

# ART AT WORK

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AN ARTS & EQUITY INITIATIVE

## PUTTING CREATIVITY TO WORK

- Nominated for a National League of Cities “Best Practices” Award
- Featured as one of the NEA’s five ‘Our Town’ e-books on creative placemaking
- Marty Pottenger received a Portland Police Department “Hero Award” for *Thin Blue Lines*



Creativity is a tool that can transform situations, inspire people to action, stimulate collaborative culture, catalyze innovative ideas and create solutions the size of the challenges. It belongs in galleries, but also in neighborhoods, schools and governments - any place where policies and practices are determined. That's the work of Art At Work.

This initiative is designed to tackle neighborhood and civic challenges with arts-based projects. It increases the odds that cities and communities throughout the U.S. will be able to turn anticipated social and economic crises into opportunities that bring community and city leaders together, increasing understanding among those who often see one another as opponents rather than allies.





The process of making art dramatically increases our ability to tap into a flexible intelligence, function collaboratively, analyze complex challenges, integrate contradictory perspectives, envision a positive outcome and be willing to take inspired risks that lead to innovative solutions.

- Marty Pottenger

What if police wrote poetry to improve morale?

What if city councilors sang to practice listening?

What if sanitation workers carved prints to combat racism?

# MAKING THE CASE: PORTLAND, MAINE selected projects

## Challenge

Historic low morale in Police Department; upset & disdain for command staff, union leadership and city management; impacting safety, retention, productivity & community relations

Culture of unaware & intentional racism and discrimination in the Public Service Department resulting in multiple lawsuits against the City by employees, requiring resources, but not resulting in culture change

Escalating incidents of groups of teenagers throwing rocks & bottles at police cruisers, officers & city workers after police killed an armed, Sudanese resident; youth community believed the man was unarmed; national media coverage

## Strategy

Increase visibility & appreciation of individual officers & the hard work they do well everyday; raise awareness re: public's skewed attitudes of police officers; show human side

Create a more welcoming, equitable culture by raising visibility of employees' heritages, addressing the notion of "whiteness" while raising appreciation for diversity and increasing departmental pride

Portland's Police Chief asked Art At Work's Director to write and direct a play using interviews with officers about their lives and work to be performed at city high schools as a way of stopping the attacks and building relationships

## Project

Partner officers with poets & photographers to create art about their lives & work; publish high quality calendar; send to their families, other police departments & sell on Amazon

Story workshops with PS department's ten divisions; harvest stories in workshops that reflect know-how & pride in heritage(s), work, & life; carve block prints illustrating those stories & family photos

Performances developed from a series of user-friendly workshops & ride-alongs with officers including those who use an aggressive policing style; interviews w/ PBA leaders, command staff, African refugee youth and City Councilors; rehearsals with police & refugee youth to deepen connections

## Innovative, cost effective, outcome driven projects for municipal government

### Product

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Calendars sold at Amazon, Borders, local bookstores, gas stations, schools, coffee shops, court house and city depts; Officers did a public poetry reading/civic dialogue that was broadcast throughout New England and on YouTube.

A collection of 100+ stories and 100+ block prints created a 'dictionary of images'; workers used the carved blocks/ rubber stamps they wanted to tell their unique life & work story. Framed prints at 12 Public Services locations + City Hall.

Two original performances – one by officers, one by African refugee high school students, performed together at all 3 city high schools & public library; outreach to Police Chief, command staff, principals & faculty, city and community leaders; Q&A's and filmed for broadcast on local station; ½ day facilitated debriefing for both casts - officers & youth

### Outcome

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A Kellogg Foundation-funded evaluation confirmed 83% of officers reported that the calendar improved their morale; the next year, twice as many volunteered to write poetry; one poem changed an extremely unpopular policy; significant positive public response continued for 3 years; articles in NYT, APB, Fox, MSNBC, Forbes, etc; over 26,000 internet hits, 8000 sold, 5000 given to community

In the year following this project there was a 50% reduction in discrimination suits filed; the entire department was excited about the project as finished prints were framed & displayed at many workplaces; stories associated with the prints were incorporated into their culture of teasing, but this time with pride, making 'minor celebrities' of workers willing to openly combat racism.

All attacks on officers & city workers ceased; teachers & students initiated discussions filled with insights on the importance of police as individuals & officers; the debriefing revealed 'life changing' reevaluations of each other for each participant; one Somali student, inspired by experience, organized first-ever meetings with Somali leaders, police chief, regional director of DHS and FBI; officers reported a dramatic increase in 'positive youth interactions that referenced the performances'; significant positive media coverage



Art At Work is a national initiative to improve municipal government through strategic arts projects between municipal employees, elected officials and local artists.

After a year of planning, Art At Work's first pilot project was started by Marty Pottenger in Portland, Maine. The pilot is a partnership between the City of Portland, Maine and nonprofit Terra Moto Inc, where Pottenger serves as Executive Director. With core funding from the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the first three years have been a time of learning, experimentation, and laying the foundations for Art At Work to become permanently integrated into municipal operations. Half the projects are initiated by city departments and/or neighborhood residents themselves and half continue to reflect AAW's interest in "making the case" for new partnerships, illustrating for them that arts-based projects can provide cost-effective, sustainable, and culture-changing outcomes.

The first two years in Portland resulted in seven significant projects with Police/Public Safety, Health & Human Services, Public Works, and ACSFME Local 481.



The Art At Work method begins with a participatory planning process that joins the unique perspectives of professional artists with city staff to identify departments' challenges and the assets that municipal staff can use to address them. **Low morale, high turnover, discrimination and poor relationships with the public** were some of the challenges identified during this initial assessment process with participating departments. Once the key issue(s) have been determined with the city department, designing an appropriate arts project begins, and a local artist is partnered with the participating department.

Municipal workers, residents and local artists have created over 300 original artworks, poems, stories and photographs that apply an imaginative intelligence to systemic problems. Program evaluations at the end of each project capture the impacts of the project. Art At Work projects have been credited by city leaders with **increasing departmental cooperation, enhancing public awareness and appreciation for municipal employees and the work of government, ending an escalating series of attacks on police officers and parks workers by groups of youth, instilling a spirit of respect and relationship among city staff, managers and elected officials amidst a time of dramatic cutbacks and layoffs.** AAW's two newest projects focus on strengthening local neighborhoods and building relationships among key municipal and grassroots leaders.







# ARTS & EQUITY INITIATIVE

THANK YOU TO OUR  
PARTNERS AND SPONSORS  
FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF  
ARTS & EQUITY INITIATIVE  
AT THE CITY OF PORTLAND



Art At Work Portland's purpose is to actualize the City's commitment to creating a diverse multiculturally aware workforce. Through creative engagement between professional artists, city staff, elected officials and community members, Art At Work strengthens core factors of a healthy city - pride, informed and engaged citizenry, shared vision, valued leadership.



