

# CREATE

# CULTIVATE

# REACTIVATE



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95+  
murals  
created



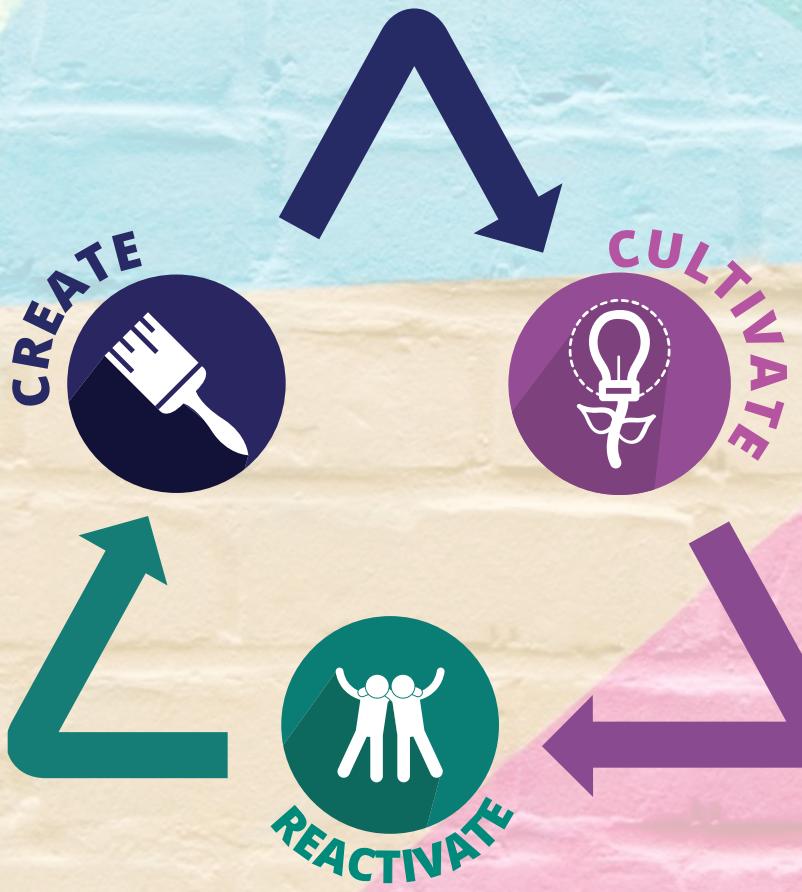
800  
students  
cultivated



50+  
city blocks  
reactivated



Wall # 59, a project-based learning mural, designed and painted by Scotlandville High Magnet School students and artist Marc Fresh



# **The Walls Project**

## **Community Development Process**

## THE WALLS PROJECT

Create, Cultivate, Reactivate



**T**he Walls Project is a community development organization stimulating Louisiana's creative economy.

Since 2012, The Walls Project has generated over one million dollars in economic resurgence through programs engaging people of all ages to CREATE public and hands-on arts experiences, CULTIVATE creative and technology industry training programs, and REACTIVATE miles of city blocks through monumental collective volunteerism.

The Walls organization offers a bold vision for what is possible, while creating a pathway to achieving our vision through a collection of separate but integrated program services. Through creative placemaking, The Walls is educating citizens to create a skilled workforce, rejuvenating public and private structures and streetscapes, improving local business viability and public safety, and bringing diverse people together to celebrate, make change, and be inspired.

In turn, these creative efforts are fostering entrepreneurs and cultural industries, generating jobs and income, spinning off new products and services, attracting and retaining new business and skilled workers, and reducing the cycle of generational poverty in rural and urban communities.

Ultimately, The Walls intends to demonstrate a set of interconnected arts and entrepreneurial initiatives can serve as catalysts for change in a community, impacting participants far beyond simple self-expression through the arts.



