

An abbreviated version of these remarks was read at the Mosaic Dedication on June 14, 2016, in front of the mosaics at the K. A. Brett School.

Hi everyone, I'm Juno Lamb, the director of Arts Council of Tamworth, and the project director for the Tamworth 250th Mosaic Project. I'm happy to be here this evening to celebrate these mosaics with so many of you who helped create them and those of you who are here to enjoy them.

These mosaics were created by hundreds of kids and adults with the guidance of mural artist David Fichter. David came to Tamworth to explain the entire process to us last December, and we put out a call to the community to share ideas and images of things significant to Tamworth past and present. Every kid at Brett drew something important to them from their lives in Tamworth, and we received hundreds of ideas and images from community members. David masterfully combined many of our ideas and drawings into the design you see here today.

Because we couldn't put everything in the mosaic, think of everything that you see in them as representative of more—animals, activities, people, places; everything has multiple meanings.

For example, the people represented in the mosaic are not the "most important" people in Tamworth, or the people who have necessarily made the greatest mark. As well as representing different eras in Tamworth's history, different ages and genders, this group of citizens represents many aspects of all of us who have lived here through the centuries: Among them are husbands and wives, mothers and fathers. The group includes year-round residents and summer people, those born in Tamworth and elsewhere, those whose family connections cross centuries in Tamworth, or who adopted the place as home in their own lifetime. They are business owners and laborers, farmers and hunters, writers, artists, craftspeople and musicians, military veterans, public servants of many stripes, medical professionals and people of faith. All of them gave much to this community, as have so many of our citizens throughout Tamworth's 25 decades. And one dog! A key will be available soon for those who want to learn more about the people and places represented—and make sure you find three hidden objects: a four-leaf clover, a moth, and an M for mosaic.

And then, David came to town. Little did we know... My brother, who knows his Boston-area murals, presciently described it like this: "I picture him flying up from Boston like Superman, emitting a jet stream of happy urban picnickers." In fact he arrived in his signature overalls, in a van packed to the brim with thousands and thousands of glass tiles, and for two crazy weeks, morning, noon and night, students and community members built these mosaics in Brett art teacher Melanie McBrian's classroom. David is tireless, indefatigable, relentless, inexorable—he doesn't stop to eat or drink anything except coffee. Mrs. McBrian was generous and relaxed in turning her classroom over to the entire community for two weeks. Mrs. McBrian's intern Lauren Sayers was a pool of calm in what might have seemed like a whirlwind of tiny glass shards. Once the mosaics were built, volunteers returned for several long weekend days of mounting and grouting the mosaics—Wyatt Berrier made a great time lapse video of one of these days that you can see on our website. These weeks contained so many wonderful moments and stories, some of which are described in this brief mosaic of participant voices. (If any of you have not yet written a residency evaluation, I still welcome

them.)

“I LOVED this residency, as I have so many of the Arts Tamworth residencies. There was something about this one, though, that set me on fire. The artist, David, is so gifted with the media of people and community; it rivals his skills as a mosaic artist, which are huge. I loved the complexity of the project. From collecting stories and images to teaching children how to use glass nipping tools to learning traditional glass mosaic techniques to grouting by cell phone lights, and the complexity shows in the finished pieces. I loved watching the students gain confidence as they performed "dangerous" acts with glass shards, watching them work together and with community members of different ages. I learned so much Tamworth history and lore and was moved watching history in action as three generations worked together, or as all the living librarians considered how to build the glass likeness of their beloved home. Engaging with the students as they fell in love with the beautiful materials and their "own" corners of the piece as they worked was a joy.”

“We are new to this community and the promise of the existence of a community here was what drew us to move Tamworth. Walking into the school our first night we met two new neighbors on their way in. The mosaic project was full of palpable community buzz...kids, grandparents, old timers, new timers all gathering and splitting glass...us new timers learning who and what the images were from the stories told from 'old timers'. A sharing of heritage and pride, and laughter about history that makes up the fabric of Tamworth. Ahem...the mosaic of Tamworth.”

“One big room, surrounded by thousands of pieces of colored tile. In the middle, a big group of people, each focused on creating an image in glass. Comments flying from one person to another in helpful and friendly tones. Working hard, but feeling good, energized by David's enthusiastic banter.”

“People of all ages came together to create a lasting and wonderful work of art, celebrating community, past and present. David and the volunteers schooled the community, young and old, in the magical medium of mosaic, new to many of us. What seemed like an impossible task, composed of so many people and pieces and processes, came together beautifully. Thanks to the many hands and cooperative spirits involved, the final masterpiece lights up the facade of K.A. Brett School. Every time I see it, it moves my heart to think of all the materials and hard work that went into it, the experience of learning and accomplishment, and the peaceful dedication and joy in making it.”

“My favorite moment was when I was able to bring my 94-year-old mother-in-law to participate. As the prior Cook Librarian, to see her place tiles along with other town librarians, was really a piece of history. I think of it every time I walk by the mural. Also, watching George Smith's family work on his image was heartwarming and powerful...the legacy continues in Tamworth. Community members came into our building that I have never met before. The commitment and dedication of some of the artists was overwhelming.”

“I truly enjoyed working side by side with present as well as former students. It was wonderful to see students who had graduated from the Brett School and gone on to do

remarkable things.”

