



**ROMEO
COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS**

GOOD NEWS ACROSS 'R' DISTRICT

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Art teacher reaches new heights

Tatum Lorway, an illustrator, muralist and art teacher at the 9th Grade Academy, has been chosen to paint a mural on the support pillars of the Groesbeck Pedestrian Bridge at Metropolitan Parkway. The project was made possible through the DIA Partners in Public Art (PIPA) mural program, which was created in 2018 with the goal of collaborating with communities to co-create community-informed, highly visible public works of art.

For the past four weeks, Ms. Lorway has spent her days suspended on a lift transforming two 15-foot pillars into a large-scale piece she titled "River Flow."

Before embarking on the project, which is a partnership between the DIA and Clinton Township, Ms. Lorway had to submit three designs to the DIA and the Clinton Township Board, each one incorporating responses from a survey conducted with Clinton Township residents. Responses on what residents would like to see included the Clinton River, nature, history, and the diversity of the population in the area.

"In my art, I was able to encapsulate a lot of those things," Ms. Lorway said. "The main piece of it is the Clinton River. I brought in the diversity aspect on the top and bottom with all the stones."

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“In my pieces I really like to tell a story or portray a lot of symbolism,” she added. “In the rocks that border the river, I decided to make them all different shapes, sizes and colors because that truly is our community. We have a large spectrum of people who live here. I wanted to create that as the border of our river to show the structure and the strength that they give – the form of our river, holding along that flow.”

The rocks will be visible for passersby in cars. Pedestrians crossing the bridge will encounter something unexpected: arrowheads mixed in the rocks that are a

tribute to the rich history of Native American tribes that inhabited the area.

Once her design was approved, Ms. Lorway got to work. Giving her confidence was not just her experience painting smaller scale murals – in home basements, nurseries, a parking structure and an at-risk center for youth, to name a few – but a philosophy she seeks to instill in her students at 9GA: Trust the process. That process begins with creative problem-solving and visual idea building.

“We teach the students how to ideate, which is really great for getting their ideas down, researching and exploring,” she said.

While Ms. Lorway has been interested in art her entire life, she didn’t always know she wanted to be a teacher. She attended the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, majoring in illustration and art education.

It was during her student teaching that she fell in love with it. An added bonus was that she could share her passion for art with her students.

“I grew up very excited about art so I wanted to see if this was something I could give back,” she said.

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