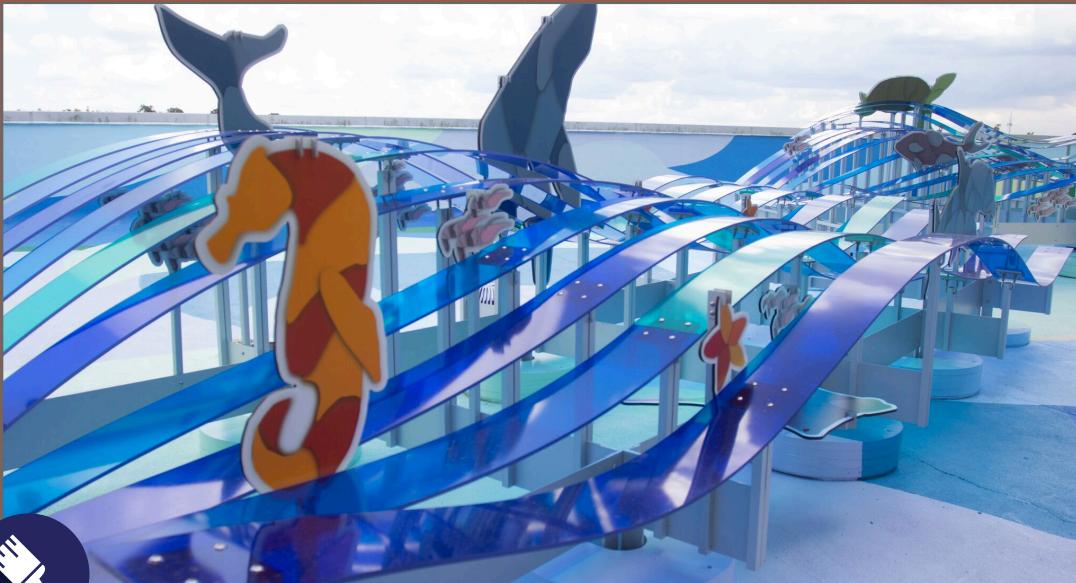
Create



Cultivate



Reactivate



CREATE

# Creating the FUTURE OF BATON ROUGE

The Walls uses visual storytelling to create art which inspires, educates, and develops a community's pride and sense of place through murals, sculpture, and digital installations. To date, The Walls has engaged hundreds of professional artists and thousands of community volunteers to create over 90 public art installations, and contribute over \$1,000,000 in economic growth to the Capital region's creative sector.

The Walls art initiatives range from producing ten-story murals on high rise buildings, creating interactive healing-arts sculptures at hospitals, and recycling yard signs into mini-mural canvasses for children.

Our education programs amplify the power of the arts to keep young people engaged in instruction. In partnership with school districts, The Walls brings creative learning murals to youth across the state. Our instructors lead project-based learning activities, encouraging collaboration and interdisciplinary instruction among faculty.

The Walls provides pathways for creatives of all ages to engage with their community, fuel their passion for progress, and interact with professional artists.

**A**rtists and a team of creative consultants cohesively engineered a custom-designed public sculpture, successfully transforming an ordinary rooftop into a joyful expression of nature.

The artwork celebrates our coastal region and Louisiana's wildlife diversity. Colorful translucent ribbons provide an abstract representation of land and water, supporting playful flora & fauna panels.

This rooftop scene was designed to ease the stress of families in an intense medical setting. By installing the sculpture in a public space, Woman's Hospital enables a multitude of families, nearly 1,000 each year, to enjoy and interpret the piece.

Art creates a sense of pride and place for those in the community. By creating art that reflects local culture, communities are honored and respected, while enabling open space for dialogue to emerge. Public artworks mitigate a social climate, allowing everyone to come together and enjoy the creation simultaneously, regardless of race, class, or education.

Even more, public art can cause a resurgence in the local economy. Small businesses and patrons alike are drawn to the landmarks, creating a bevy of interaction. Beyond helping businesses, public art through The Walls catalyzes

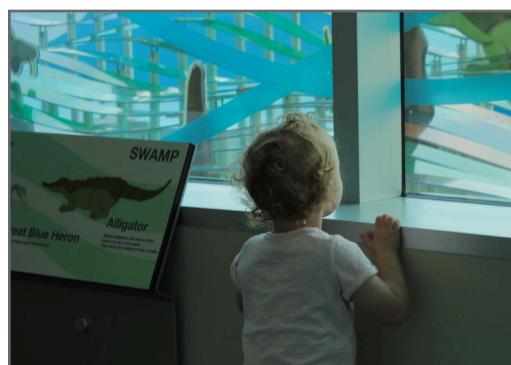
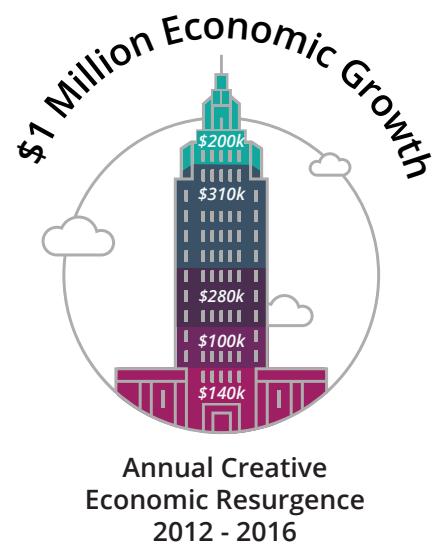
local artists and creatives, enabling the Baton Rouge creative economy to grow.

