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April 23rd, 2023

Dear SCUSD,

I believe by supporting the future growth of the WOW US program, Wide Open Walls Uplifting Schools, SCUSD has a chance to be on the forefront for something positive and something lasting. A chance to make headlines for greatness and positive impact.

Painting murals on these campuses allows the artists, students, faculty, staff, and community to be on the "front lines" as the campus transforms. Erica Thomas and I, two WOW US muralist and mothers of children who attend SCUSD schools, have had the pleasure of spending a full week at each of these schools painting. We get to see the immediate impact murals and art bring to the school.

We see people and students excited about their school that have never been excited before. Students ask us over and over again, why are we painting at their school. They seem so surprised that something so exciting and wonderful is happening to their campus. The answer to them is always, "because you matter."

These murals are our gift to the students, faculty, and staff. It's a way of showing them they deserve something beautiful. Something created with thought and care. Students typically smile shyly at us when we tell them they matter. Many of these students haven't heard this before. Most of the children visit us all week. By the end, Erica and I have been shown a significant amount of student artwork, notes, and pretty darn good poetry. On Friday, the younger students offer hugs, proudly bring their parents to see the murals springing up all over campus, and tell us that they plan to be artists. A few parents have even told us that they are inspired to dust off the paints they own.

We see people become involved in their community and at their school. At Abraham Lincoln Elementary, we were told by several volunteers that they had never volunteered before. In addition, one parent was so impressed by the energy and positive impact of the WOW US murals she has been inspired to bring more art lessons to the school. But even more mind-blowing was one of the last interactions with a parent I had on Friday before the Abraham Lincoln Elementary mural festival. This parent slowly wandered over to me and silently watched me work for several minutes. As she drifted on by she said to me, "My kids have been attending this school for years and I have never been inside! Now I got to go check things out." Thirty minutes later, she came by and thanked me and said she wished her elementary school had been as beautiful.

All of this impact is not just a figment of imagination. The University of Pennsylvania, has done copious amounts of research on the positive impact of public murals and community art. In summary of their findings, art painted for and with the community has a "spill over effect" that results in "stronger community and civic engagement, better health, schooling, and personal security..."

Art, in particular murals, is not for museums and the few, art is at its best when it is for a community (and school). It enriches the cultural ecology of the neighborhood. Murals have become a tool of social justice, community justice, and now for SCUSD, a tool of educational justice.

I ask you to please support WOW US and our schools.

With great sincerity,  
Lauren Muse-Fisher  
aka. Musepaints

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To Whom It May Concern,

Painting murals at schools across Sac City Unified School District each month with Wide Open Walls has been an absolute honor.

My painting partner Lauren and I are both moms of children in the district and art docents at their respective schools. We always begin our murals the week before Saturday's community fair and have the unique opportunity to talk with students and staff during the school week. I love meeting students throughout the week, talking about art and asking about artwork they've created. The engagement and wonder the process brings to students is just as important as the murals that live on their campus. It makes my heart so happy meeting their families when they bring them to the community fair over the weekend. They feel how much love the artists paint into the murals created especially for them, expressing that they matter.

These murals on Sac City Unified School District campuses mean so much not only to the school community who see them every day, but to the greater community. The beautiful variety of murals, each as unique and diverse as the artists who create them, collectively transform campuses and lift the spirits of all who experience it.

In gratitude,  
Erica Thomas  
Wide Open Walls Muralist

ERICA THOMAS  
artist & muralist

To Whom it may Concern:

I have had the pleasure working with Wide Open Walls this year. In October, my school was selected to have several artists create murals specific to our school and vision. Once the Wide Open Team began the process of planning, there was very little I needed to do or prepare for. For me, the entire experience with Wide Open Walls was flawless. They are well planned and organized. The work that was done fits our school community, the work was fast, and respected the work space.

The work that was completed at the school has greatly affected our school climate. Students are seen every day enjoying each mural and finding something new. I have classroom teachers walking the different spaces enjoying the work and talking about what they see and feel from each mural. Students are learning to express themselves through art and words. I also have heard from our surrounding community that they are very pleased with the art work and believe this has improved the beauty of our school. Many neighbors say as they walk the neighborhood they always find something new in the artwork and enjoy viewing the work each time they walk by.

I know from this experience I feel inspired. My school has always been beautiful to me, but adding unique art to its walls has made our school just a little bit brighter and friendlier. I can not thank Wide Open Walls for choosing us to share this wonderful gift. I would recommend to all Administrators to advocate for your school to become a partner with Wide Open Walls. Best decision ever!

Sincerely,

Dr. Roxanne Wolfe  
Bret Harte Elementary School  
Principal

I have so many positive things to say about Wide Open Walls on the Hiram Johnson campus. When the artists were setting up the vibe of campus became one of curiosity and the anticipation of new and exciting things filled the air. It was fascinating to watch the processes of the individual artists, to see the various tools and colors they used, and to notice the different styles that emerged over the time they were here. Not only have the finished works added vibrance to the campus they have provided engaging and meaningful conversation starters.

*Warmly,*  
*Abby Serin, BSN, RN (she/her/ella)*  
*School Nurse - Hiram Johnson*

We had a blast at the Open Wall mural event at Hiram, here is a link to the Hiram rock band playing at the event with professional musicians from Sacramento:

[https://soundcloud.com/patreilly/sets/hiram-2-18-23?si=662b7b6fd33d4bfc9f6d25c003e41953&utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=social\\_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/patreilly/sets/hiram-2-18-23?si=662b7b6fd33d4bfc9f6d25c003e41953&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)

Patrick Reilly

The murals at Hiram Johnson are amazing. When I first heard about the project, I assumed we would get one or two large murals. Instead we have multiple murals that have transformed the school. Thanks to all who made this possible.

