



Celebrating
60
YEARS | Because of my
**EISENHOWER
FELLOWSHIP...**



JANE GOLDEN, 2003 USA (PHILADELPHIA)

Executive Director, Mural Arts Program, City of Philadelphia

When Jane Golden began the Mural Arts Program in 1984 as a small element of the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti network, she could not have imagined the profound effect that it would have on a global scale. It began as an effort to curb the graffiti problem in Philadelphia, but quickly grew to foster constructive community relationships, not only in Philadelphia and the U.S., but internationally as well. In 2003, Jane was awarded an Eisenhower Fellowship, and used the opportunity to visit organizations in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland so that she could better advance the mission and work of the Mural Arts Program. However, what came out of Jane's experience with Eisenhower Fellowships had a reach far beyond that.



One of the most inspiring moments in her trip occurred when Jane visited Mount Joy Prison, the largest prison in Ireland. A conversation with the warden about the importance of humanity and rehabilitation in prisons inspired Jane to continue to expand her work with adult and juvenile prison populations in Philadelphia. In considering a project that could utilize art and function the Mural Arts Program with 2001 USA Eisenhower Fellow, IBM Executive, Diane Melley, launched the Restorative Justice Program to help inmates, ex-offenders and juvenile delinquents develop skills to become productive members of society. Participants have the opportunity to author, illustrate, and publish e-books for global distribution. This program not only benefited the participants therapeutically, but opened up new employment opportunities. The recidivism rates for those involved in these projects are very low, demonstrating the constructive and healing power of art that Golden has advocated for in all her years with the Mural Arts Program.

In a continued bond with Ireland, Jane worked with children from the Big Picture program (of Mural Arts) in 2007 to raise funds for Dublin youth to fly to Philadelphia and collaborate on a joint project. In 2008, Big Picture raised enough funds to go to Ireland. The opportunity to expand the worldviews of the children in Philadelphia and Dublin is a profound testament to the power of grassroots community efforts to open the world up for young people and facilitate new networks of understanding and dialogue, much like Eisenhower Fellows develop by connecting with other leaders in their fields around the world. In 2009, the American Embassy in Paris worked with Jane and the Mural Arts Program to address social problems with the restorative power of art. Together they designed a project targeted at tensions about race, class, ethnicity, and opportunity that surfaced following an increase in non-native French population. What they found was that while the French understand public art, they did not initially understand the purpose of community-building through art. The French project produced three murals in suburban Paris as well as an artist exchange between Philadelphia and Paris. These were so successful, the embassy funded a second effort.

Although "government" and "justice" are not words typically associated with "art," Jane Golden and the Mural Arts Program have embraced and united all three with great success. The community-based organizing model that she has used with the Mural Arts Program has demonstrated its applicability with many populations, especially in opening up interactions between diverse communities and creating opportunities for dialogue, healing, and employment. The lasting presence of the Mural Arts Program is due in part to Golden's ability to adapt and identify where the greatest areas of need are. Golden's Eisenhower Fellowships experience opened up the world in a meaningful way not only for her, but for those affected by the positive and powerful influence of art.

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