By recruiting and supporting local artists, The Walls is able to invest in and grow the art community. The current estimated economic impact created by The Walls now tops over \$1 million thus far in the local sector alone.

Through public art, like murals and sculptures, the city and surrounding areas of Baton Rouge are able to grow and change culturally, economically, and as a community.

.....  
**"Being able to put this beautiful artwork outside of the walkway to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, where the most critically ill babies are, is [...] so inspiring for the families and siblings of those babies."**

**Teri Fontenot  
President/  
CEO  
Woman's  
Hospital**





"Tribute to Louis Mouch" Wall #17 by John Wax, 2014

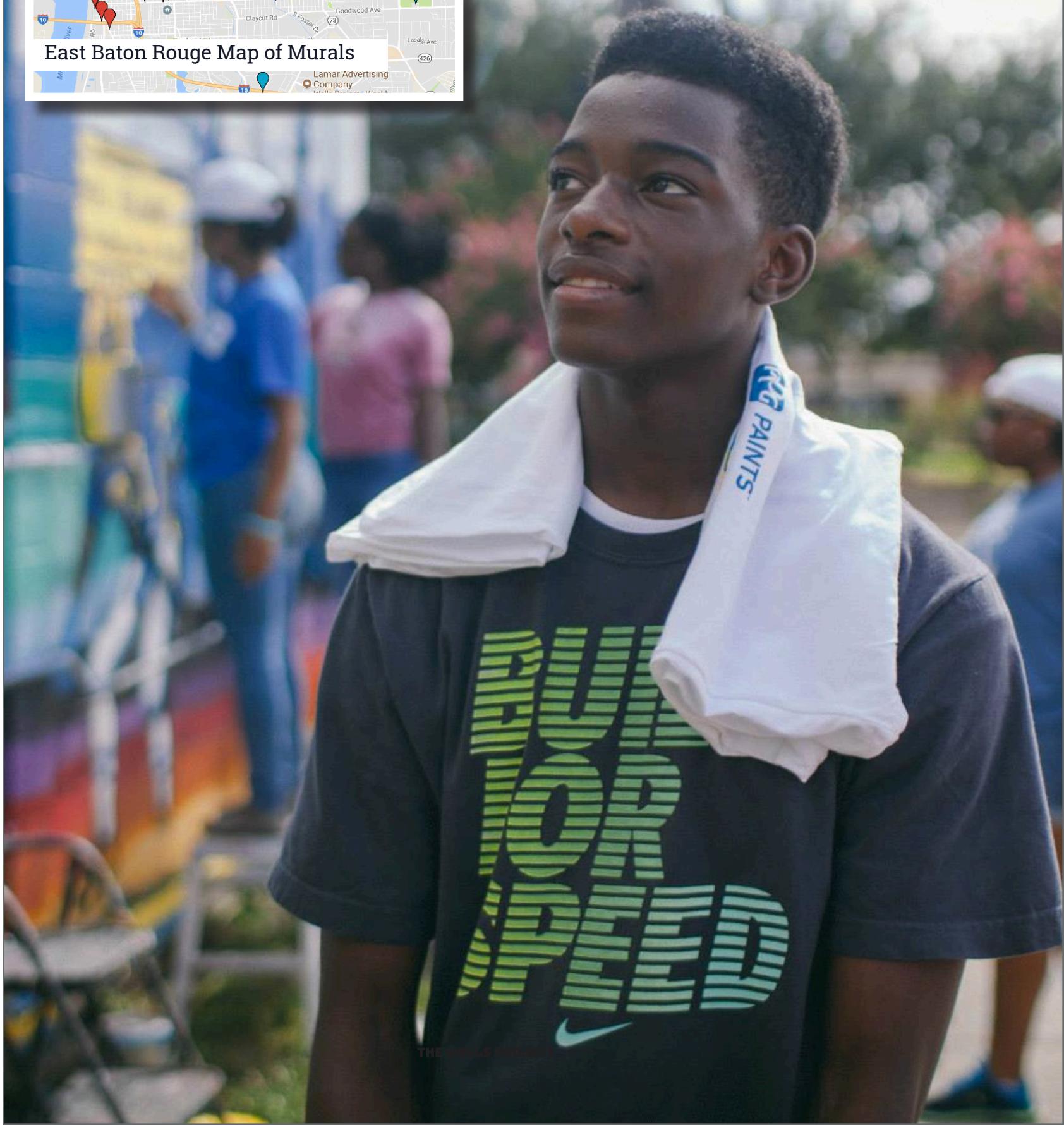
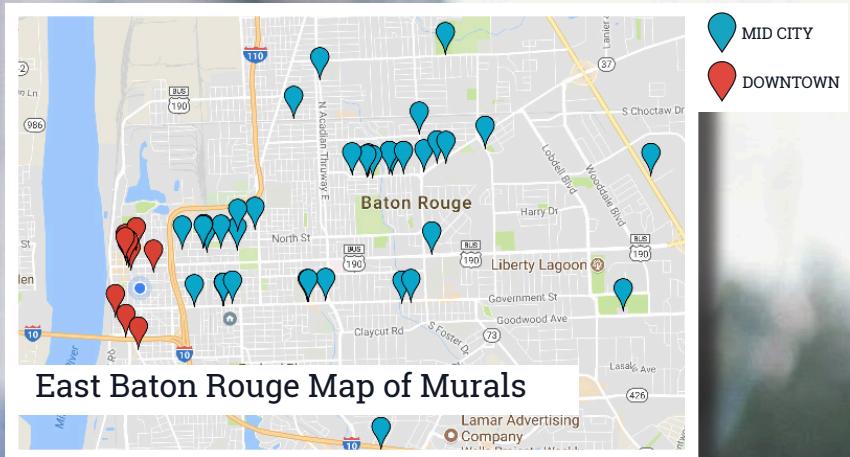


