

Mural at Meldrum Park – Vision Statement

Our mural welcomes people to Whittier, a working-class neighborhood that embraces its heritage, celebrates its dynamic cultural and ethnic diversity, and looks forward to addressing and overcoming challenges to a prosperous and peaceful future. Our mural recognizes this as the past and present home to Native Americans from many tribes, as well as the place where settlers have come from across the globe. Our mural sings with a chorus of many languages and radiates with the colors of many cultures. And, our mural shows the neighborhood working together to care for its natural beauty, the education of its young people, and the welfare of its most vulnerable residents. Our mural is beautiful, engaging, and is the product of many dedicated hands and minds. <http://siouxfallsmuralproject.blogspot.com>

Description of images on mural:

From left to right, the design includes:

- Whittier Middle School students from Lela Hemmerich's class exploring their city, illuminating aspects that have cultural, historical and personal significance. Their research project is our inspiration and has been integral to developing the mural design.
- Symbolic hands holding the Falls of the Big Sioux River as a gateway to the city. In the distance, the Statue of Liberty is visible welcoming those of us who at one time were immigrants to the U.S.
- The waters of the river are gradually transformed into a march of nations familiar to residents as the annual Celebration of Cultures parade. The figures here are taken directly from photographs of the march. The flags they carry are a representative sampling of the many countries represented in the neighborhood, including South Sudan, Norway, Cuba, India, Lakota Sioux, Nepal, Somalia, Iraq, Ireland, Sri Lanka and El Salvador.
- At the head of the march, the flags in the hands of marchers are replaced by seedlings and tools for planting. This signifies new immigrants' intentions to put down roots in Sioux Falls, and that they represent more than just their homeland.
- To the right of the march, large hands from above grasp ones from below in a gesture of play and / or lifting up or helping. One of these hands has Henna decoration, common among the cultures of Africa and southeast Asia, and popular at the Celebration of Cultures.
- At the far right, young people from our design team manifest, through drawing, a hopeful vision of Whittier Neighborhood and Meldrum Park .
- Tying the design together in the background are a series of design motifs taken from 1) the interior of the old Minnehaha Courthouse, 2) Lakota Sioux Star Quilt, 3) Henna tattoos and 4) East African textiles.