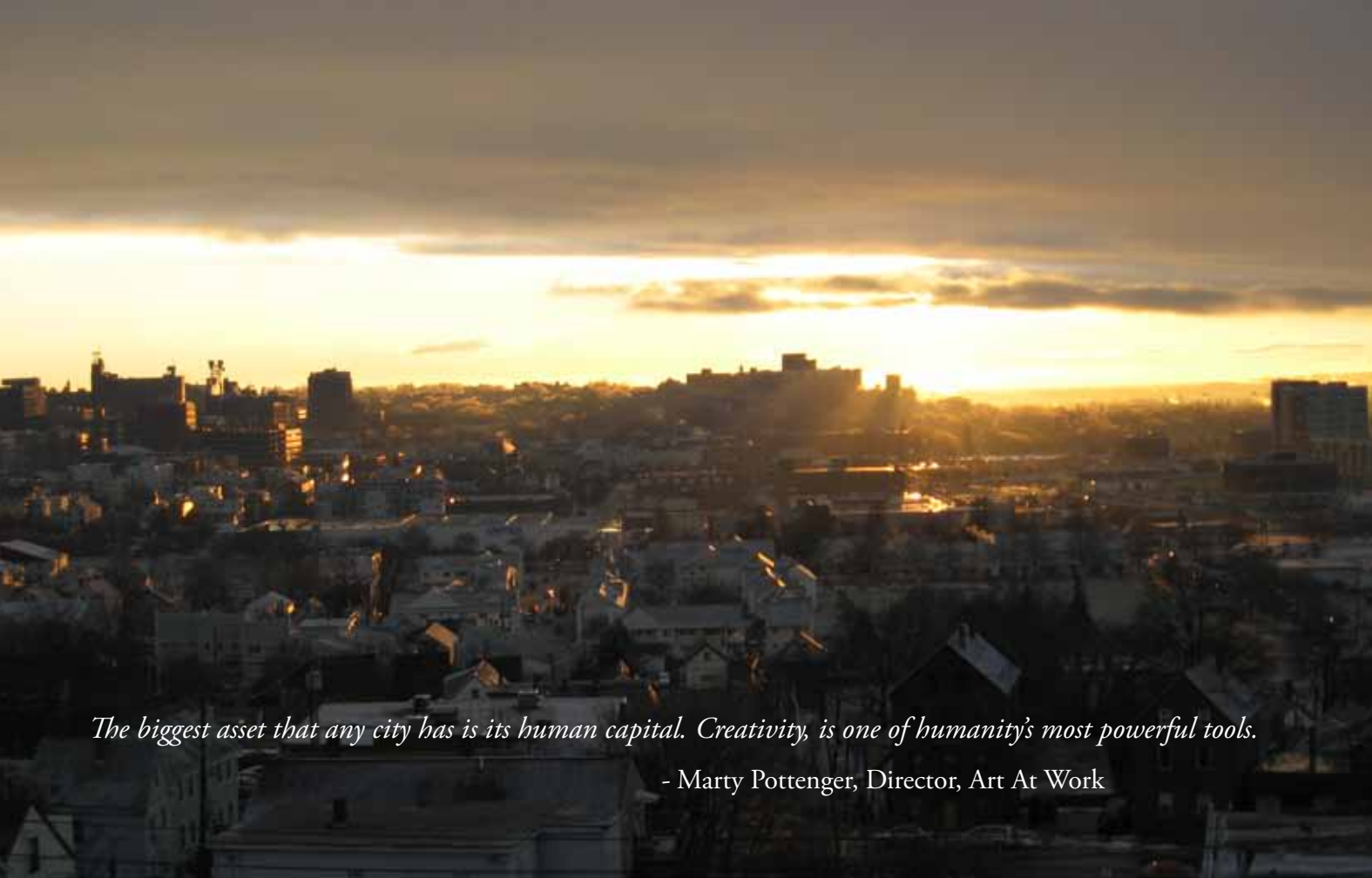


## *I Do Hate The Hat*

Talking to a child  
or a victim, someone harmed,  
I take it off.

*Officer Alissa Poisson*

One 'minor' - but to officers, significant-  
impact of their poetry calendar, was that a  
long-disputed departmental uniform policy  
was changed as a result of this poem.



*The biggest asset that any city has is its human capital. Creativity, is one of humanity's most powerful tools.*

- Marty Pottenger, Director, Art At Work

# PROJECTS CITY OF PORTLAND

- THIN BLUE LINES - poetry, photographs, public discussions, readings, exhibits  
Police Department / Public Safety - Artist Marty Pottenger
- PUBLIC WORKS - block prints, storycircles, exhibits, public art: coffee cups & sculpture  
AFSCME Local 481 / Department of Public Services - Artist Daniel Minter
- TIES THAT BIND - prints, storycircles, story writing, exhibits, blog,  
Department of Health & Human Services - Artist Elizabeth Jabar
- CITY WRITERS GROUP - Poetry, essays, stories photographs, chapbook, exhibits  
City of Portland All Departments
- LINES PORTLAND - Exhibit of prints based on road repair lines, stories  
Public Services - Artist Katarina Weslien
- FOREST CITY TIMES - 2 original performances, 'Radio Calls', 'The Weeping City'  
Police Department/High School students - Artists Marty Pottenger, Maine Inside Out
- MEETING PLACE - Chorale singing, drumming, photography, poetry, storytelling, dialogue  
4 Neighborhood Associations - Various Artists
- PORTLAND WORKS - Collage, poetry, storytelling, chorale singing, discussions  
City, Union, and community leaders - Various Artists





# THIN BLUE LINES

POETRY, PHOTOGRAPHS, CIVIC DIALOGUES, READINGS, EXHIBITS

Police Department / Public Safety

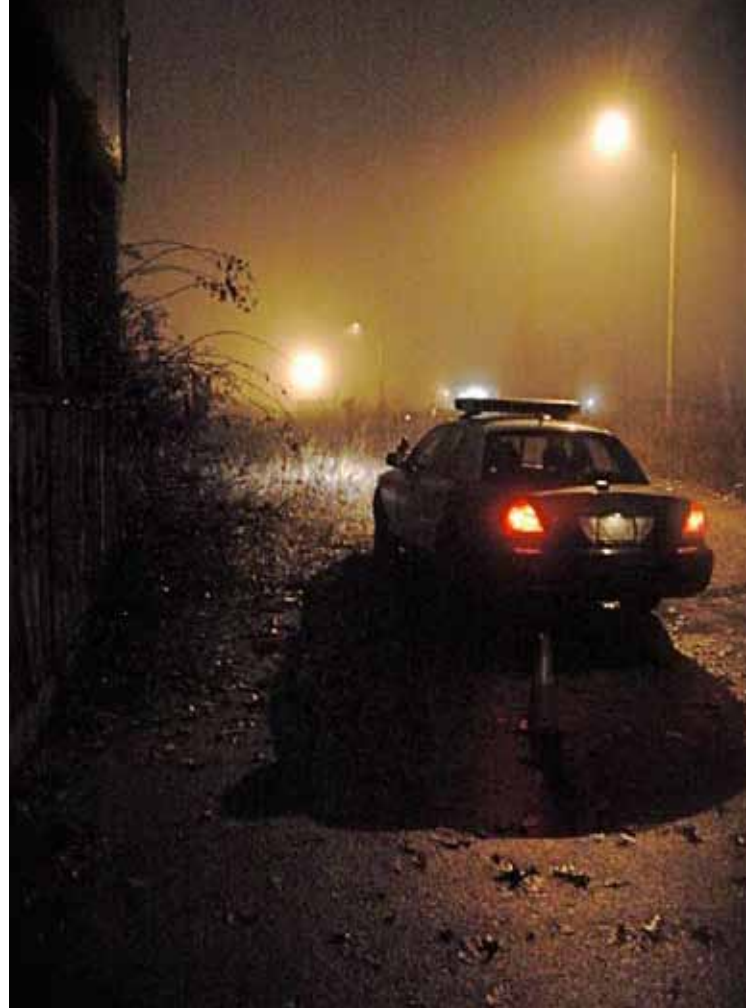
Artist: Marty Pottenger, Poets: Annie Finch, Gibson Fay-LeBlanc,  
Michael Macklin, Betsy Sholl, Martin Steingesser

*Not surprisingly, in the process of helping others to understand them, the poems also helped officers to understand themselves. Officer Alissa Poisson told the Associated Press, "In this job, you try to keep your emotions in a box," she said. "It's a hard job and if you get too emotional, it becomes even harder."* -- The Huffington Post

- Challenges: Improve morale and community relations
- Strategy: Partner police with local artists to both write poetry and take photographs that increase departmental pride and public awareness of officers' experience
- Outcomes: Publication of 2 internationally-acclaimed police poetry calendars; 5 police poetry readings; 4 arts-based civic dialogues with the police and community; Calendars bought by police officers, family members and departments throughout the U.S.; Online videos of officers and poets; permanent exhibit of 60 photographs at police headquarters. An evaluation funded by the Kellogg Foundation determined that 83% of participating officers reported a significant increase in morale.



It's probably accurate to say that people rarely put the idea of police anywhere near the idea of poetry. They seem so very different – one internal, the other external; one private, the other quite public; one demanding a flexibility and openness, the other about force and control. But both rely on observation. Both require risk and an intuitive trust in ones own judgment. And both demand courage, the kind needed to head into a scary place - metaphoric or actual – and not turn back.





But those weren't the reasons that ten Portland police officers and detectives said 'yes' to creating a police calendar by partnering with ten local poets & photographers. They said 'yes' because they wanted to help raise money for Rob Johnsey's family, an officer who died from an accidental gunshot wound. Partner activities included ride-alongs, time at headquarters, coffee, swapping stories, rhymes and editing suggestions. At the first meeting between the poets and police officers, Lt. Sauschuck said, "I gotta be honest with you Marty, if you gave me a choice between writing a poem or fighting four guys at the same time in the street out there, I'd be fighting those four guys right now." After a few seconds, poet Annie Finch sighed and said in a forlorn tone, "Me too. Writing poetry is hard."

The project was designed to address two key challenges that several months of interviews with the PPD had identified - their relationship with the public, and low morale. While not discounting the importance of issues like wages, benefits, job conditions and policies, Art At Work's basic hypothesis is that it's not only useful for people to make art about their work and lives, but that doing so increases their chances to come up with better solutions to longstanding problems.

Key goals for the calendar were that it would give the world a better picture of the work that police departments do and that it would raise money for Rob's family and more projects like this one. It would also result in the men and women of the Portland Police Department (PPD), sworn and civilian, having the value of their service reflected back to them by the people of Portland. This dynamic would then lead to even more positive outcomes in the future.

## *Fishbowl*

People stare, always staring.  
We like it, the uniform, the badge, the justice.  
We hate it, the computer, the pen, the law.  
This isn't what we thought.  
I want black and white and am troubled by gray.  
I have handcuffs but am reluctant to use them.  
What will they say about me tomorrow in the light.  
I use a flashlight because it's dark and fast  
and others have the sun and the power to judge:  
Was it attitude or the law that made him act?  
I like it, the uniform, the badge, the justice.