"Love Our Community" Summer Youth Employment Program Wall #27, 2015

"Baton Rouge Blues Harmonica" Wall #10 by Robert Dafford, 2013



"On the Shoulders of Giants" Wall #21 by Eduardo Mendieta, 2015





CULTIVATE

# UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

## THE FUTURES FUND STEWARDS TEEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Through The Futures Fund, a STEAM education and workforce development program, The Walls trains middle and high school students for the jobs of the future. The ten-week program is administered every spring and fall by highly trained industry professionals to build a sustainable ecosystem of economic empowerment and development with youth.

In the Digital Arts program, students learn current computer coding languages such as CSS, HTML, Java, Ruby, and Python. In the Visual Arts program, students train with photographers gaining skills and insight unavailable elsewhere. In addition, all students learn 21<sup>st</sup> century soft skills, such as critical and creative thinking, professional communication, effective collaboration, problem solving, analysis with evidential support, project management, and public speaking.

By developing these skills early, students are set on a path to secondary education, or a career in growing industries with higher earning potential. To date, participants have generated \$25,000 in revenue through our program with internships and product sales and have launched their own start-up businesses in web design, photography, apparel design, and social media marketing.

The Futures Fund is committed to building sustained economic development, while working towards a systemic reduction of poverty.



Coding Level I instructor and student

**E**ighteen-year-old Louis Russell is uniquely confident for his age. While most high school seniors are still navigating their post secondary college and career goals, Russell is emerging out of high school with a burgeoning business.

As a high school sophomore, Russell began looking at after school programs to fill his Saturdays. Although athletically inclined as a football player, Russell wanted to explore other interests. Upon discovering the newly developed Futures Fund program, Russell chose to pursue a career he had yet to discover: programming.

With programming, Russell, then fifteen, was able to unlock a completely new skill that challenged him in a new way. The educators Russell came into contact with were unlike any teachers he had ever met before. These industry-professionals were not much different from the students they interacted with, creating a community of driven and motivated individuals.

