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September 25, 2018

West Springfield Seeks International Citizen-Artists for Refugee-Focused Mural

West Springfield, MA

Over Columbus Day weekend, the Merrick neighborhood of West Springfield is going to become a bit more colorful - with the help of local artists, aspiring artists, and perhaps some reluctant artists. The West Springfield Office of Community Development is seeking residents to help collaboratively create a mural celebrating the refugee and international community on Merrick Station on October 6 and 7.

“We have a beautiful community made up of folks with a range of backgrounds,” said Morgan Drewniany, Director of Community Development, “but nothing in the Merrick neighborhood that celebrates this in an outright way.” She continued to explain though the neighborhood is seen locally as a destination for international supermarkets and restaurants, a lot of residents feel disconnected. “It struck me when I began in this role that the Town hadn’t lead a project to celebrate our refugee community, one of the largest in the State. This is just the beginning of creating neighborhood pride to this regard.”

The mural will be painted on the side of Merrick Station at 389 Main Street. Robert Markey, a local artist who has worked globally with refugee communities, will facilitate a conversation, and then assist residents in physically creating the mural together. The two day process he designed will include brainstorming and design on the first day, and execution of the mural on the second. Both days begin at 10 AM onsite, with the understanding that people may drop in and out throughout the day.

Families working with the Refugee Resource Center have been invited to participate, but more citizen artists are needed. All levels of experience are welcome to join in the beautification process, but are asked to RSVP. Interested parties can get more information or RSVP to attend by contacting Director of Community Development Morgan Drewniany at 413.263.3044 or mdrewniany@towns.org.

This project is underwritten and organized by the West Springfield Office of Community Development, with money from the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant, designed to provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities for low-and-moderate-income residents.

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More details on the First Time Homebuyers class are available by contacting Carly Camossi, Outreach Coordinator for the Town of West Springfield at ccamossi@townofwestspringfield.org or 413.495.1844.