations like painter's caps, t-shirts with partner or company logos, and snack foods can make a more ambitious mural project a reality than would otherwise have been possible.

Brainstorming about what the team thinks will be needed, and then identifying local businesses that might be willing to help is first. Send a letter to the business along with a description of the mural project. Stress the benefits to the business for getting involved, and be sure to mention how the business will be recognized for participating. Be sure to follow up within a few weeks of response.

SAMPLE BUDGET

Category/Items	Number of Items	Description	Estimated Costs	Your Budget
Mural Paint	20 gallons	Choose paint according to mural type (see section on painting the mural)	\$1,100	
Scaffolding Cost includes equipment rental only, not installation	N/A	Eight weeks for wall at 35-by-40	\$1,000	
Brushes	50	3-inch brushes to fine artist brushes	\$150	
Tin pans/buckets	10	Used to hold various colors of paint and water for rinsing brushes.	\$50	
Primer	1 (5 gallon drums)	Paint used as the first coat/layer before painting.	\$250	
Sealer	1 (5 gallon drums)	A type of paint used to seal paint and prevent from fading or environment damage.	\$250	
Dropcloth	2 or 3	Used to protect floors and other work areas from paint spills.	\$50	

Community Partners

Community groups with similar objectives can support your mural project by providing money, volunteers, publicity, mural space, and support of fund-raising events. Other organizations that make good partners include block and neighborhood associations, garden groups, police stations, faith centers, and community youth centers.

Step 3: Thank Your Sponsors

Sponsors are happy to donate money or make in-kind contributions to important and exciting projects that better the community, but it is important to acknowledge their help. There are a number of ways to thank sponsors.

Recognition on the Mural

Identify how the sponsor wishes to be acknowledged and find a mutually agreed upon place and size on the mural for recognition.

Recognition in Print

List sponsor(s) with a special “thank you” in a printed program or other printed materials including signs. Also acknowledge sponsors in press materials such as press releases and fact sheets.

Recognition During the Dedication Ceremony

List sponsors in announcements and provide an opportunity for a company representative to give a few remarks.

Note: If a sponsor wishes to remain anonymous, a thank-you letter to the company is sufficient.

III. Creating the Vision Activities

Step 1: Develop the Team Structure

Organize an initial meeting with team members. At this meeting, the mural project and the steps involved should be discussed. The team should set a realistic timetable for completion and each team member should be identified to commit to seeing the project through. The roles and responsibilities for each team member beginning with the planning stage to the design of the mural. (Consider roles such as project manager, public relations, and technical adviser). Additional roles may be required depending on the size of the mural project.

During the first team meeting, include visiting the site to begin thinking as a team about how the mural should look to the community when it is finished. Shape the “Art & Cultural” mural to the age and abilities of the students working with them to select a message for their peers, businesses and the community. Using languages that are spoken in the community and images that are special to kids and culturally appropriate for the district will enhance the overall goal of the “community” project.

Step 2: Find A Theme

Finding a theme can be fun and can provide the business community and participants with an opportunity to express themselves creatively. To develop a theme for the mural, the group can begin by discussing art and cultural values in the district. Team members can then identify specific images and messages unique to their community that support “Art & Cultural” theme. The discussion and planning phase of the mural is made up of two components:

- 1. WORDS:** selecting a subject or topic expressing the Art & Culture
- 2. PICTURES:** developing and creating a visual image of a design

For example, ask the team to select words or phrases that have a meaning, such as “diversity” or “history”. Then ask the team to expand on these words and phrases by suggesting images that represent their meaning. For example: A key in the shape of a music symbol unlocking a door can represent the visual image of the theme “music is the key to life.”

