

# MATERIALS CONSERVATION

---

March 17, 2021

Mr. Dan Diaz  
Business Development Manager  
City of Allentown  
435 Hamilton Street  
Allentown, PA 1810  
Daniel.diaz@allentownpa.gov

Dear Dan:

It was a pleasure to work with you, the City of Allentown, the Allentown Arts Commission, and the various project stakeholders on last year's public art program. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we commissioned meaningful murals and worked with your team on the artist relief grants through the Art of Encouragement Program. The achievements from last year offer much to be proud of!

At Materials Conservation (MC) it is our core belief that works of public art be an expression of the community where the art is located, and that a meaningful engagement of project stakeholders is the way to achieve that goal. Before we even began planning our work last year, we created a survey for members of the Allentown Arts Commission to understand their goals, priorities, interests, and concerns. The comments from members of the Arts Commission informed every part of our approach to the program. Similarly, when we began to work on the idea of the school mural the first thing we did was to speak to the school's principal and art teacher to better understand the school community. From these conversations we learned that Principal Schlegel's primary goal was to get each child to develop a life-long love of reading. We took that idea as the theme for the work of art and worked with the artist to develop a survey of students to inform the content of the mural. This approach of getting direct feedback and incorporate that into not only our works of art but also our planning is necessary for making works of art that resonate and create a sense of ownership and are not just parachuted into a community without context or meaning.

MC is committed to following the best practices in the field of Public Art, including having all aspects of the public art commissioning process be open and transparent. We value input from stakeholders and believe that the way to achieve the best and most resonant projects is by hearing from community members and stakeholders. We hope to have the opportunity to work with the City of Allentown on more works of art this year.

Sincerely,



Julia Guerrero, Public Art Project Manager