With students learning quickly, teachers were able to introduce high performing students to real-life opportunities, such as programming for the city government of Baton Rouge. Because Russell was determined to utilize the skills he learned in class and not deterred by the new coding language required by the job opportunity, he successfully landed the job with the city.

“Going every Saturday for a couple of weeks, messing around with a computer, has landed me my first job programming.” Russell chuckles, “I’m not even old enough to have a full-

time job, so I am a part-time intern.”

The Futures Fund provides students with access to explore fields that they are passionate about now, rather than making them wait until college. The program also allows students to achieve a vision greater than the classes themselves; it allows students to learn skills which lead directly into entrepreneurship.

Now Russell sees job opportunities around every corner. “If I see a friend, and they need a website, I can tell them that I can do that. If it’s a [coding] language I’m not used to, I know I can figure it out.”

Although technology has become more ingrained into the world’s economy, over a third of public teachers in the Capital Region confess that STEM isn’t being provided to students, especially in areas with the most opportunity for growth. Seeing this gap, the Futures Fund provides the opportunity for students looking to learn the skills required to be successful in both college and career, but also to be mentored as they develop into entrepreneurs themselves.

By cultivating the area’s youth into future business owners or critically-thinking employees, The Futures Fund is able to expand the economic impact locally. Especially in technology sector jobs, the future workforce can literally be anywhere, providing an opportunity to work in the community in which they were raised. Additionally, the wage increase by working in a STEM-related field is \$26,000 greater than the average salary - equaling 76 percent higher wages.

In 2013, the Capital Region experienced the creation of approximately 3,420 new STEM jobs, while the area’s colleges and universities produced only 2,140 STEM graduates and certificate holders.

The Futures Fund provides a pathway for middle and high school students to discover STEM fields, while also tapping into their creativity and entrepreneurial mindsets, ultimately ushering more students into area colleges and universities for STEM-focused programs.

.....

**“Going every Saturday for a couple of weeks, messing around with a computer, has landed me my first job programming.”**

**Louis Russell  
Coding III  
Graduate,  
Programmer  
with  
city of Baton  
Rouge**





Photography Level I students on location



Photography Level I students



Coding Level III graduate Christopher works on his website

Photography Level III graduate Mia-Miracle styles and photographs models in a fashion shoot



Illuminated by the screen of the computer, Coding Level II student practices new coding languages



## REACTIVATE

### Reducing Neighborhood Crime by Instilling Pride

**M**in order to revitalize and reactivate neighborhoods, The Walls empowers the community, initiates artistic engagement, and encourages volunteers from surrounding areas to participate in community driven clean-ups, murals, and enrichment activities.

Through these cultural redevelopment projects, we hope to encourage business owners, civic leaders, volunteers, and local families to commit to place and actively participate and invest where they live and work.

Through the principles of creative placemaking, The Walls empowers citizens to rejuvenate public and private structures and streetscapes, which improves local business visibility and public safety, and brings diverse people together to inspire and be inspired by their city.

Encompassing our ‘Reactivate’ initiative is our MLK Festival of Service. This four-day event facilitates

the painting of blighted buildings and murals, planting community gardens and trees, repairing fences, and hauling trash away from properties.

These creative efforts are fostering an environment for investment, job creation, and economic development, reducing and closing wealth inequality in our rural and urban communities.

**"Being a part of the MLK service activities of 2017 in the neighborhood in which I grew up was a very meaningful experience. To share with people from all walks of life, from all over the community, was inspiring. Driving through the neighborhood and remembering brings a smile to my spirit."**



**Raymond A. Jetson**  
**President, CEO MetroMorphosis**

**I**n the fall of 2016, The Walls looked down the 10 blocks of Gus Young Avenue, easily seeing past the worn streets, blighted properties, and overgrown shrubbery. A vision of restoring Gus Young Avenue and the businesses, schools, and parks that line it to their former glory would not only brighten the neighborhood, but would allow residents to harbor a sense of place, pride, and safety.

Luckily, this hasn't been the first time The Walls has successfully revitalized a neighborhood. Every MLK Day since 2014, The Walls has hosted a festival of service. What originated as a one-day event, quickly transformed into a weekend-long series of reactivation steps culminating to the final MLK Day event.