*Lt. Mike Sauschuck*



## Things I Carry

Always it has to be in my right pocket,  
the knife with the dull blade.  
I look at it on the shelf in my locker and think,  
Why am I bringing that?  
I can't leave without it — just in case.  
I look at it almost every day. I don't need that knife!  
Every day I bring it.  
My black gloves, fabric on top, Kevlar on the palms,  
in case someone has something sharp, a needle or razor —  
I don't pat anybody down without those gloves.  
They're my second pair, someone's blood on the first.  
We do carry a lot of gear — 20 pounds: pepper spray,  
flashlight, two sets of handcuffs, one hinged, one linked,  
radio, baton, knife, gun, two clips of bullets.  
Inside my hat, a picture of Rob, the card from his funeral.  
There's a small plastic window in the hat.  
Some officers use a picture of someone in their family,  
some a prayer. Rob's in mine.  
The photo is not there to remind me  
something terrible happened, yet I don't want to forget.  
I carry a Glock 45. That's my gun.

It's too big for my hand. And heavy.  
13 x 3, plus one in the chamber. Forty bullets —  
silver, with copper power points.  
I always wear the earrings, never take them off.  
My ears have been pierced since three.  
And the ring, too, I used to take it off, leave it in the locker,  
but I don't want to be separated from my life.  
From that promise of love.  
Maybe that's why the shift commander  
gets impatient when I write in blue.  
Everyone else writes in black," he says.  
Blue reports, the earrings, pieces of my other life,  
wrapped in the things I carry.

*Officer Alissa Poisson, PPD*





## CIVIC DIALOGUE

Civic Dialogues are an important part of Art At Work's long range strategy. Municipalities have a long tradition of public hearings, town hall meetings, and citizens' review boards - all fairly formal events where community members come to state their positions, perspectives, concerns, criticisms, outrage and, occasionally, appreciation. They also allow elected officials and city staff to communicate policies, proposals, and perspectives. They are rarely places where people change their minds or leave with a new perspectives or feel fully listened to.

“Arts-based civic dialogue” describes an event in which people address a controversial issue by using an artistic element (performance, exhibit, writing, etc.). Over the last ten years in the United States alone, hundreds such projects have occurred, initiated by communities, artists and governments. One indisputable finding from these efforts is that having artistic expression as an integral part of a civic dialogue enhances the participants' ability to think in fresh ways, genuinely listen to others, connect with others' experiences, acknowledge contradictory thoughts and demonstrate greater flexibility. In 2011, Art At Work Portland facilitated fourteen arts-based civic dialogues, a number which had doubled in 2012, and continues to increase.





Police poets and community civic dialogue  
Portland Public Library

*“People still stop me (after 3 years) on the street to say ‘I saw you in the poetry calendar.’ Reading our poems was the first time they’d ever thought about what it’s like to be a police officer. That’s made a big difference to not just me but all of us out there in uniform.”*

- Officer Gayle Petty,  
Portland Police Department



Developing governmental and community capacity for respectful civic dialogues that strengthen social ties and increase understanding among the many disparate parts of city is going to be increasingly important as our nation becomes ever more diverse and dynamic. There are many controversial issues that a public needs to discuss with its police force, the public works departments, health and housing agencies and other municipal agencies. Adding the transformative element of art to these dialogues has been proven to help build the trust, connection, and understanding that will help us manage our differences more productively.

Art At Work has not had enough time to make arts-based civic dialogues a universal part of city debates and public process, but planning and preparation to do so has been a part of AAW from the beginning. The police calendar project included two modest dialogues, the first with the officers and poets at the Public Library, the second with the photographs and officers at City Hall. As part of AAW, more than 100 people met here in six different dialogue groups of citizens, artists, city managers, department heads, municipal employees and elected officials. Each group had its own flavor, but all of them included lively and productive exchanges between the police officers and the public.



*“For me, this was a huge win! I’m proud of a lot of things in my career, but this idea and its manifestation, is right up there. It drove home the fact that the police and the community are one and the same, that we are human, able to talk. I’ve never seen anything like this in 34 years in the business, and I’ve seen a lot.”*

*- Police Chief James Craig (2009 - 2011, Portland, ME) Current Police Chief of Detroit, MI*

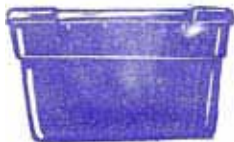
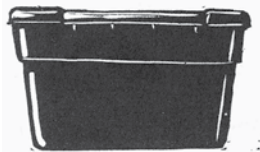
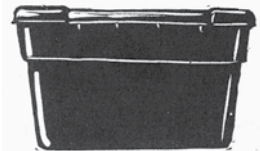
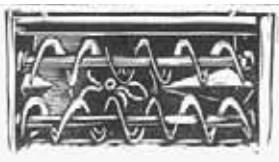
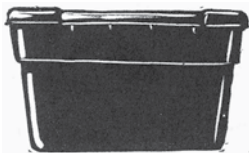
# PUBLIC WORKS

A CITYWIDE ARTS PROJECT SAVES BOTH COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND A LOT OF MONEY

AFSCME Local 481 / Department of Public Services  
Artist Daniel Minter

- Challenges: Foster awareness and respect for diversity; improve city finances by decreasing number of discrimination lawsuits; improve community relations
- Strategies: Use storytelling and printmaking workshops that focus on heritage to raise awareness and appreciation for diversity within departments and better relationships with Portland residents
- Outcomes: Number of discrimination-based lawsuits decreased substantially; AFSCME Local 481 sponsored AAW project “Lines Portland”; Public Services invited AAW to collaborate on a CDBG project





Public Services employees from a variety of divisions began participating in block printing workshops under the guidance of printmaker Daniel Minter. In these workshops employees produced images about their jobs and personal heritages, creating a dictionary of images used to tell their story. Final images were exhibited in the mechanics garages, recycling center, lunch room, and the accounting office.

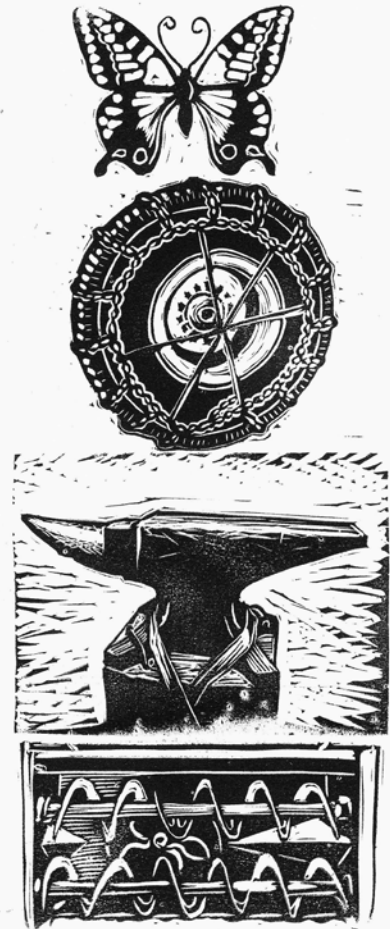
To extend the visibility and increase awareness of work accomplished by Public Services employees, selected images were printed onto paper coffee cups with the name, job, years of service and a quote from individual employees. In partnership with local coffee vendors a series of the printed cups were used throughout

Portland in July 2009. The project will also produce several temporary art installations that will be placed throughout the city. Each installation will represent a division's work -traffic signs, painting park benches, street light repair, sanitation – and will be identifiable as art by the presence of a ceramic version of the printed coffee cups.

## *That's my Life*

The hawk comes and sits on the corner of the maintenance shed out behind 55 Portland, Public Works headquarters. I took a photo of it a few weeks ago. Maybe it means something to me because I have some Native heritage. This print-making is awesome. I'm a kind of 'ready for anything' guy, so it works for me. The butterfly is for my brother who died of AIDS. He was gay and really out there, he wasn't afraid of anything, didn't back down, real courage. Anyway after he died I got a butterfly tattoo in honor of him. So the hawk, butterfly, fish – I'm really into hunting & fishing. And then the snowplow which is what I do anytime there's a storm. Those two guys – Andre & Bruce – they came in third in nationals for snowplowing. City Hall – that's homebase. Eric Lemay, he's PW's accountant for payroll. I love my job. Love working for the city. I've had lots of jobs but this one lets you feel good about what you do. When I finished this picture, I stood back, looked at it and said "That's my life."

