



# MEDINA COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT

## Probate and Juvenile Divisions

93 Public Square, Room 104, Medina, Ohio 44256

KEVIN W. DUNN  
Judge

MEDIA RELEASE  
February 17, 2021

## Mandala Mural Created by Juvenile Detention Center Residents on Display in Judge Dunn's Courtroom



MEDINA – In 2020, ten residents at the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center (MCJDC) had the opportunity to create a mural representing how we can all put in effort to create a small piece of value to contribute to the larger picture, despite social distancing.

The interactive art program, The Joy Project, came to the MCJDC in a collaborative effort with the Akron Art Bomb Brigade and funding from Access the Arts. These two organizations work to inspire troubled youth to identify their

passions and provide a healthy outlet for expression. The Akron Art Bomb Brigade virtually hosted five, two-hour classes with the residents to learn how to create their own mandala, a geometric configuration of symbols. Mandalas have been used in spiritual traditions to help focus attention and aid in meditation, and have been shown in clinical studies to reduce stress and pain, lower blood pressure and ease depression.

The MCJDC began utilizing therapeutic art in 2017 as an outlet for residents facilitated by Youth Fulfillment Coordinator Jaclyn Balliet. Therapeutic art has been shown to promote positive youth development, address social skills, interpersonal communication and problem solving, as well as increase creativity, critical thinking, and emotional management.

“Even if the residents don’t verbalize how they feel, you can see it on their faces as they create,” said MCJDC Superintendent Ron Stollar. “It’s one of the most positive, upbeat times in the building for that hour to hour and a half. Even the kids who normally have behavioral issues, tend to not cause problems during art time.”

Residents of MCJDC have reported that art helps them take their mind off of negative things in their life, and focus on expressing their emotions and thoughts in a healthy, positive manner.

To maintain social distancing, residents created 15 individual mandalas, made from wooden boards and painted with acrylics, and they were later assembled into one mural. While the MCJDC was not able

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to host an in-person Art Experience to the public last year to showcase the piece, the Mandala Tiles, along with other pieces of art, were displayed online where the community could bid on artwork or donate to the MCJDC therapeutic art programs. Everyone who purchased a piece of art received a complementary set of five greeting cards created from the resident's artwork. Sponsors of the Mandala Tiles received 10 cards and have their name displayed on the plaque hung next to the mural.

Last week, the mural was fixed into its new home in Judge Kevin W. Dunn's courtroom. Judge Dunn said the mural has meaning to him beyond overcoming social distancing. He sees it as a symbol for the effort needed by all to achieve a common goal.

"The purpose of Juvenile Court is not to strictly punish youth for making a mistake," said Judge Dunn. "I requested this mural be hung in my courtroom as a reminder to all the children and their families who come before me that our collective goal is to set these youth on the right track. We will provide all of the services and programs we can, but it takes effort from all sides. Everyone is responsible for doing their part to achieve the best outcome."

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