Adriane Jackson

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 26, 2023 3:49 PM  
**To:** SCUSD Public Comment  
**Subject:** Public Comment for Board of Education Meeting

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04/26/2023 3:49pm

Putting Children First

**WEBFORM SUBMISSION**

**Submitted by user**

Name:  
Lori Sablan

Email:

Phone Number:

Student Name (if applicable):

School (if applicable):  
Jfk

Comment or Question:  
My son was awarded the national merit scholarship. Can we recognize him and other winners in the district?

Webform submission  
Submitted by user

Name:  
Karis Lee  
Email:

Phone Number:

Student Name (if applicable):

Karis Lee

School (if applicable):

Oak Ridge High School

Comment or Question:

my name is Karis Lee and I am a current sophomore at Oak Ridge High School in El Dorado Hills. It has come to my concern that crimes are exceeding in not only Sacramento but also in California as a whole. In my English class, we are currently doing an Amnesty Project to make either the community or campus better for students and other people. I am doing my project on giving self-defense lessons to the poverty areas of the state because those areas are where the crime rates are the highest and yet those schools aren't able to afford self-defense lessons for their students. Oak Ridge High School currently has a self-defense unit in PE for freshmen; however, that may be an issue for students that are new and aren't a freshman. So my idea is that the more privileged areas such as El Dorado Hills, Folsom, etc, could help out the students in schools that are in low-income areas by doing fundraisers, charities, and donations for them. Online Self-defense classes outside of school cost from \$30-\$200 and in-person self-defense classes cost from \$45-\$400 for a 2-hour class. Many low-income families aren't able to even think about these classes because they could be using the money for other necessities. So my idea is that we can start off small by starting off with schools in Sacramento and then expand it to other schools in California. I have done research on different self-defense companies and their programs and the cost. I have also done a poll for students to answer on whether or not they would like self-defense classes. My plan is that, once a company is decided, we can email or call them to ask if they are willing to contribute to this idea. I have already started making flyers for self-defense companies and have been researching some as well. Thank you for your time and consideration. Have a good evening.



To whom it may concern,

I would like to show my support for the Wide Open Walls Uplifting Schools Mural project at the upcoming school board meeting and submit this letter for your consideration. The Wide Open Walls Uplifting Schools Mural project is an important project because it provides upcoming artists with an unforgettable opportunity to not only create something in a public space, but also to inspire other budding artists on their own campus. WOW US brings beautification to the schools and surrounding community. It occasionally gives students the opportunity to assist artists, as was the case with my mural at Hiram Johnson High School.

WOW US strengthens the community of artists by providing a unified schedule and location to insure that artists have an opportunity to meet and learn from one another. In an otherwise lonely endeavor, I can truly testify that having support from other artists in my community helps boost my confidence and knowledge within the industry of mural painting.

For these reasons, I would love to show my support for the Wide Open Walls Uplifting Schools project.

Thank you.  
Sincerely,

Maeve  
Painter, 8 years experience

Dear board members and community,

I am a member of Tahoe Elementary's art docent program, volunteering for the past 6 years. Our PTA coordinated and installed the first school mural, (say what it was). We also coordinated the mural festival at Tahoe Elementary, which paved the way for school mural installations citywide. I am also in my final semester as a graduate student seeking a MA in Art Education at The Ohio State University. In these roles, I have been studying the medium-term effects of the mural installations at Tahoe Elementary, and by extension, other schools. I have reviewed related scholarly literature as part of this process. I have found that:

Murals do more than beautify the walls. I have found both at the school and in the literature that school-based public art strengthens emotional and cultural literacy. The diversity of art represented is a key feature of these school installations, helping students in our marginalized communities feel seen. These transformed spaces feel more nurturing, creating positive environments where students want to be. The murals have extended learning outside the classroom, which is vital for students with limited access to art. As permanent artifacts, they have the potential to affect more students over a longer period of time than one-time experiential learning initiatives.

All students should have access to art education. All students should go to school in environments that are nurturing. Continuing the Wide Open Walls Uplifting Schools program is a positive step toward equity for this district's underserved students.

Thank you,  
My-Lien Olsson

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I am writing in support of the Wide Open Walls Project for Sacramento Schools. As a resident of Tahoe Park and a member of the Tahoe Park Neighborhood Association, I can't say enough about the impact the Wide Open Walls has had on our community. It's wonderful to drive by Tahoe Elementary School and see so much color. I know the students have been inspired by it. And it was great for them to see the artists at work, both at Hiram Johnson High School and Tahoe Elementary. I hope that the District will continue this project, so that you can bring such experiences to students across the district. Arts education is a critical component of learning, and this project is a great way of supporting the arts in under-resourced schools like Tahoe Elementary. I hope it's just a first step in your plan to bring art and music back into every school in the district in a big way!

Sincerely,

Christie Munson

My name is Juan Hoye and I am the School Plant Operations Manager at Abraham Lincoln Elementary. I am emailing to show my appreciation for Wide Open Walls. Since we had our event at our school a few weeks ago we have seen a dramatic energy boost from children around campus. They are more upbeat and positive due to the display of art around campus. It shows them that the community cares and wants to see them thrive in a vibrant environment.

Juan Hoye