

Civil Rights Activist Mosaic Portraits 2017

A Collaborative Project to honor the civil rights movement, Lowell School, Wash DC



“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Rev. Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

In collaboration with the middle school Humanities and Diversity programs, I engaged our 7th graders in an ambitious project intended to honor less known contributors to the ongoing civil rights movement. Students visited *Trace*, an exhibit at the Hirshhorn Museum of Art by Ai Weiwei consisting of Lego portraits of 176 activists from around the world. We then undertook creating our own portraits of seven select contributors to social activism. Students participated in creating over 30,000 small clay tiles which were spray painted varying shades of gray and black. These tiles were assembled following gridded patterns into large collaborative mosaics. Many hours of effort over a two month period resulted in works of art that have been referred to as “remarkable”, “unbelievable”, and “amazing” by faculty and families. The mosaics were first presented to the public as part of a celebration of the life of Martin Luther King Jr. in January, 2018 and have gone on to become part of our permanent collection of art on campus.