

The Doors of Diversity Are Now Open!

Pottsville, PA – What does diversity look like in your community? Students from Mahanoy Area, Nativity BVM, Pottsville Area, Shenandoah Valley and Tri-Valley Area School districts answered this question as they participated in the Schuylkill County Diversity Council's *Doors of Diversity* mural project.

At the 2010 Schuylkill County Youth Conference the Diversity Council of Schuylkill County invited high school students to participate in the *Doors of Diversity*, a mural project supported by funding from the Schuylkill Area Community Foundation. Students from each high school were asked to submit a mural design depicting diversity in their community.

Mahanoy Area, Nativity BVM, Pottsville Area, Shenandoah Valley and Tri-Valley chose to participate and submitted a design to the Diversity Council. The members of the council provided suggestions and approved the school's design.

The doors, supplied by the Diversity Council, were delivered to the school and the students painted the approved murals. The painted doors will be on display in the Schuylkill County's VISION office at 123 Mahantongo Street, Pottsville for the Block of Art event April 8-10, 2011.

The doors will be returned to their respective high school for display during the April 29, 2010 *Stand Against Racism* events planned by each district.

Participating schools, staff, and students include: **Mahanoy Area** - Staff: Nancy Brylewski and Dot Scicchitano, Student: Mike Handy; **Nativity BVM** - Staff: Mrs. Jennifer Daubert and Mr. Lee Labosky, Students: Courtney Field, Michael Ferguson, and Jenna Schuster; **Pottsville Area** -Staff: Mikki Grabusky and Beth Pillus , Students: Sonja Rossi, Delaena Cline, Jacob Cobb, Jori Stefnic, **Shenandoah Valley** - Staff: Barb Boyer, Student: Blaise Breslosky; **Tri-Valley** - Staff: Melissa Felty, Dennis Moyer and Kim Roulin, Students: Hilary Wehry, Courtney Radel, Zach Shade, Allison Rusinko, Chris Kelly, Bethany Richards and Mei Zhu Dan.

"We are honored to have the "Doors of Diversity" in our window for the Block of Art and proud to have the Diversity Council of Schuylkill County as our strategic partner", stated Kay Jones, Director of Community Development for Schuylkill County's VISION.

Beth Fligge, Chair of the Diversity Council, added "The Diversity Council celebrates diversity in Schuylkill County. We wanted to engage the youth of the county in a project that would raise awareness of diversity in their community. "

According to Doreen Milot, Supervisor of Curriculum and ESL at Intermediate Unit 29, " The goal of the Youth Conference is to help create inclusive respective school communities, develop empathy and effort to get past labels, recognize the humanity in all of us, appreciate each other for our uniqueness and work towards social justice as a life-long endeavor. This project is a creative outlet for Youth Conference students to display their thoughts about their diverse community."

According to Eileen Kuperavage, Executive Director of the Schuylkill Area Community Foundation, “This project is support by the Schuylkill Area Community Foundation’s **Diversity Fund for Schuylkill County.**”

The Diversity Fund is an endowment fund that was established in 2008 with two substantial contributions from Wal-Mart Distribution Center #7030 and Susquehanna Bank.

Contributions reach the student population through the Schuylkill County Youth Conference - A World of Understanding and various initiatives throughout the county. The programs and activities in our schools and communities will foster and enhance cultural appreciation, understanding, and unity. The annual earnings from the Diversity fund are distributed to qualified organizations that meet the criteria set forth in the fund agreement.

In 2010, the Schuylkill Area Community Foundation’s Grant Committee selected the Diversity Council as the recipient of the grant for \$400 to purchase supplies for the participating high schools. The Doors of Diversity project invited students from each high school to create a mural representing diversity in their community which focused on two areas of interest at the community foundation – arts and culture.

The fund continues to grow through the generous contributions of individuals and our business community. It is our privilege to recognize the following donors who have supported diversity education programs throughout Schuylkill County: Steve and Doris Agapakis; Sylvan and Rosalie Lehrman; Lipkin, Marshall, Bohorad & Thornburg, P.C.; M&T Charitable Foundation; Richard Weiss and Barbara McLaughlin; OMNOVA Solutions Foundation; Jack Rich; and the Herman Yudacufski Charitable Foundation.

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