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City Dedicates Disabilities Mural on October 4, 2008

Painting a mural is a big project! That's why the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program enlisted the help of Art-Reach and other community agencies to participate in a Community Paint Day for "Independence Starts Here," an enormous new mural on the Avenue of the Arts at Broad and Race Streets that celebrates the achievements and contributions of people with disabilities.

The Community Paint Day for "Independence Starts Here" took place last fall at Carousel House in Fairmount Park, a unique recreation center specifically for people with disabilities. The goal of the project was to have members of the disability community work with their friends, families and community leaders to create a mural recognizing the achievements of the disability community. After much research and community involvement, artist Don Gensler fused the many ideas into one fantastic mural, and during the Community Paint Day Gensler mobilized an army of volunteers to actualize this incredible image.



Artist Don Gensler lead participants of HeARTS for Autism through a print making art project last fall that inspired the design of the Disabilities Mural.

Paint Day participants worked on large pieces of parachute cloth with sections of the mural traced on them. Each section was numbered, and the numbers corresponded to specific color, which participants applied. Gensler then took the completed sections and applied them at the mural site.



Throughout the Paint Day process, the spirit of community and collaboration permeated the workspace. From start to finish, a mural is a vehicle for community collaboration, and at the completion of the Paint Day all the participants had instilled a portion of themselves into the mural where their story will be captured for all to see.

Art-Reach joins with Mural Arts and all our community partners to celebrate the dedication of "Independence Starts Here" on Saturday, October 4, at 2:00 p.m. This is a free community event held rain or shine at the mural site at Broad and Race Streets. No RSVP is required, and we hope to see you there!



Easter Seals joined the paint day and helped create the mural