

Community mural needs 1000 volunteer “artists” to connect the dots

By Polina Olsen
The Southwest Portland Post

Andy Bell wants kangaroos. Jarmila Darby wants people dancing. As artist Aimee Erickson sifts through suggestions for the Multnomah Arts Center (MAC) mural, her vision grows bigger and brighter.

After years of anticipation, the MAC is happy to announce they have commissioned Erickson to design and coordinate their 122-linear-foot main lobby mural. And, the center requests community input from start to finish.

“It’s a beautiful thing to be part of,” Erickson said during an interview with the Southwest Portland Post. By incorporating techniques she successfully used on several Portland area school murals, she hopes to include as many people as possible. “Once we know the design, we block in the solid

drawing,” she said. “Then, we’re ready for the dots.”

The dots are what 1000 volunteers will make. Each gets a Q-tip and some paint. Dots large and small cover the mural background and foreground creating a colorful canvas everyone can share.

Aimee Erickson (www.aimeeerickson.com) teaches painting and drawing at the MAC and lives in Multnomah Village. A Brigham Young University graduate in Visual Communication and Design, she specializes in portraits, drawings and landscapes.

Her clients include KATU Channel 2, the Portland Art Museum and Portland Public Schools. Now the Regional Arts & Culture Council, The Safeway Foundation and Southwest Neighborhood, Inc. have teamed up on the \$11,437 grant that honors arts in the heart of the community.

“It’s a great opportunity to work



Erickson includes public participation by painting with dots. This photo is from a mural she designed for the Illahee Elementary School in Camas, Washington. (Photo courtesy of Aimee Erickson)

with a fabulous muralist and reflect the multitude of lives we affect every day,” said MAC Executive Director Michael Walsh. “We first met with a Portland Parks and Recreation grant specialist to discuss this in earnest last summer. Then, all the pieces came together, and we were able to make it happen. We gave Aimee the concept of *arts and community*, and she took it from there.”

“We don’t want to limit this to people who can draw,” Erickson said. “All ages can participate. We want the mural to be a joyful and energetic representation of the role the art center plays in the community.” Erickson hopes to finish the mural by the end of September with a community celebration planned for

November.

The deadline for design suggestions is May 8. Forms are available at the Multnomah Arts Center office, Multnomah Village Stores and online at www.multnomahartscenter.org. Or, visit Erickson during Friday drop-in hours. The MAC is located at 7688 SW Capitol Hwy (at 31st Avenue). Register for forty-five minute “paint the dots” sessions by calling 503-823-2787 or stopping by the MAC office.

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Aimee Erickson checks out suggestions for the new community mural. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

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