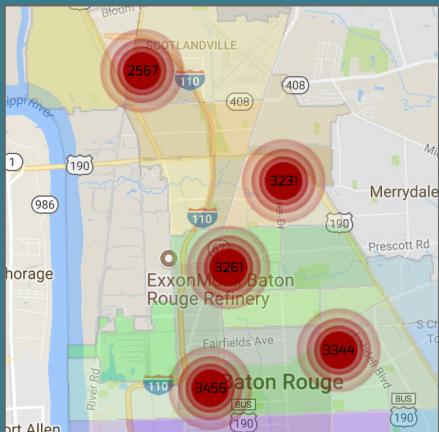
Over the next few months, with constant input from the local community members, The Walls designed a plan to overtake the avenue with volunteers to pick up trash, haul away broken appliances, freshen the facades of houses and buildings, plant community gardens, and paint iconic and inspiring murals.

Bringing together more than 2,000 volunteers and partnering with over 70 organizations, The Walls set the plan into motion. Within the first two days trash was cleared, buildings were getting fresh paint, and much needed landscaping had been done. By day three, the spaces for the upcoming murals were primed and ready. No small feat, considering one mural alone on Gus Young Avenue measured 19' x 146'.

On MLK Day the festival came to its epoch, with talented hand-picked local artists implementing designs chosen by the community members, as well as an all-day celebration with dancing, music, and food. Moreover, the residents also interacted with local organizations they may have never known about with a resource fair.

Within the four days, 40 blocks were cleaned, 10 buildings were revived, 2,000 pounds of garbage was hauled, and most importantly the citizens from all over Baton Rouge were able to come together with a common goal.

Beyond beautification of the neighborhood, The Walls has a deeper motive. The places chosen as the focus for the MLK Festival of Service are areas labeled crime "hot spots". By selecting areas in great need of resurgence, the effect of the festival is strengthened. Communities impacted by this unorthodox means of improvement tend to react better than those who receive extra policing. "...The evidence suggests that such strategies rarely improve community perceptions of the police."<sup>1</sup> With the intention of producing an area where pride of place is not only available, but largely participated in, crime becomes a community issue, rather than a judicial one.



2016 map of crime "hot spots" (# of violent crimes) in Baton Rouge, highest areas being where we position our Reactivation efforts.



Mayor-President Sharon Weston-Broome speaks to the crowd at the Festival's Block Party



Music heard during the Festival's Block Party inspires a group of volunteers of all ages to form a conga line

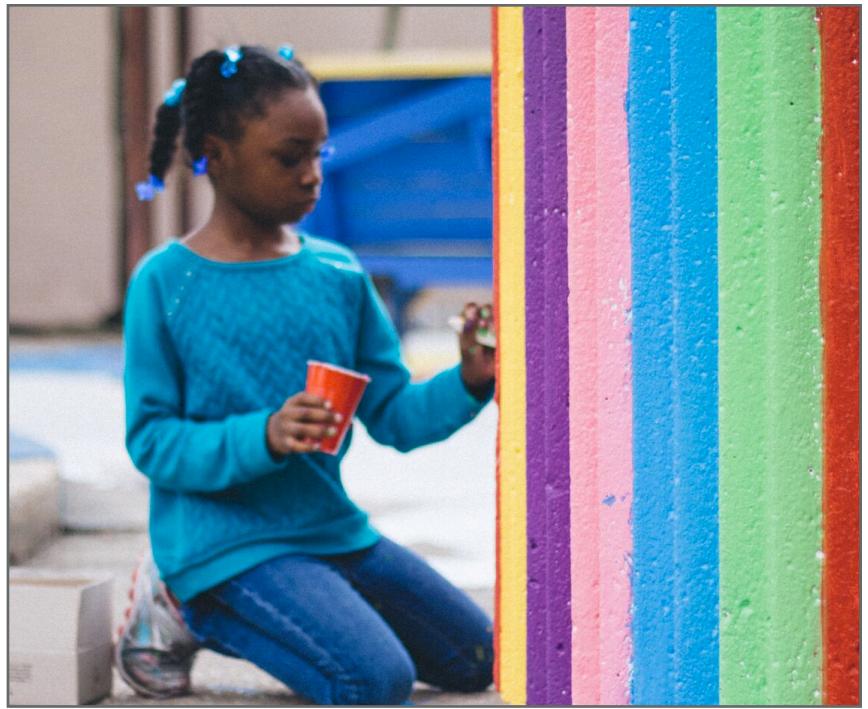
<sup>1</sup> Committee on Proactive Policing: Effects on Crime, Communities, and Civil Liberties in the United States

MLK Festival of Service 2017 at Gus Young  
Avenue mural by Jo Hines Jr.





