

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Youth Homelessness to Hope

A healing project by the Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity

NOVATO, CA (April 2021) On Wednesday, April 28, MarinMOCA opens *Youth Homelessness to Hope* a traveling mural project spearheaded and produced by the Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity (AHO) Youth Leadership Team. The team is comprised of previously homeless youth served by AHO, a 17-year old award-winning Marin nonprofit organization. AHO provides support for 16-25 year-old teens and young adults without families or resources. The mural answers the important question "What kind of world do you want to live in?" and includes themes of social justice, the environment, climate change and Black Lives Matter. We invite the public to view this uplifting artwork that shares the youths' vision and messages about the challenges they face. This project employed 15 formerly homeless youth for three months as artists and event planners. In addition to the murals on view, visitors will see an engaging retrospective of the many exciting projects produced by the Youth Leadership Team over the past 12 years. This free exhibit is on display in the Second Floor Gallery and will be on view from April 28 - May 23, 2021. Museum hours are Wed-Fri, 11:00am - 4:00pm, and Sat-Sun, 11:00am - 5:00pm.



For the past eight years, the murals have been exhibited throughout the Bay Area where AHO youth share their stories to educate the community about youth homelessness and the critical issues highlighted in the murals.

Following the close of the exhibit on May 23, the AHO Board, Council and Youth Leadership Team will gift the murals to the College of Marin as their permanent home. Dr. David Wain Coon, Superintendent/President of College of Marin says:

"We are honored that AHO has generously chosen to gift College of Marin the Youth Homelessness to Hope murals, following the closing of its current exhibit. The murals will be permanently displayed at the College so that future generations can be inspired by the murals' themes of social justice, the environment, climate change, and Black Lives Matter which are visible in the artistry of the murals,"

Continued:



Each 8'x 8' panel portrays the same oak tree in a different season. The endangered oak tree is a metaphor for the endangered youth.

The AHO Youth Leadership Team Story:

The *Youth Homelessness to Hope* traveling mural is the vision and inspiration of the AHO Youth Leadership Team, comprised of homeless and at-risk youth served by Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity (AHO). The mural is the culmination of a year-long process to bring awareness to the crisis of youth homelessness and the plight of the planet. The AHO Leadership team engaged 1,200 young people from 30 private, public, alternative high schools, middle schools and colleges to participate in the project.

The AHO Youth Leadership Team was born in November 2007 when Kevin Ippolito, Amy Phelan, Mario Rangel and Ali Fadeff wanted to "give back" for the help they had received from the Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity organization. Their mission was to unite young people ages 16 to 25 in Marin County who were previously homeless or at-risk of homelessness, and other socially conscious youth from all socio-economic backgrounds, with the goal of designing youth-led projects to foster awareness and bring funding to the organization that was helping them succeed.

The Team has produced dozens of successful projects that create awareness about youth homelessness in Marin County.

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