Bring a few books about murals to the planning meetings to illustrate the range of possibilities – from the Mexican murals of Diego Rivera to recent murals in California, Chicago, and Philadelphia.

seven months before unveiling: -Determine budget -Determine mural type -Find mural artist	two weeks before unveiling: -Begin publicizing event -Send announcements to local media. -Make calls to guest list; finalize list of those attending.
six months before unveiling: -Form mural theme -Scout for mural location -Determine mural location -Obtain insurance and permits	one week before unveiling: -Finalize ceremony details -Purchase refreshments; take care of final details -Call press to extend invitation
five months before unveiling: -Plan team meeting to discuss mural theme -Determine message -Develop mock design -Plan community meetings	two days before unveiling: -Review ceremony plans with mural team
four months before unveiling: -Obtain materials for developing mural	one day before unveiling: -Review ceremony plans with the mural team - Make last-minute calls to invited press and other guests
three months before unveiling: -Clean and repair surface -Transfer mural design to surface -Begin painting mural	Unveiling: -Set up for ceremony two hours before ceremony -Provide equal amount of time for cleanup afterward
one month before unveiling -Plan the unveiling ceremony -Develop guest list; send invitations for ceremony -Develop publicity materials -Plan for refreshments and place orders	

Need some additional help in getting the team working on creative ideas? Try these activities for inspiration.

Step 3: "That's Me" Icebreaker

Goal

To provide an active warm-up to get the participants thinking about their various interests.

Instructions

1. Have participants sit on the floor or in chairs.
2. Instruct the group to call out various pastimes, hobbies, and interests, such as fishing, sewing, or playing soccer, in a format such as "Who likes...?"
3. After the question is asked on the group, participants who are interested in this particular activity will jump up and say, "That's me!" Continue until the entire group is not standing after only one question.

Note: The leader may want to begin by asking about less common activities and work activities and work toward more popular activities. This will make certain that the entire group is not standing after only one question.

Discussion Idea's:

1. Ask the participants to write down three ways to describe the community's art and culture. Help them determine this with some information, historical data. Discuss how to show these visually.
2. How do kids decorate their rooms at home? What kinds of images and objects make them feel comfortable or help them identify with the world they live in. Talk about how to use these ideas in a mural.
3. Takes turns describing one thing each participants loves about his/her neighborhood. How can these ideas be incorporated into the mural?
4. Ask the participants people to close their eyes, relax, and meditate for a few moments and the ask them to color an area or two or three inches square that represents a feeling or relaxed alertness that comes from within.

Step 4: Declarations

Goal

To highlight and focus on local Art & Culture needs and activities.

Recommended Materials

Large sheets of white paper, flip chart, markers, and information from various websites or literature.

Instructions

1. Discuss facts or statistics about the importance of Art & Culture in the community.
2. Have participants list their personal reasons for what they think is Art & Culture.

Finally, brainstorm specific Art & Cultural themes, pictures, or slogans. Ask the team to discuss the project and their plans with friends and family members. The facilitator should write all the responses on a chalkboard and later review them with the group. Let kids help you decide which responses they like best. Some young people, particularly those who are interested in art, will “think” in terms of drawings. Notice these efforts and bring them to the attention of the rest of the team.

Tip Make sure the language and content of the mural will reflect the culture of the community. Include as many languages as your team members speak. In doing so, make sure to check the translation before putting them in a mural, because translated words sometimes have unintended and undesirable meanings.

Step 4: Develop Mock Design

Once a general theme is selected, pass out art supplies and have each team member develop a creative picture that expresses the Art & Culture theme. The final creative design will be the mock design for the mural.

Step 5: Get the Community Involved

The success of a mural depends on involvement and support from the community. The mural will become a fixture in the community and should reflect ideas and values. But getting the community involved can be a challenge. Start early by organizing a community meeting. Invite community leaders as well as the neighbors living near the proposed mural site. To help the team answer questions, give them copies of the draft of the mural design, the budget, names of sponsors, and most important, the theme.

Consider selecting a meeting location that is public and convenient such as a place of worship, school, or community center. Remember to consider people’s work schedules and family obligations when finding a mutually convenient meeting time.

Send “fliers” to every home and business in the neighborhood announcing the meeting and invite friends and families to the mural unveiling and dedication ceremony. Post an announcement at supermarkets, community centers, and in local newspapers and/or newsletters. Combine the meeting with a cleanup day organized around the site of the proposed mural or some other community event to

create interest in the mural. Identify more ways for community members to take an active part in the mural's development.

Tips

- The owners of the walls **MUST** be happy with the mural plan. Consider meeting with them separately to be sure of their support.
- A professional artist can help combine elements from several drawings into a single design. It is easier to paint flat shapes than shaded ones. Help students pick a design where their talents will shine.