Artist Diego Roa Castillo in front of his mural of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



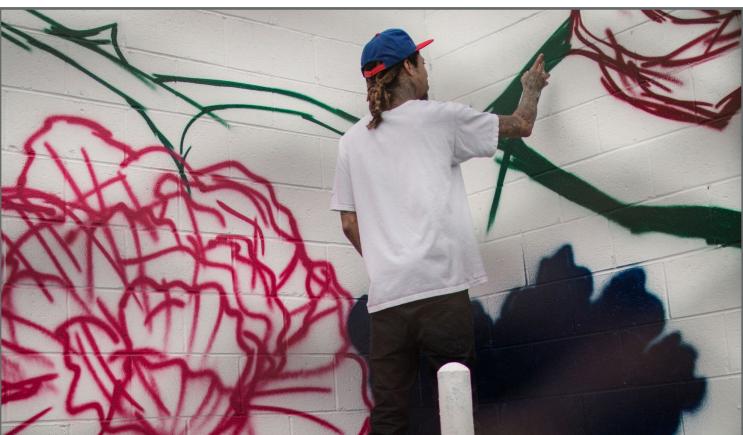
Young volunteer paints in playground area on Gus Young Avenue



Paint covered volunteers enjoy the Block Party at the end of the Festival



Artist Drexell Flowers entertains volunteers at the Festival's Block Party



Artist Skinny Dope spray paints the outlines of the largest mural on Gus Young Avenue



Volunteers from City Year help with the mural on Gus Young Avenue

# JOIN US

## PARTICIPATE

If you are passionate about participatory public art and its effect on our community, consider volunteering with The Walls Project! Volunteers help us achieve our mission, igniting change throughout the community as we engage in public art and programs. Our volunteers serve as ambassadors of the organization, interacting with the public through events, paint days, and arts advocacy. It's a great way to connect to the community at large, and to get to know The Walls family.

**"So proud of these people and their work. They fight for beauty every day. Serving BR by making it a beautiful, creative, welcoming place for all of us. Not a day goes by that some aspect of their work isn't in front of me and making me smile. Thank you, thank you, thank you for your amazing service for the people of this city."**

**Compassion Louisiana**

## COLLABORATE

The Walls recognizes its success is only as good as the collaborative efforts of the public, private, business and arts communities. We actively seek out partners to assist in creating a vibrant cultural economy. This can come in a variety of forms and collaborations such as providing internships for students, becoming a resource partner for arts and workforce development programs, assisting in the identification of real-estate for murals, etc. We are open to discuss how our partners might bring new and innovative configurations of capability and knowledge to the placemaking table. We look forward to the opportunity to create with you.

**"I think the murals are amazing. I enjoyed watching the process and getting to interact with the artists. You made it all come together and we, the Brookstown family, appreciate your help, support, and professional demeanor."**

