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Graceland Students Work with Lamoni Community to Create Mural Downtown

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Graceland Community Development Club members said they wanted to create a mural in downtown Lamoni and transform the garden space by Linden Street Coffeehouse. Receiving a Bridge Endowment Grant gave them the go ahead.

The club included Chase Wood, Shane Majerus, Addison Wilson, Natalie Harper, Lexie Frazier, Andrew Wolsey, and Alex Mallick. Majerus led the garden transformation, pulling out weeds, bringing in grass tarp and gravel. His fiancé, Wood, ran the mural project. Wood and Graceland University Associate Professor of Art, Karen Gergely, put on a contest asking Graceland students for concept art or detailed design for the mural.

Lamoni Community of Christ members and owner of the coffeehouse Tabor Nowlin selected the contest winner, Tressa Cummings '20, who graduated with honors in studio art and history and soon begins landscape architecture school.

“Cummings’ more surrealist version of the Iowa landscape and it’s fertile land lends to this patchwork approach to different farm fields being sewn together. Her vision encompassed all the things we wanted, the landscape, the community, and the long history of farmers and quilters here. Because the piece is, essentially, a quilt of place and community,” shared Wood.

Wood and Brayam Suarez Garcia '19, who graduated from the honors program a triple major in studio art, business administration and economics, developed the overall designs for the mural based off the original design by Tressa so it could fit a larger scale.



While an array of Graceland students contributed, the mural itself was also a community effort. Students from the Alley Kids afterschool program that Alex Burnette has supervised completed one of the four panels.

Gergely’s painting students contributed a significant amount of work to the mural, including Alex Burnette, Jared Connell, Adrian Elmore, Ashley Farnsworth, Willie Fields, Delaney Fox, Mei Hayashizaki, Ivan Hernandez, Albert Huff, Kaitlyn James, Emily McKinney, Kelly Nouse, Dominae Ponds and Meredith Millstone.

Gergely, said “It’s cool to see how far-reaching this project has become! This project, Chase started. Many hands make awesome work!”

Larry Phillips, Lamoni Thrift Center Board members, and Lamoni City Council also helped make this project happen.

“This is a very good example of *The Power of Together*”, noted Graceland Development Club Advisor and Associate Professor of Business Max Pitt.



Community volunteers, Lloyd White and Bob Rowland, secured the panels to the brick wall.

“The art panels add vibrancy and beauty to downtown. The many hands that made this project happen is a true expression of the spirit of caring community of Graceland students. They reached out and collaborated with community members. They inspired a transformation,” shared Tabor Nowlin, Linden Street Coffeehouse Owner.

“I’m thrilled to see this mural in its final form. The design, execution, and installation have all been a collaboration - thank you to all who kept this project going!” -Tressa Cummings '20

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