IV. Painting the Mural

A wall is secured, the team is assembled, funding is obtained, a theme has been selected, and a dynamic visual presentation and community approval has been obtained. We are ready to PAINT! Before beginning, the mural surface must be prepared and, in some cases, repaired. Here are a few steps to guide the team.

Step 1: Assign Roles and Responsibilities

Gather all team members and assign roles and responsibilities. This allows every team member to feel some responsibility for the project. For example, there should be a team member in charge of materials, to review the overall mural development, one or more to work directly with youth, and one or two people to plan the dedication ceremony.

Step 2: Determine Materials Needed

Consider the type of mural that is being developed. Each mural type has specific material needs. The following materials are standard for painting interior and exterior murals.

Step 3: Prepare Surface for Work

Clean the surface

Cleaning and preparing a wall for a mural is sometimes called buffing the wall. An old exterior wall should be washed with a bleach solution. Use a power house on peeling paint. Unless the walls are new, interior walls should be washed with detergent and carefully rinsed.

Repair the Surface

Fill cracks and chips in older walls with Sealkrete or a mixture of gesso and fine sand; both are available at most local hardware stores. If the wall is outdoors, clean the area in front of the mural, removing debris and leaves that might blow onto the wet paint. Repeat this process often during painting.

Prime the Surface

Let dry for at least 24 hours. The clean, dry wall should be primed with three coats of white or off-white latex exterior house paint or primer to cover up existing graffiti and make the wall color uniform. Apply the paint with rollers to keep the texture consistent. Allow the final coat to dry for at least 24 hours before you begin to transfer the design and paint your mural.

When to use Scaffolding

When selecting a wall, remember that young painters should work on an area that is no higher than they can reach while standing on a low, sturdy support. For outdoor paintings more than 6 feet high, you will need to locate a reputable general contractor and rent scaffolding (\$250-\$400 a month). Only professional artists will work on the scaffolding while the young people paint the lower portions of the mural.

Step 4: Transfer Design to Surface

Now that you have chosen your design, your artist will likely choose one of the following methods, or a combination, to complete the transfer of the mural design to the surface. Listed are the most popular techniques. If the surface is large (taller than 8 feet), you will need to have scaffolding in place before the artist begins drawing.

Freehand

The oldest technique of wall painting is freehand or direct painting. This technique is best-suited for expressive subjects such as flowers, sky, water, and trees. Freehand is not recommended for a mural portrait, for example. If you are lettering by freehand, use a straight edge and make right angles. The disadvantage of freehand painting for a team of painters is the obvious variation of style from one painter to another. However, if your team is painting individual sections (for example, canvas panels), each by an individual artist, freehand painting can be a perfect option.

Direct Projection

A photograph can be digitized as a slide, projected onto the wall, and traced. You can also lightly write notes, which will be painted over later, to help the team find its way around the tracing when painting. Ordinary, non-digitized slides and images in an overhead projector can also be traced. If your mural is outdoors, projections should take place at night when it is dark. When using a projector, you may have to experiment a bit to find the correct distance for projecting the mural. If the mural is large (two stories tall), the tracing may take several evenings to complete. Nighttime activities could attract a good deal of interest within the community. For example, a neighborhood block party with refreshments, music and fliers explaining the project could be held at the same time as nighttime activities.

Step 5: Select Paint for Mural

Before you begin painting, consider the type of mural and its location. It is important to consider the effects that the seasons will have on the painted surface. If the surface will constantly be exposed to strong sun, wind, and rain, uses paint that will not weather easily to preserve the mural.

Best Paint for Outdoors Murals

The best paint for outdoor murals is a UV-protected acrylic (protected against ultraviolet light damage). If a UV-protected acrylic is not available, use exterior latex house paint.

Best Paint for Indoors Murals

Liquitex acrylic or other artists' acrylic paints are used for indoor murals. If your indoor mural is exposed to a lot of sun, consider a UV-protected acrylic. Latex paints can be used indoors and outdoors. Although latex is not as color fast as acrylics, it comes in a variety of colors and is less expensive.

Painting Process

Working with a professional artist, plan the stages of painting and giving each team specific assignments. Start with broad areas of flat color (background) allowing inexperienced painters to build confidence. Finish with details or areas of shading.