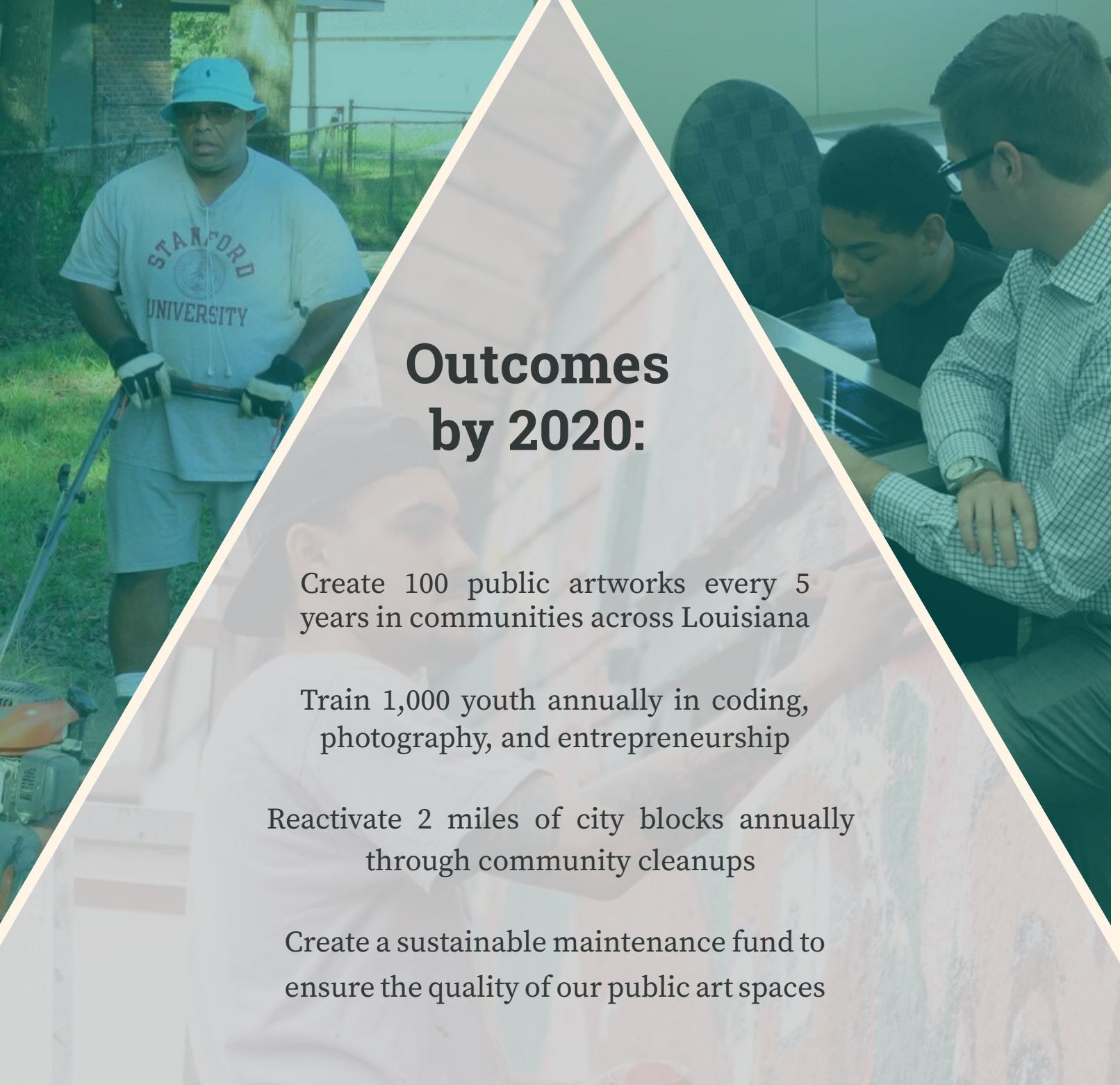
**J. Smith, Sr., Principal  
Brookstown Middle School**

## CONTRIBUTE

Private contributions support our growth as an organization and cover more than 80% of our annual expenses. Your generosity ensures we can continue to ignite change in people, places, and practice through the process of making beautiful collaborative art and creating a vibrant workforce and community. Your support, your engagement, and your input is critical. Be part of positive change through your donation to The Walls.

**"The Walls Project, one of the most phenomenal organizations that I've had the privilege to work with... Art encourages you."**

**Kathy Victorian  
Community Outreach Manager | Marketing  
Healthy Blue**



## Outcomes by 2020:

Create 100 public artworks every 5 years in communities across Louisiana

Train 1,000 youth annually in coding, photography, and entrepreneurship

Reactivate 2 miles of city blocks annually through community cleanups

Create a sustainable maintenance fund to ensure the quality of our public art spaces

## CONTACT

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[www.thewallsproject.org](http://www.thewallsproject.org)

The background of the image is a dense, out-of-focus pile of numerous tin cans. These cans are painted in a variety of vibrant colors including red, blue, green, yellow, and orange. Many of the cans are covered in splatters and patches of paint, suggesting they have been used for artistic expression or recycling projects.

If we can't get it right in  
our backyard,  
**how are we going to get  
it right in the universe?**

THE **WALLS** PROJECT

[www.thewallsproject.org](http://www.thewallsproject.org)