*Dave Melendez, Trainer Public Works*



# TIES THAT BIND

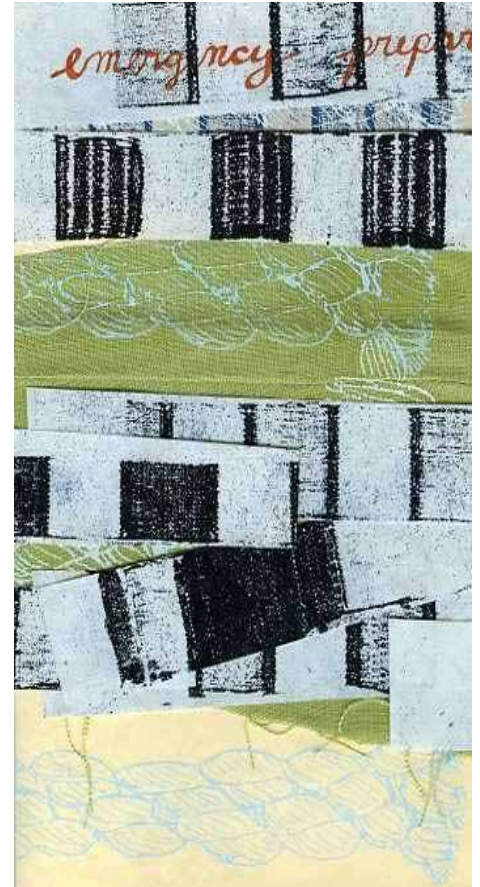
PRINTS, STORYCIRCLES, STORY WRITING, EXHIBITS, BLOG

Department of Health & Human Services  
Artist Elizabeth Jabar

- Challenge: Increase city employees' respect & awareness with regard to staff diversity
- Strategy: Create story & collage prints that reveal the staff's history, work ethic, and love of Portland
- Outcomes: Prints still hang in social services; division head requested AAW initiate a new writers program for staff, 7 division heads reported specific positive outcomes within next 2 years



As part of an intricate network of state, federal, private and public organizations, the Department of Health & Human Services addresses critical issues and is arguably the most stressful terrain in any city. They deal with issues that regularly become vehicles for political maneuvering - General Assistance, Public Health, Homeless Services, Child Welfare, Crime, Health Indicators/ Risk Factor Monitoring, Elder Issues, Mental Health & Substance Abuse, Population/Immigrant & Refugee Services. From the first Art At Work workshop, the staff's strong sense of public service and caring was evident. Each participant shared powerful stories about what brought them to this work and how they continue to sustain themselves. The challenges are impressive, and the effects unsurprisingly lead to a high rate of turnover in many of the jobs. The importance of having a tight working team, the cost of training, legal requirements, staffing, and the critical nature of the work are all places where the impact of staff turnover shows up. There is also the rarely discussed impact of dedicating oneself to work that is so misunderstood and misrepresented by the general public.





The greatest challenge that Art At Work faces isn't finding people who would like to participate, but finding the time for overworked municipal workers to come participate. Ideas that have shown promise are meeting during lunch time, which doesn't allow enough time for the deeper gains, meeting as staggered hour and a half workshops, using individual sketchbooks to keep the work portable, and setting up an area onsite with arts materials so the participants can work in between the workshops. The workshops so far have resulted in original prints by the staff of Immigrant & Refugee Services that transform the conference room used by HHS, an exhibit of prints at City Hall's Art At Work gallery, over thirty stories from the staff at Barron Center, a city-owned long term care center, about the work they do, with collages, drawings and maps about their heritage. This work is featured on the Ties That Bind blog and on the City's and Art At Work's websites.

# Six Tomatoes

I am from Eritrea, a country that several years ago won its war of independence from Ethiopia. I had been a guerrilla fighter for many years. Afterwards I went to England to get my Masters in Public Policy at Oxford. Growing up, we had a huge garden with hot peppers, taff, many vegetables and also tomatoes. My wife and I have six children so they are the six tomatoes you see by the house. I chose to come to Portland in 1992, after learning that it's a safe, clean, welcoming city to raise a family in. In my culture, to work for the common good is very important. I have lived for several years in three other cities in America and I am certain that Portland is the best city in the United States. The people, the police, the city government, they care.

*Efram Weldemichael*

*Human Services Counselor Refugee Services HHS*



# CITY WRITERS GROUP

POETRY, ESSAYS, STORIES PHOTOGRAPHS, CHAPBOOK, EXHIBITS

All Departments  
Artist Marty Pottenger

- Challenges: Increase communication and understanding between employees in separate divisions and departments; combat negative public stereotypes with regard to municipal workforce; address staff burnout amidst diminishing resources

- Strategy: Connect workers via open invitation to participate in monthly writing group focused on their jobs; create large posters featuring selected text from employees representing each department; exhibit writing at city work sites and locations with high public traffic; create chapbook for participants

The City Writers Group was a project in which any city employee, regardless of their department, could participate. The monthly meetings included employees from Parking, Dispatch, Treasury, Survey, Engineering, Housing, Fire, Police, Corporation Counsel, General Assistance and the Library. Two hours allowed for time to check-in, write, read and share positive comments. Every other meeting the group wrote about their work with the City; topics like 'first day', 'worst day' and 'mentors'. The year end anniversary of the Writers Group was celebrated by creating a chapbook of stories, essays and poems and a City Hall exhibit of the same work. Although the group is just beginning to explore some of the ways writing by city workers might be able to improve municipal government, at the end of every meeting participants would regularly talk about how much closer they felt to each other and that they were leaving with new thoughts, insights and appreciations of their co-workers and the value of working in public service.





## *Livery*

Too much gray I think.  
Every morning at 5.30  
I enter through iron gates  
Into this vast empty grayness.

Perhaps it is to contrast the  
Colored wheeled possessions  
Employed to get people somewhere near.

Their presence here  
Like colored candies  
On a brown paper bag.

I am their incidental accomplice  
To work, shopping, school or culture.  
They didn't choose me nor I them.

And yet we converge.  
I sell my time for hours of freedom  
And sell my freedom to redeem my spirit.

They pursue destinies unknown and unshared.  
For a time without thought they entrust to me  
What Thomas Wolfe thought impossible.

Reposing in my care is their way to go home again.

*-Don Burns,  
Parking Garage Shift Leader*



PARKING

NO  
PRIVATE  
DUMPING  
OF  
SNOW

BE

PARKING  
6:00 A  
TO 6:00

VEHICLES WILL  
BE TOWED

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BE TOWED

SCHOOL  
SPEED LIMIT

YIELD

NO  
CRUISING

A



# Hands

Hands....different colors, different shades of flesh, soft, rough, leathered, smooth, wrinkled, gnarled, large or small and delicate.

Hands....with fingers missing, fingernails bitten or dirty, henna stained fingertips, or french-tipped manicures.

Hands...that smell of exotic perfume, or smell of oil, diesel, fish, curry, or garlic.

Hands extended toward me  
With cash –crisp and sticky  
Straight or wadded up bills –  
sweaty, soft and worn.

Such important paper  
made up of forest green ink  
and dead presidents faces.

The plastic cards are just as popular  
-metallic holograms, numbers, and letters, pictures of kitties, mountains, or geometrical shapes, etc.

The cards slid through as if slicing  
a finely greased track - a person's  
PIN # entered as if a habitual spasm,  
beeps and rustling paper.

Where did the money come from?  
What had to be done or not  
Done to earn or receive it?  
What had to be sacrificed?

*-Tina Carlstrom,  
Treasury Department Clerk*

# LINES Portland

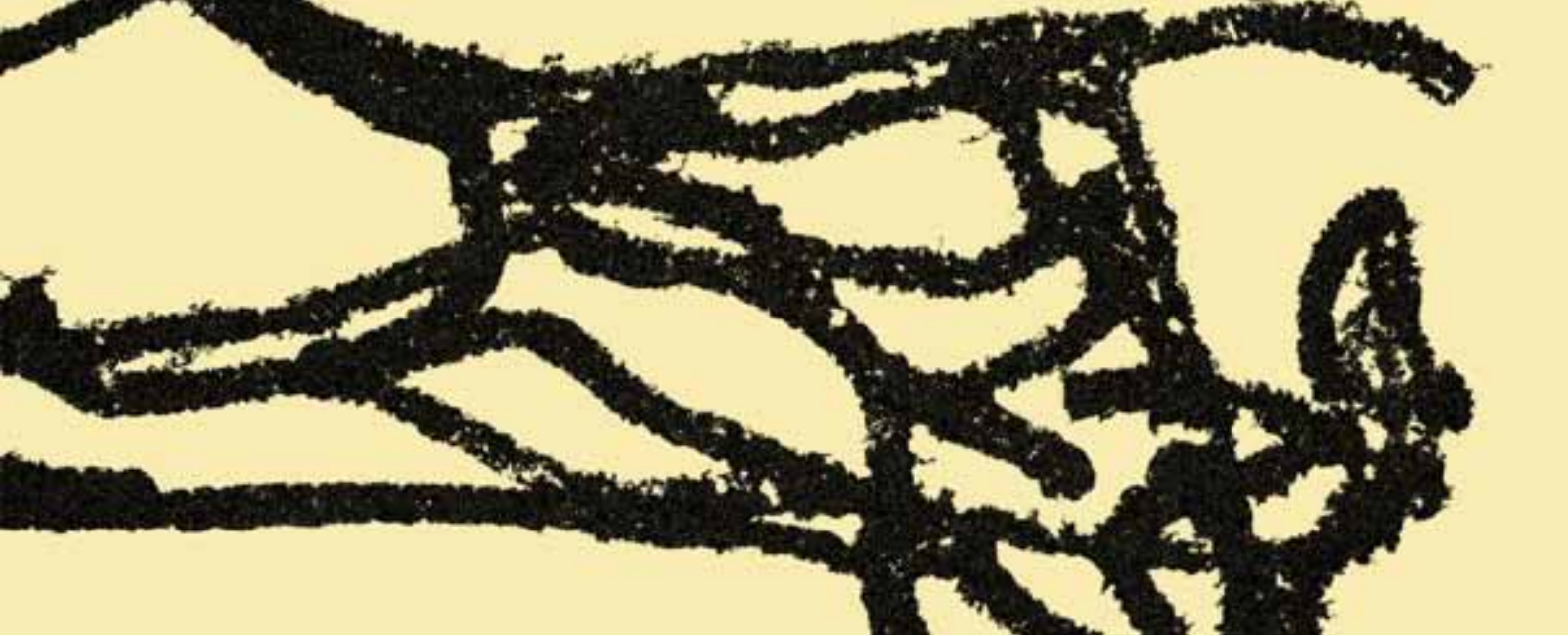
EXHIBIT OF PRINTS, PHOTOS AND MAPS

CIVIC DIALOGUE: PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGERS, AFSCME LOCAL 481 MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

