Y.O.U. Students Create Murals for Union Miles Community

"I want our children to be fearless and know that there are endless possibilities."  --Mary Kay

In the summer of 2017, a group of inner city youth of Y.O.U. (Youth Opportunities Unlimited) were sent to work with a Cleveland legend in the artistic community. Mary K. Thomas was born and raised in the Union Miles area and accepted the offer to teach self expression through art to these lucky pupils. The task was to create a mural representing the future of the humble community. The future and our greatest natural resource is our children.

The final project was named Endless Possibilities. Mary Kay donated four wooden boards for this project. At first, the participants were hesitant and confused on how four wooden planks could be considered "art." Mary Kay instilled in them that art is what you make it and to reach for the sky. On each board there are scenarios of local young people playing in the playground and a group playing instruments. Mary Kay wanted to include a story with each person that she and the students drew and painted. She taught her students that if there was no personal connection to what you produce then it won’t be authentic. The students received that affirmation and ran with it.

After the summer, Mary Kay stayed around Union Miles Development Corporation and did the finishing touches on the murals. She even had preschoolers from Union Miles Headstart come in and paint their hands on the back of the boards with clouds painted onto them. She said, “I want these kids to grow up and see this mural and know that this is for them. I want them to know that they made that and made our community, our city more beautiful.”

Mary K. Thomas is a sculptor, painter, and mixed media artist. She received a BA in Studio Art from Ursuline College in 2013. From her website rhythmicartistry.com, she says:

“Art has always been a part of my life, with my great grandmother and grandmother giving me the greatest inspiration in the arts. Studying ceramics at the Karamu House gave me my introduction to clay as a child. My faith in God and my passion for art is what compelled me to step out and return to school to complete my education in the visual arts. This has been a healing and restorative journey for me after I survived a stroke and ruptured brain aneurysm. I knew that my art could renew me, with the strength of an eagle. Studying art helped me to develop the gift that God has given me, and to refine my skills in the pursuance of my passion. Art for me is the most powerfully therapeutic tool I could have used for my recovery. I am inspired by aesthetics of art for art’s sake and the love of creativity.”

The sky isn’t even the limit for Mary Kay and she is on her way beyond where we can see.
On Thursday, September 14th, John Adams High School held its Hurricane Relief Drive by collecting non-perishable items. Also each student was given the opportunity to dress down for a day in which they did not have to wear their John Adams uniform. They were given the opportunity to pay $1 or bring a non-perishable item to dress down. All non-perishable items and donations are going to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to be donated to the Hurricane Relief Fund. We thank our Principal Dr. Terrance Menefee, Community Partner Joyce Hood, John Adams staff, and most of all the students of John Adams High School.
On September 9th, 2017 E-prep school came together with students and their families to beautify their campus, planting beautiful trees throughout the Campus located on Cain Avenue. Special thanks to Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Arbor Day Foundation, Avery Dennison, and Bosie Paper for help making this happen.

East 108th Street Club Hosts 5th Annual Community Day With Night Out Against Crime Movie Night
Youth Visit Underground Railroad Freedom Center

On September 16th-17th Union Miles Development Corporation partnered with BrandNew Youth Mentoring and Chocolate Girls to take forty youth from the Union Miles neighborhood and surrounding cities to Cincinnati, Ohio’s Underground Railroad Freedom Center. The youth learned about everyday Freedom Heroes from all walks of life whose extraordinary choices at key moments paralleled the courageous actions taken by participants on the Underground Railroad and much more.