Periodically, the whole team should step back and critique the progress of the mural. Discuss changes and additions needed. As the mural nears completion, ask your team to consider how visually unified it looks. Can it be made more unified? It is worth the extra time and effort to make your mural as beautiful, memorable, and legible as possible since it will be a permanent fixture in the community. Start your final corrections and touch-ups at the top of the mural and work down so drips can be covered.

Sealing the Mural

When the mural is complete and dry, you have the option of applying a sealer coat. This will protect the mural, and the light will reflect evenly from all the colors. The best sealer is clear acrylic, which offers ultra-violet protection. **DO NOT USE POLYURETHANE.** It dissolves acrylic paint! Make sure a thin coat is applied with brushes or rollers.

Step 6: Cleanup

At the end of every painting session, leave time for cleanup. Emphasize simple rules for keeping materials in good condition for reuse. Lids should be tightly covered. All paint tins and brushes must be washed thoroughly. (When exposed to air for an extended period of time, acrylic paints will become hard and will not be suitable for reuse. If paint has dried on the brushes, you will not be able to use them again). Gather the clean supplies and place them in your storage area at the end of the day. If it is an outdoor mural, remember to remove any trash or unwanted materials.

Note: Hundreds of everyday household products, such as paint and paint thinners are used as inhalants by kids to get a quick high by sniffing directly from an open container or “huffing” from a rag soaked in the substance held to the face. Inhaling such products intentionally can cause heart palpitations, breathing difficulty, dizziness, and headaches in the short term and damage to the brain, nerve cells, heart, and lungs in the long term.

V. Promoting and Dedicating Your Mural

A mural dedication celebrates the mural’s relationship to the community and young muralists’ skill, creativity, and teamwork. The ceremony is also good way to thank everyone who worked on the project. The dedication reinforces each team member’s sense of social responsibility and confidence in their ability to achieve complex, real-life goals.

Scale the celebration to your mural. The larger and more public it is, the more ambitious your plans should be. Start planning the dedication for an outdoor mural early. You need this time to contact media sources in order to draw their attention to the mural. Engage journalists in the early stages of painting. The dedication ceremony should be announced in newspapers before the event.

Step 1: Plan the Details of the Dedication Ceremony

When the painting timeline is developed, set a tentative date for the unveiling ceremony. Choose a day and time that will draw a crowd; a Saturday or Sunday afternoon is ideal. Build in several extra weeks to complete the mural in case of bad weather or other problems.

Selected Invited Guests

Creating your community mural involved a lot of people – neighbors, community leaders, businesses, and sponsors. An invitation should be extended to all who made this event and mural possible.

Develop a simple, inexpensive invitation for broad community distribution such as a flier or post card. Distribute fliers throughout the neighborhood a week in advance. Give each team member copies of fliers for friends and family. Send invitations to or telephone team members, sponsors, and anyone who assisted in making the project possible. Personally invite community elders, teachers, and other respected local residents. Hand out fliers to passers-by at the last painting (sealing) session. Invite representatives of organizations that might support the mural idea. Invite journalists who might be interested in your story. Consider the location and travel requirements for your mural to make sure that journalists are able to attend the event and meet story deadlines.

Refreshments

Local supermarkets, restaurants, or other businesses may donate refreshments and paper goods for your event, but also consider preparing the food. When neighbors prepare food for the party, the dedication becomes a truly unique and special event.

Step 2: Determine Elements Needed for a Dedication Program Speakers

Determine who should participate in the dedication program. You may want to ask an important community leader, like the Mayor or City Manager, to officially dedicate the mural. Provide your sponsor(s) with an opportunity to share and say a few words regarding their participation. Also include a spokesperson from the mural team. Prepare mural team members on questions about the mural and what it means to them.

Entertainment

Budget permitting, feature a local band, poet, singer, dancer, or other entertainer, or consider bringing upbeat music on a tape or a CD and decorating the area around mural dedication to give it a celebratory feel. Radio stations will often broadcast live from community events and bring promotional items to attract a crowd.

Printed Program

A printed program for your dedication ceremony also should include information about the mural and the mural team and should acknowledge the sponsors. The program can be a simple sheet of paper or a more elaborate pamphlet. A member of the mural team could design it, or perhaps there is a local graphic artist who would be willing to donate time to develop and copy the program for distribution at the dedication.