Public Services/AFSCME Local 481

Artist Katarina Weslien

- Challenges: Increase public awareness of extent and value of public service work; address general lack of respect among union members for each other
- Strategy: Utilize the daily work of public service employees to create an art exhibit that draws positive media attention to the individuals who do the work, and the work itself; show this “necessary” work in a new, artistic vein
- Outcomes: Increased productivity in participating crew and increased collaboration between union members and management; greater public awareness of value of public service's labor in maintaining a healthy city and greater pride across public services divisions; permanent City Hall exhibit showing public services contributions



*LINES Portland: the invisible/visible lines and labor that connects us* is an exhibit of artist Katarina Weslien's prints based on the road repair lines made by a Public Service crew in Portland, Maine. Weslien's powerful prints serve to make visible the invisible lines and labor that connects us as neighbors and as a city.

All too often we remain unaware of the work that city workers do, even though much of the work happens out in public. Hauling garbage, plowing snow, monitoring water, cleaning sidewalks, treating sewage, repairing roads – all are quite visible to the eye, but not to the mind.

In a welcome convergence between the invisible labor of running a city and an exceptional artist's eye, the unintentional beauty of the road repair crew's labor has inspired Weslien to incorporate those designs into fine art prints.

The "LINES" opening included a panel discussion with artist Katarina Weslien, Public Services Dept. Head Mike Bobinsky and the AFSCME Local 481's Public Services road repair crew: Gordie Greenlaw, Dave Melendez, Dave Shaw, Chris Nassa and Brian Cogill.





# FOREST CITY TIMES

PERFORMANCES BY PORTLAND POLICE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Police and High School Administration/Faculty/Students  
Artist Marty Pottenger

- Challenges: Foster honest dialogue between police and youth; challenge stereotypes and judgments made on both sides; improve overall relations between youth and police; increase city's understanding of the need for these positive relationships
- Strategy: Create an original play from interviews with 25 officers, intentionally including officers who have an aggressive style of policing; bring police and student actors together to combine police play and student play into one performance followed by a civic dialogue; perform for over 50% of Portland's high school students.
- Outcomes: Stopped all instances of youth violence against police/public service employees; increased participants/audiences awareness of the the challenges faced by police officers and by immigrant youth; a comparison of students' pre and post performance evaluations showed a 300% increase in positive perceptions of police officers; 18 months after performance officers report youth who saw or heard about the performance have increased expectations of a positive interaction.

Forest City Times was created in response to intensifying tensions between the city staff and (primarily) immigrant/refugee youth following the death of a Sudanese man during a confrontation with Portland police officers. The police and parks department personnel were increasingly targeted with the labels “Murderers,” “Assassins,” “Killers,” and – on two occasions – rocks and bottles. This openly hostile stance toward police was becoming a common attitude among residents under 30 years of age. The performance featured two original plays, and was performed for of an audience of over 1,000; high school faculty, as well as half of Portland’s high school students, were in attendance.



The performance opened with *The Weeping City*, a production by local nonprofit Maine Inside Out that explores the relationship between young immigrants and the police. It was performed by 9 students, all born in Africa, who helped to write and stage the play. Inspired by a performance of *The Weeping City* and Art At Work’s poetry and photography projects with the police, Portland Police Chief James Craig asked Art At Work’s Director Marty Pottenger to write and direct a performance that communicated the police officers’ perspectives for local high schools. *Radio Calls*, developed from interviews and workshops with over



25 police officers, is the result. *Radio Calls* featured five Portland police officers sharing stories about their lives, work and interactions with Portland's youth.

*Forest City Times* concluded with facilitated dialogues with officers, students and audience members that examined where we are, where we want to be and how we might get there. At the end of every performance, high school students flocked to meet the police officers in person, to ask more questions and to share their perspectives on the issues. Officers have reported countless instances of positive engagements with youth in direct response to the performances.







# PORTLAND WORKS

CIVIC TOPICS + ART MAKING WORKSHOPS

Key Leaders: Grassroots, Community, City

Artists: Tonee Harbert/Photography, Andrea Kelly Rosenberg/Singing,  
Daniel Minter/Prints, Marty Pottenger/Story Telling, Betsy Sholl/Poetry

- Challenges: Establish structures for ongoing communication and relationships between municipal and community leaders; decrease tensions between immigrant/refugee communities and city departments; reduce incidence of lawsuits that charge city workforce with misconduct.

- Strategy: Artmaking workshops that partner city staff and elected officials with community leaders; topics include the personal, practical, political; resulting in public art installations that bring people together and give residents concrete evidence that citywide collaborative civic engagement is possible.

Portland Works employs artmaking as a catalyst to build enduring, authentic relationships and trust - all essential components needed to solve increasing challenges facing cities. Created in response to civic and social tensions between city employees, elected officials and the immigrant and refugee communities, Portland Works partners municipal participants – city councilors, police, public service, social service, fire and EMS workers – with community leaders who reflect both the city’s growing diversity and the residents who have lived here for generations. Exploring topics including **civics, history, life stories** and the “**state of the city,**” participants meet monthly to create and share individual artworks.

The last workshop in each Portland Works session includes a debriefing to evaluate of the impacts of the project and share that knowledge with local and national audiences. The first session of Portland Works included 30 participants meeting over the course of 4 months (3 artmaking workshops + debriefing session). It is our hope and intention to repeat Portland Works multiple times over the next two years in order to reach a maximum audience, thereby increasing the project’s reach and impact.

Project challenges are addressed through **education, facilitated discussion** and **artmaking**, under the guidance of professional artists, participants create unique art – photography, mosaics, collage, printmaking, poetry, graffiti, video, audio, music – into public art projects. Such projects might include sidewalk stencils, park benches, murals, painted light poles, images on sanitation trucks – all of it art that connects people to their communities, each other and the city.

## *Unknown Destiny*

Landed in Portland from a sunny country in the middle of the winter, when all the ground was covered by snow.

Born and raised in the Democratic of Congo a country that never recognized my citizenship, even though my ancestors lived there for over 40,000 years.

My neighbors were mostly white and spoke all English and I wondered how I was going to survive with limited language ability, and being different from them.

My new home has adopted diversity, but many newcomers are still facing

challenges that leave me to wonder if this will be the place they call home.

Is my new home another Congo?  
Where I will live with many unanswered questions about my future.



*-Claude Rwaganje,  
Director of Community  
Financial Literacy*



# MEETING PLACE

ART WORKSHOPS, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, GATEWAY ARTS PROJECTS

“All four of these projects strike me as fantastic. NEA Our Town is helping lead arts-centered explorations of each neighborhood’s history, assets and challenges. Strengthening community by strengthening place is critical to sustainability. If we don’t have places that are worth caring about, they literally will not be sustained.” - The Atlantic *CITIES - 4 Examples of Powerful Placemaking*

Annegret Baier, Shamou/Percussion, Kelly Rioux/Visual, Tonee Harbert/Photography, Daniel Minter/Prints, Betsy Sholl/Poetry, Andrea Kelly Rosenberg/Singing, Marty Pottenger/Stories

- Challenges: Strengthen four neighborhood organizations as partners with government; expand memberships to reflect true socioeconomic and cultural diversity of residents; increase civic participation and economic development
- Strategy: Directly connect residents and businesses to associations with art workshops that focus on neighborhood histories, assets, challenges and leadership development

- Outcomes: 150 one-year public art installations that redefine, celebrate and increase awareness of four neighborhoods, 600% increase in positive city/state/regional media coverage for East Bayside, over 300 new East Bayside Neighborhood Organization conversations & contacts made with residents, new motivated leadership in two neighborhood organizations, Increase in diversity of neighborhood organization membership: racial, national origin, income, age, new partnership with over fifteen neighborhood businesses and organizations, two more neighborhood associations are incorporating arts-based community development, new fundraising approaches


Vibrant neighborhood organizations are one of the most significant untapped assets available to cities as they struggle to face increasing challenges amidst diminishing resources. Portland has a rich tapestry of 19 diverse neighborhoods, all with the potential to play central roles in ensuring the well-being of their residents through civic engagement, local organizations, institutions and community planning.

In order to have impact, a strong neighborhood organization needs 1) engaged, active members that reflect the diversity of the community; 2) a collaborative culture with recognized and supported leaders; 3) a knowledge of its challenges and assets; 4) good relationships with other neighborhoods and city government; and 5) an environment of respect, caring, hope and vision.