“My favorite time on the project was probably working on that last Sunday, to finish up. I loved the feeling of total concentration, of a bunch of people tangled up on the scaffolding working together, almost as one. I loved admiring the skills of other people. I loved partaking in the sense of accomplishment as a group as night moved in. But second to that, when we were mounting the first panel on the wall on Friday evening, there happened to be a dance at the school. As kids walked past the mural with their families they pointed out the sections of the mural that were “theirs”, the parts they drew or laid tiles on, with such a sense of connection, pride and competence/skill. I hope they hold on to that feeling and that it carries into other activities in their lives.”

“Juno asked me to figure out roughly how many mosaic tiles were incorporated into the entire piece. We are working on it in my math RTI group! As we measured and calculated this bright May morning, we had a chance to see the finished mosaic up close. Wow. Absolutely beautiful.”

“This residency drew people in from all corners of our town. Okay, so it drove home the metaphor that we, the people of Tamworth are a beautiful mosaic. Up close, each of us is pretty good, but put us together and WOW, now you've got something so beautiful and complex it could make you cry.”

Are you curious how many individual shards of glass Anne Chant’s math group determined are in the mosaics? Zoie Thurston is going to tell you, and as she does, just remember that at one point all these bits of glass were held together with nothing more than some big pieces of plastic tape!

[At the dedication ceremony, Zoie described the group’s process and revealed the final figure. I included this paragraph in the grant report to the NH State Council on the Arts: “I asked the middle school math teacher to work with her students to figure out how many pieces of glass and ceramic both mosaics contain. The minority are whole tiles; most have been cut by hand into the shapes you see them in. They figured out a strategy, measured, calculated, and determined that the left hand mosaic contains 22,040, the right hand 21,536, for a grand total of 43,576. Whether that number is exact or not, it’s obvious that the mosaics contain a zillion little bits of glass. *Every one of those pieces was placed by a human hand working in community.*”]

Soon we will print a permanent plaque to be mounted near the mosaics, saying when they were created, and why, and by whom. The plaque will credit the major funders of the mosaic, including The Tamworth Foundation, the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, the Tamworth PTA, the K. A. Brett School, the Yeoman’s Fund for the Arts, and business sponsors The Other Store, BEAM Construction Associates, Inc., and Club Motorsports. Arts Council of Tamworth donors at \$500 and above have the option of dedicating the mosaic in honor or memory of someone or something. Dedications include “in memory of Helen and Jim Breasted; in honor of the K. A. Brett teachers; in memory of Joan Ayer Remick Casarotto—artist, storekeeper, gardener, Tamworth historian; in memory of Joan Cave; in honor of Peggy Johnson, Genius of Music, Painting, Poetry and Life; “A Little Help For Our Friends”; Thank

you, Tamworth artists, young and younger—you make our lives brighter; in honor of Tamworth Volunteers; in honor of Betsy Thompson and the Rev. William Huntington Thompson; in memory of Arthur Walden and Chinook.”

I want to thank all of these funders, with a special shout out to The Tamworth Foundation whose large grant at the beginning of the project allowed us to move forward with confidence that we could secure sufficient community support, the Arts Tamworth board of directors, especially Chris Clyne for consulting on the project throughout and Siena Kaplan-Thompson for organizing such a successful Crowdrise campaign, and all of our donors, business sponsors and funders who make it possible for us to bring so many wonderful diverse art forms to school and community year after year. Take a peek at the House of Wishes on the lawn, the glass mosaic mobile of the five Platonic solids hanging in the cafeteria, and the needle felted wool murals hanging in the hall by the gym for visual reminders of what we are able to do with community support, and then remember salsa dancing to Mariachi and Cuban music, Japanese stories, hard core Americana, Afro-Caribbean beats, vocal improv, hip hop poetry and more. I would be remiss if I didn't say you have just a couple more days to add a dedication to the mosaic, and you all have an opportunity to support Arts Tamworth at our Benefit Auction this Saturday evening at 7:00 at Runnells Hall. Lots more info at artstamworth.org.

I want to repeat the final mosaic dedication, to Tamworth Volunteers. Without the hard work of every Brett student and many teachers and staff people, art teacher Melanie McBrian who volunteered dozens of hours outside of school to this project, hundreds of community members and *dozens* of absolutely tireless volunteers, you would not be witness to these mosaics, and generations to come would not be witness to this bright record of some of what we care about as a community in this particular moment in time. Especially the volunteers, who came into the school day after day to work alongside students, and who worked many long hours building, mounting and grouting the mosaics—who returned day after day, and night after night—who came in multigenerational groups, or came to build the faces and clothing of their relatives or ancestors—who listened to David Fichter's jokes and told their own, who celebrated birthdays and anniversaries, life and death with us as we worked together.

We have a little memento for volunteers—if I don't find you with one soon, make sure you find me.

In the end we grouted the mosaic on the right in one very long day. Volunteers worked until well after dark by the light of their cell phones, and inevitably we missed one tiny area—Willey Fromm's hand. I came over one morning to mix some flesh-toned grout to finish the job, and to give the mosaics a final cider vinegar polish, and I had the strongest sensation as I was working here that all these faces were watching me benevolently, that these kind spirits of Tamworth will be watching over all of us for generations to come. So many of us, so many of you, are in these mosaics—not just your blood, the DNA from which David believes will be collected in the future to clone some composite mosaic human—but your spirits, too—everyone who had a part in these extraordinary artworks will be watching over us as well. Many thanks to all of you.

And now I'm pleased to introduce the Silver Lake Singers, who will conclude our brief celebration by consecrating these mosaics with song.