

Our mural's design comes from a monthly art project that I do with the youth. A few years ago I came across the spray paint art on Facebook that everyone was posting about from Youtube. I watched the Facebook videos and went to Youtube to watch more videos. I often use Youtube for ideas for art projects, especially recycled art projects. We do art with the youth once per month at the Street Outreach Center. I try to make sure that our art projects don't actually require artistic talent. I want everyone to be able to be involved, whether they consider themselves artistic or not. The spray paint art uses stencils, so there is no previous talent needed, anyone can do it. Our previous experience with "Art with Andy" (what we call our monthly art projects) had been somewhat successful with some youth involvement; most times the majority of the youth in the center weren't interested because they weren't into art. Art is such a vast medium that anyone can get into art. When I started asking the youth if they wanted to go outside and play with spray paint, everyone was excited. The excitement dwindled slightly as I passed out the protective masks, but no one complained enough to not want to be involved. I didn't tell them what we were going to create; I just started showing them what they were going to do. Very quickly they began to realize they were making one of the space pictures with spray paint, like they too had seen on Facebook. The excitement was awesome! With new youth coming in every month and active clients eager to try it again, we began doing the spray paint art every month (weather permitting, this is an outside activity). We have multiple pictures around the center of spray paint art, all done by the youth as group projects. Our mural is very much influenced by the youths' love of the spray paint projects. I explained to them that they had to design the mural, and I gave them the theme, "Realizing Youth Potential". It was unanimous that they all wanted to do something along the lines of reaching for the stars, using the spray paint. I tried to explain that it had to be more than just our usual space pictures. One youth suggested that we put the Project Lighthouse logo on top of the moon saying that they would never have seen their own potential if it hadn't been for us. Through motivational interviewing, we help the youth see the positives in their lives no matter how negative their initial outlook may be. While I told them the initial sketch had to be in pencil, the youth took it a step farther and used colored pencils. Knowing they worked hard on it, and not wanting to ask them to redo it, the scan I am attaching is in color. I hope this is acceptable as it is colored pencil. Two current youth and a youth graduate of the program who was recently hired as a Part-time Outreach Worker worked on the design. I am very proud that our youth see their potential as limitless as space itself.