Art At Work's newest project, Meeting Place, is a multidisciplinary arts project to help four Portland neighborhoods develop and deepen their networks of connection by tapping into the transformative power of the arts through year long partnerships with local artists.

Neighborhoods: Libbytown, West End, Bayside, East Bayside



Selected by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of their Our Town initiative, Meeting Place re-envisioned and resets Portland's identity as a diverse, welcoming and innovative city with an engaged vital partnership between her neighborhoods and city government.

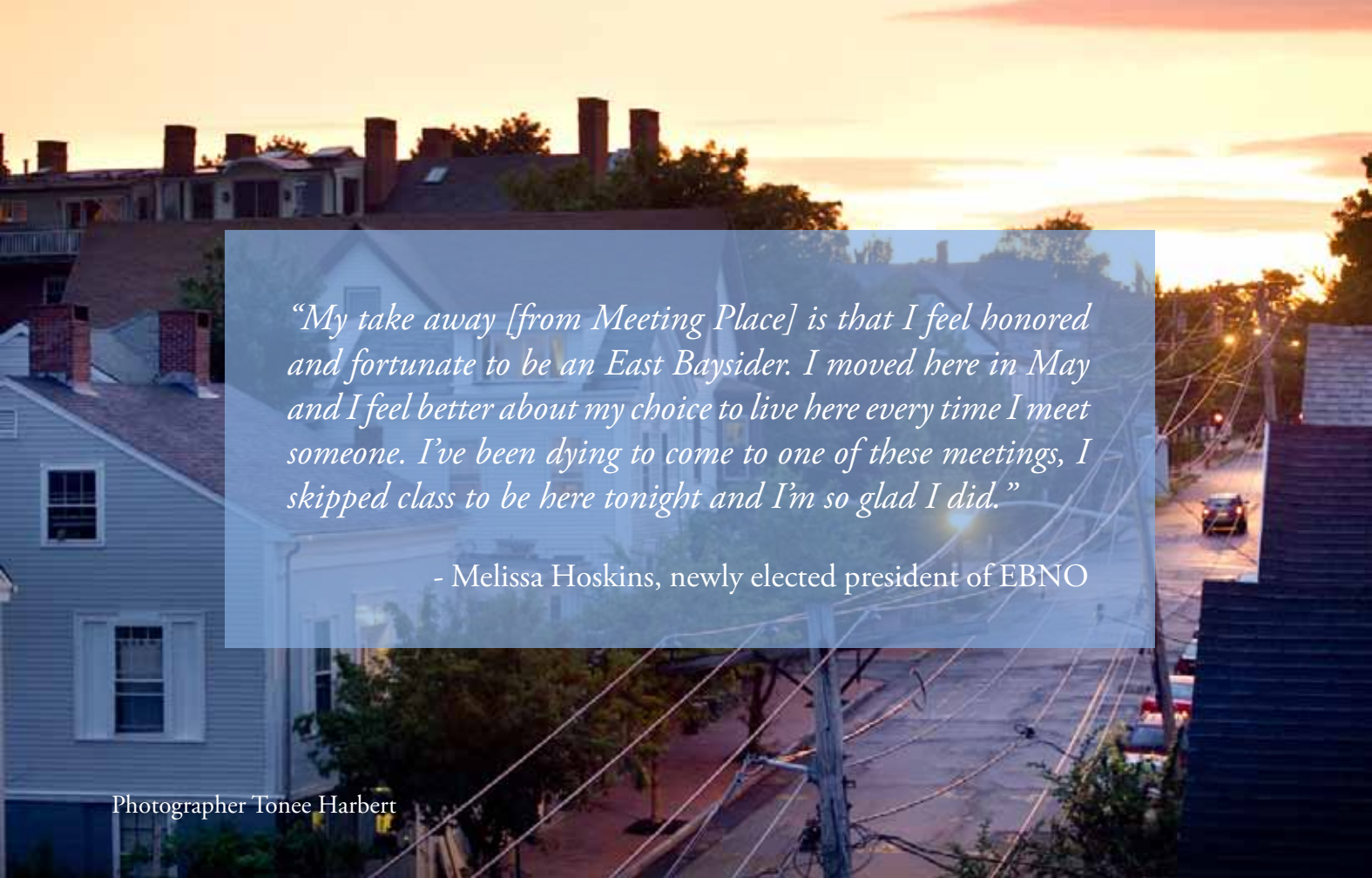
Meeting Place artists led monthly arts-based workshops on neighborhood-related topics that increase civic engagement, pride, and unity and culminate in the creation of four neighborhood art projects, called 'Gateway Arts Projects' celebrations.

Workshop topics include "Stories and Places of Meaning" with photographer Tonee Harbert; "Neighborhood History from Dinosaurs to Now" with the Maine Historical Society and former Maine Poet Laureate Betsy Sholl; "Mapping Relationships, Assets & Challenges" with USM Muskie School's Charles Colgan and visual artist Daniel Minter; and "Economic Vitality" with the city's Greg Mitchell; and "Leadership and Followship" with chorale director Andrea Kelley Rosenberg.

As part of building neighborhood capacity and organizational muscle each neighborhood worked with a professional fundraiser to assist them in raising \$5,000 toward the cost of their 'Gateway Arts Project.' In addition to the 'Gateway Arts Project' the two citywide festivals, hosted jointly by Bayside/East Bayside on September 22nd and Libbytown/West End on September 29th, included a neighborhood open house/trail, storytelling/spoken word performances, and art exhibits.

Meeting Place was made possible with the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts 'Our Town', Nathan Cummings Foundation, Maine Arts Commission, Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, Daveis Benevolent Fund, Gorrill Palmer Consulting Engineers, ICMA-RC, Sebago Technics, Inc., Delta Dental, Espos Trattoria, Anania's, Clarion Hotel, Tony's Donuts, East Bayside Neighborhood Organization, West End Neighborhood Association, Bayside Neighborhood Association and the residents of Libbytown and the City of Portland





*“My take away [from Meeting Place] is that I feel honored and fortunate to be an East Baysider. I moved here in May and I feel better about my choice to live here every time I meet someone. I’ve been dying to come to one of these meetings, I skipped class to be here tonight and I’m so glad I did.”*

- Melissa Hoskins, newly elected president of EBNO

Photographer Tonce Harbert



## LIBBYTOWN 9 to Noon

### Tony's Donuts

Can poetry stitch a neighborhood back together? Come explore Libbytown with a Portland Trails walk along the Fore River, Inside Amtrak tour, Skateboard Jam, Bicycle ride and lots of Here's Libbytown Poetry Banners. Start the day with a Meeting Place Molasses Donut and cup of Libbytown stories.

Stories, Photographs, History, Elephants, Music, Donuts, Poetry

## WEST END 1 to 4pm

### Maine Irish Heritage Center

Come explore the neighborhood through 'West End Snapshots' photographs by West Enders, 'West End Sings' a concert of neighborhood choirs and choruses and Mike's Walking Tour. Have a slice of Bonobo's Meeting Place WENA pizza. In partnership with the West End Neighborhood Association.



Photographs: Victoria Dylewski, Patricia Collins

Neighbors + Photographs + Choirs + Stories + Treats = A Really Good Afternoon



the real Bayside by Daniel Minter

## BAYSIDE 8:30 to Noon

Kennebec Street between Preble and Elm

Come explore the *real* Bayside, stories, secret spots, history, and play a new game - "Creative Placemaking in Action: *Imagining a new public space*," invented by the Bayside Neighborhood Association. Enjoy 50 Art Cards, Bayside images carved by Daniel Minter and stories from Whole Foods, Pearl Place, Dyer's Variety, City Hall, Planet Dog, Bayside Bowl, Flea For All, Portland High, Miss Portland Diner and YMCA. It's all happening at the new "Phoenix Square," Kennebec St. between Preble and Elm St.

Pancakes + Art Cards + Youth Activities + Neighbors + Music

## EAST BAYSIDE 1 to 5pm

Peppermint Park & Fox Field

Come explore exciting East Bayside. Kickoff at Peppermint Park. *Good Fences for Good Neighbors* murals, McKenzie Family Story Hour, Drumming, GreenDrinks Brewery Tour, Mayo St. Arts, Kennedy Park Community Soccer, Maine Jewish Museum, Sahara Club, Dominoes, Somali Poetry at the Maine Muslim Community Center, and a Meeting Place BBQ at Fox Field. In partnership with the East Bayside Neighborhood Organization.



Blue Wrap Wave, mural by Jan Piribeck & Chris Wright

# Good Fences for Good Neighbors



Jonathan Cook

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*Woven Wall*  
Recycled Tarp

Jan Piribeck & Chris Wright

---

*Blue Wrap Wave*  
Recycled medical fabric





Kelly Rioux

---

*Kennedy Park Portraits*  
Recycled Tyvek

Tim Clorius

---

*CLOUDS*  
Recycled Paint, fence slats



# The Real Bayside

Resetting a neighborhoods identity, story by story. Decks of 30 unique cards were given to over 30 businesses and organizations to distribute to customers and residents.



