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Media Contact: Demone Carter
Organization: School of Arts & Culture
Email: Demone@schoolofartsandculture.org
Phone: 408-396-6757



School
of Arts
& Culture
Celebrates
Mexican
Heritage
Plaza

With support from the California Arts Council, the School of Arts and Culture at MHP will empower East San José youth to create new public art in their community.

AUGUST 5, 2019, SAN JOSE, CA: The School of Arts and Culture at MHP (SOAC) is proud to announce it has been awarded a **\$150,000** California Creative Communities grant from the California Arts Council (CAC) to facilitate the *Jóvenes Activos* Mural (JAM) project, a collaborative effort between the [School of Arts and Culture](#), [SOMOS Mayfair](#), and [Local Color](#).

For a community actively experiencing cultural erasure as new developments push out our predominantly Chicano/Latino, blue-collar families, our youth will learn how to navigate the public arts system to create murals that preserve and uplift our community's culture and heritage. Over the next two years, two cohorts of Eastside youth will learn the process of creating public art from conception to execution. The institutional knowledge gained from this partnership will live on in this community. Knowledge that is imperative as the community comes together to address the inevitable change that is already underway, and to ensure the current and future Chicano/Latino residents have a sense of place and belonging in East San José.

The concept for JAM was born out of the organizing work of *Jóvenes Activos*, a youth group that has led the fight against [cultural erasure](#) in East San José, a community that is also in the advanced stages of gentrification. According to *Jóvenes Activos* organizer, Sandra Mata, "After seeing the recent destruction of our cultural murals, it is important for us to advocate for public art that reflects our community's culture and heritage. Murals tell the history of a community AND this project gives us the opportunity to make history by creating murals that are representative of our rich and diverse community."

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The School of Arts and Culture's Executive Director, Jessica Paz-Cedillos, explains why it is important for the School to be involved in this work:

As a cultural institution in East San José that is in service of a predominantly Chicano/Latino and multicultural arts community, we have a moral obligation to step up with our partners to do the work that will protect and celebrate our heritage, culture, and creativity. For a community actively combating cultural erasure, this partnership is an incredible opportunity for Eastside youth to engage systems and uplift their rich histories through public community art.

The JAM project will begin this fall and community members will be able to view the youth's progress at the School of Arts and Culture's *Cafecito* pop-up coffee shop event series starting in September 2019.

For more information about the JAM project contact Demone Carter at demone@schoolofartsandculture.org

About the School of Arts and Culture at MHP

The School of Arts and Culture at MHP is a cultural institution in East San José that is tasked with activating a local gem (the Mexican Heritage Plaza), and convenes more than 70,000 people a year. Their mission is to catalyze creativity and empower community.

About SOMOS Mayfair

SOMOS Mayfair is a community-based organization with over 20 years of experience working with families in East San José. They work toward a vision where **everyone** is able to build their leadership capacity to ensure families have **access** to everything, including resources and opportunities to strengthen our community (*Todo Para Todos*). Their mission is to support children, organize families, connect neighbors, and address systemic inequalities as they uplift the dreams, power and leadership of the community.

About Local Color

Local Color is a non-profit building economic opportunities alongside providing affordable studio space for creatives at the intersection of art + community development. Their work strengthens the local economy by keeping creatives engaged, employed, and active.