

07 | Talk it Up!

A robust public art program brings with it great opportunities for teaching about art and the community. An educational program about the arts and the public art process will increase the overall understanding and support of public art, as well as its enjoyment. The Cary Public Art Advisory Board should take advantage of these opportunities and pursue educational programs as part of the Public Art Program. The Board may want to pursue grants and partnerships to leverage funds and resources for these programs. Examples of educational programs include:

- 1) The artist selection process can involve residents about the proposed work, the selected site, and the artist(s). Public meetings, open houses and/or exhibits of work by artist finalists, and perhaps talks by the artists themselves as well as a representative of the site or partner organization, provide great learning opportunities.
- 2) The artist's work process may be a mentoring opportunity. Interested artists could involve students and budding artists in the creative process of researching, designing, or fabricating some portion of their artwork. The details of the mentoring process should be included in the artist's contract.
- 3) Artists should be encouraged to share information with the public about the inspiration and themes of their art projects. When this information is available, it should be included in Cary's public art inventory posted on the public art website.
- 4) A walking or driving tour brochure of public art would be a fun and educational means of increasing the public's awareness of public art in the community. The brochure would include a map, photographs and narrative on the art projects. Funding for the brochure could be through a corporate donation or grant application to state and regional arts organizations.
- 5) Workshops, seminars or events with artists can generate a community dialogue about the meaning and importance of public art. Potential audiences are schools, civic organizations, or the public at large.
- 6) The Cary Public Art webpage provides the community with access to a variety of public art topics. The current website includes the public art inventory and upcoming events. With an expanded selection of information, such as public art articles, art projects in other communities and links, the webpage can serve as an important repository for public art information, educating the community and promoting the Public Art Program.
- 7) A community-based art project directly involves citizens in the development of themes for a public art project. The result can be a one or two word concept, or more detailed and descriptive themes. For example, some concepts may be: Cary's history; local geography ("all rivers flow from here"); Cary as a technology center; as a digital gaming center; ethnic diversity; train route; arts and culture center; agricultural history in west Cary; water as a soothing presence in hot Cary summers; as well as environmental concepts that the Office of Sustainability is considering. These ideas are intended as a way of involving members of the community in evoking aspects of Cary that they feel are important to express. This is not intended to describe the form of a particular art project, which is solely the artist's area of expertise, rather it is a way to collect a range of thoughts about what citizens see as important about life in Cary.