**Art At Work/City of Portland**  
Putting Creativity to Work  
Strengthening Neighborhoods

Annie Wadleigh, Bayside  
Neighborhood Association

Since meeting my neighbor, Susan, we've rescued a young seagull that got stuck in a plastic bin, drove it to Back Cove, and watched it fly into the air. She brings me mince pie and I help her shovel her driveway in the winter. Doctor's appointments, relocating a woodchuck family, movies, next-door-plots in the Bayside Community Garden, she's the best neighbor in the world.



**Art At Work/City of Portland**  
Putting Creativity to Work  
Strengthening Neighborhoods

Kevin Thomas, Traffic Supervisor,  
Department of Public Services, City  
of Portland

This guy, he rode his bicycle everywhere, piled with stuff. I'd see him everyday, for years. He'd always say to me "How you doing brother?" So one day, its 60 degrees in February, he looks up at the sky, says "The end is near. If I go first, I'll save you a place brother." When I heard he'd died, I fell apart. I'm still not sure what it all meant to me, but I still miss him. Everyday I saw him. Every day he'd say "How you doing brother?"



**Art At Work/City of Portland**  
Putting Creativity to Work  
Strengthening Neighborhoods

Deqa Dhalac  
Counselor, Survivors of Torture, City  
of Portland

Life Skills Aid. Showing people how to work with keeping cleaning products away from their kids, stoves, electricity, showers, faucets, garbage, recycling, cooking, what's 911, how to ride an airplane, all that. They were in refugee camps for their whole lives. They had to get water from far away their whole lives so here they would fill up their tubs and overflow them, celebrating the water, splashing, having it right there, inside their homes.

# Here's Libbytown

Banners share residents' story poems marking Libbytowns landmarks with history and memories.

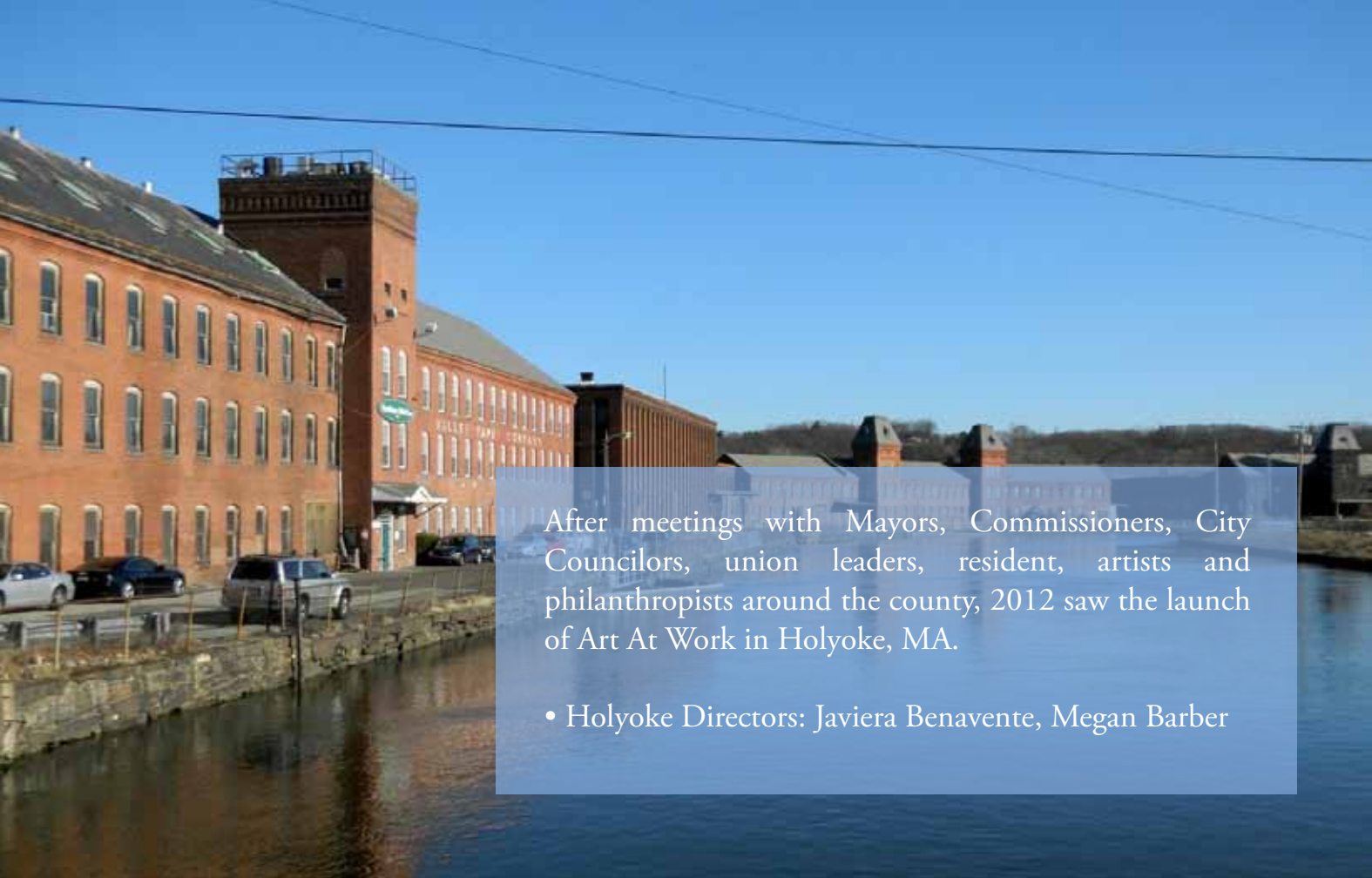


# PARTNER CITY

(2012-2013)

HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS





After meetings with Mayors, Commissioners, City Councilors, union leaders, resident, artists and philanthropists around the county, 2012 saw the launch of Art At Work in Holyoke, MA.

- Holyoke Directors: Javiera Benavente, Megan Barber

# Holyoke At Work

## Sometimes It Takes A City To Make A Home

Holyoke is a city rich in potential, but one that has struggled to find its footing since the mills shut their doors in the 1950s. Over the past half century, poverty rates have continued to climb, and divisions among people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds have entrenched. Many organizations and groups are working to move the city forward, but connections across groups are not strong, making each step forward a slow and solitary one. For Holyoke to meet the challenges it faces (a poverty rate of 28.4%, a high school dropout rate of 45%, and slow economic development), community leaders must work together in new ways, reaching across boundaries, finding common ground, unleashing their inherent intelligence and creativity and building lasting relationships that form the basis of a strengthened social fabric. With the success of a grass roots campaign to elect Mayor Alex Morse, Holyoke has shown it has what it takes to turn things around.

Art At Work's program, Holyoke At Work, is addressing the substantial problems that a lack of communication between city, community, and multicultural leaders has caused. Holyoke At Work brought together municipal leaders (city councilors, police, public service, social service, fire and EMS workers) and community leaders representing the city's growing diversity, for a four monthly civic engagement workshop. Thirty participants explored **civics, history, life stories, demographics,** and the **state of the city.** To achieve the project goal of increasing interconnectedness and collaborative spirit, participants created and shared artworks generated with local artist instructors during these workshops and then shared and exhibited them with city workforce and community residents at three Holyoke Works potlucks.

Made possible with support from Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, Art Angels, Nathan Cummings Foundation, the City of Holyoke and Art At Work.



# SOMETIMES IT TAKES A CITY TO MAKE A HOME

*"I moved to Holyoke when I got married, and worked in a bank for a number of years. A customer came in and suggested that I volunteer at the library. So I did. Now I'm an employee, specializing in interlibrary loans, which I love. It's so much fun tracking down books for people. I love Holyoke - there's no where else I'd rather live. I have lots of friends and family here, and everything you could want is close by. We're close to Boston, New York, the Berkshires - it's the perfect place. I've enjoyed seeing the city evolve over the years."*

- Anne Gorman, Library Assistant, Holyoke Public Library, 14 years

**HOLYOKE AT WORK**

# Creating Art, Relationships, Resiliency

Over five months, we've used a mix of artmaking, listening exchanges and discussions to tackle topics that are important to Holyoke. We wrote poems and learned about each others lives. We sang and sharpened our leadership skills and collaborative capacity. And we shared photographs of the city to share stories that show the Di/Visions that surround us. We brainstormed, we laughed, we took risks, we got to know each other better.

Our workshop participants include Mayor Alex Morse, Police Chief James Neiswanger, Fire Chief John Pond, Principal Aliza Pluta (Morgan School), Jim Bartolomei (President of Patrolmens Union), Marcella Jayne (Community Leader), Maria Salgado (Community Leader/Five Colleges), Lauren Helm (CRUSH) and Mike Gallagher (DPW/UFCA) and more than thirty community activists, leaders, city councilors and staff.





## Art from some of our Holyoke Advisory Board

*“This workshop brought me back in time to when my days were more mine... I was thinking to myself, what am I doing here writing poems in this room. And an idea came to me.”*

- Mike Gallagher, Heavy Equipment Operator, Shop Steward of UFCW Local



*“Holyoke At Work has been a great collaboration between city officials, residents and community activists. In these workshops, there are no titles, and we get beyond the typical barriers that too often divide us as people.”*

- Mayor Alex B. Morse

*“To be able to be on the same side of the table with people I’m often on the opposite side of the table from. Being able to laugh, joke, and enjoy ourselves.”*

- Jim Bartolomie, Police Officer, President of Patrolmen’s Union



*“It’s difficult to pick up the crayons from childhood again, but necessary to live this new and joyous life.”*

- Peggy Melanson, Community Activist, Artist

## Poem

Poverty, low income, disadvantaged, spic,  
lower-ward, submissive, urban youth.

Stop, wait! That's not my childhood.  
Happiness, joy, youth, community,  
we had love!

Struggles, yes, but we had it all.

- Maria Salgado-Cartagena, Five Colleges Inc.,  
Coordinator for Community-Based Learning

## Vacation

Beach, sun, music, people, dancing, late nights, late mornings,  
the feeling that life is more than what we do everyday, that  
life goes too fast to forget about the small things.

-Alex Morse, Mayor of Holyoke, MA





## EVALUATION

Setting clear and definable goals and figuring out ways to measure the outcomes is an essential part of Art At Work. A grant from Animating Democracy and the Kellogg Foundation enabled the program to hire evaluation specialist Christine Dwyer to design an evaluative process that focuses on the project's key audience - municipal governments. Dwyer is the nationally-recognized senior vice president of MRC Research and a City Councilor in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.





Maple Ave

Georgetown Ave

Loping Ave

Maple Ave

MAP 15B

2005 7 4

St. George's  
Lot 1000  
1000



## Creative Placemaking with People at the Center

From the beginning, Art At Work has been conceived as a national initiative that puts creativity to work building city and community resiliency. Our progress can be measured in two ways: 1. the concrete impacts and outcomes in both our cities and 2. the influence, examples and inspiration we've brought to the national conversations regarding creative placemaking and the role of art in our cultures.

Since 2003, Marty Pottenger, Art At Work's director, has given presentations, workshops and keynotes at gatherings and conferences, including "Taking Part", University of London; Americans for the Arts Annual; Grantmakers in the Arts; Tanzmesse, (Dusseldorf, Germany); Arts & Democracy, (Appalshop, KY); Alternative Roots, (Baltimore, MD); Artists in Context, (Smith College, MA); CAAP Series, (Broward County, FL); Florida Arts Council, (Sarasota, FL); TCG Annual, (Denver, CO); National Performing Arts Convention, (Denver CO); and the Maine Cultural Summit, (Haystack, ME), among others. From 2009 to 2012 Art At Work has met with Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Tucson, Austin, Providence, Northampton, Holyoke, Pine Lake GA, and Stonington ME. We welcome any municipality's interest in exploring the benefits of a partnership.

## Next Steps in the Initiative

The current economic crisis creates a real challenge for any new initiative. Partnering with a local government makes it even more challenging. Yet impetus for creating Art At Work was to get the transformative power generated by creative engagement into the toolkits of local governments.

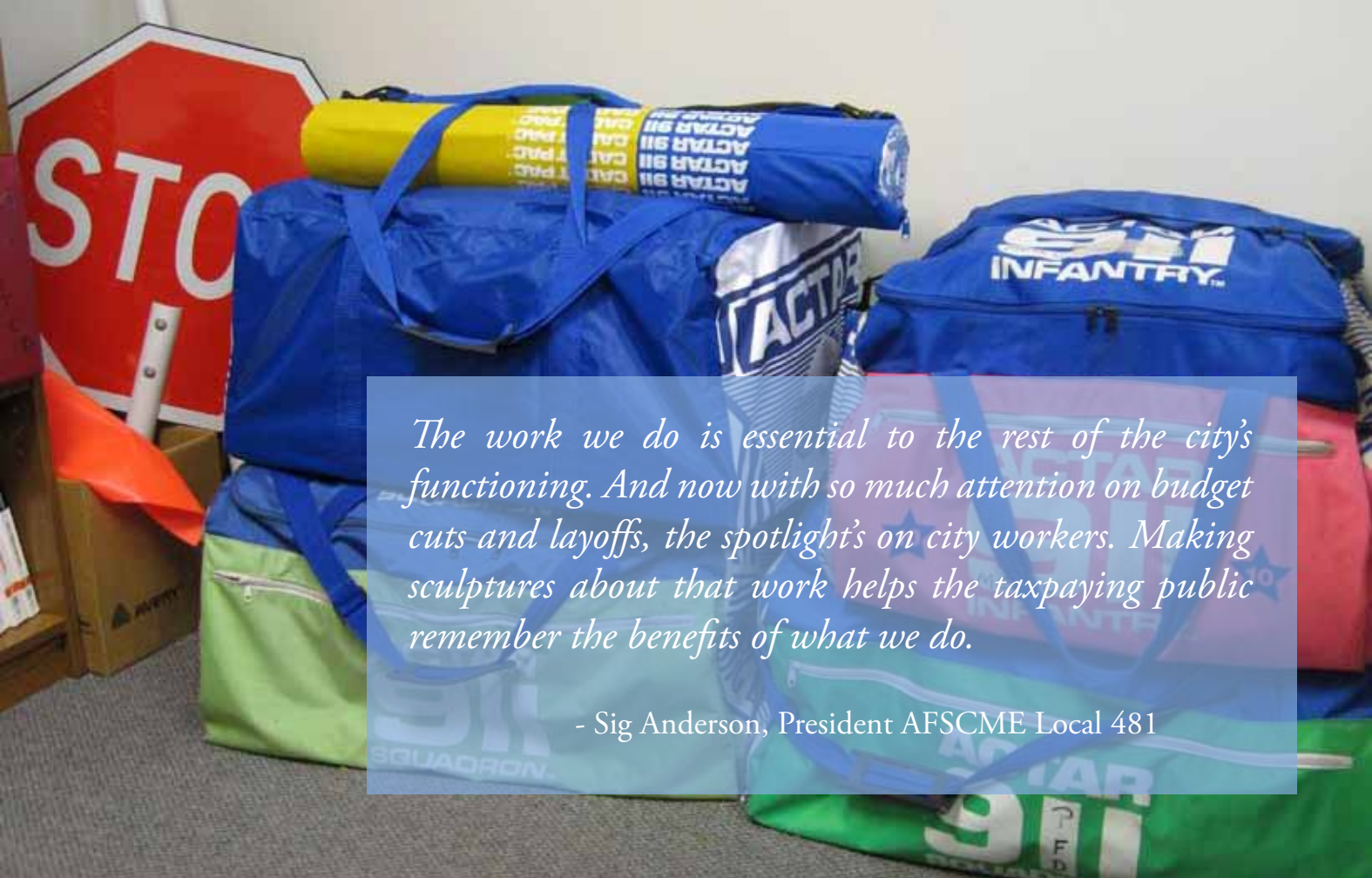
Our impacts and outcomes in Portland and Holyoke prove that this is not only an inspiring, sustainable method, but a cost-effective one.

AAW has saved Portland a considerable amount of money and significantly improved community relations via a) increased police morale b) diminished discrimination lawsuits in Public Service Department c) ended youth violence directed at the police/city workers d) activated civic engagement in diverse neighborhoods e) fostered pride, awareness and a sense of place within both the city staff and general public.

Currently our focus is on gentrification & homelessness, veterans, municipal health & wellbeing, and national outreach. We welcome feedback, ideas, suggestions and questions from artists, government staff, elected officials and the public.







*The work we do is essential to the rest of the city's functioning. And now with so much attention on budget cuts and layoffs, the spotlight's on city workers. Making sculptures about that work helps the taxpaying public remember the benefits of what we do.*

- Sig Anderson, President AFSCME Local 481











## Partnerships

City of Portland / Department of Multicultural Affairs / Portland Police Department / Department Health & Human Services / Department of Public Services / Portland Public Library / Maine College of Art / AFSCME Local 481 / Portland Adult Education / Maine Historical Society / League of Young Voters / Portland Buy Local / Portland Housing Authority / Portland Trails / USM Muskie School

## Funders

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*Particular thanks for making this work possible – Barbara Schaefer Bacon, Megan Barber, Javiera Benavente, Mayor Michael Brennan, Claudine Brown, Edwige Charlot, Nicole Clegg, Pam Cleghorn, Bev Dacey, Councilor Jill Duson, Chris Dwyer, Pat Finnigan, former City Manager Joe Gray, Deputy City Manager Sheila Hill-Christian, Jennifer Hutchins, Pam Korza, Councilor Nick Mavodones, Charles Melcher, Mayor Alex Morse, Maurine Knighton, Claire Peeps, City Manager Mark Rees, Rachel Talbot Ross, Chief Mike Sauschuck, Holly Sidford, Brandy Stewart, Councilor Ed Suslovic, Kate Webb, Allen West, Clarkson Woodward, the Portland artists who have created such powerful art, especially Elizabeth Jabar, Micheal Macklin, Daniel Minter, Betsy Sholl and the municipal employees, elected officials and residents.*

Art At Work Team: Marty Pottenger/Director, Meagan Cooney/Portland Works Coordinator, Caroline Losneck/Meeting Place Coordinator, Chris Dwyer/Evaluation, Bev Dacey/Accounting, Allen West/Design & Exhibits



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Daniel Minter

WHERE CREATIVITY  
IS THE SOLUTION.