

## Art Force 5 tribute to women's rights activists kicks off with mosaic tile painting

11/02/17



Brianna Wacenske, first-year art student from Bath, NY

ALFRED, NY Approximately 90 Alfred University art students helped kick off a five-day celebration recognizing the 100th anniversary of equal voting rights being granted to women in New York state.

Art Force 5, a program at Alfred University that uses community-based art to inspire discussion on topics of equality and social justice, organized the tribute. The group hosted a three-hour session Wednesday, at which time the public was invited to paint tiles used in three mosaic portraits of noted women's rights activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul and Ida B. Wells.

Each portrait consists of 289 two-by-two inch square tiles. The first session of tile painting was held Wednesday in the Knight Club, Powell Campus Center, with first-year art students participating. The mosaics were taken by members of Art Force 5 to be shown at an alumni event in Brooklyn Friday evening, Nov. 3. They will then travel Saturday, Nov. 4, to Albany, site of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Conference, where the public will be invited to participate in tile painting. The visit to Albany will include a trip to the New York State Museum.

The group will return to Alfred University on Sunday, Nov. 5. The finished portraits will be displayed on campus on Monday, Nov. 6, which marks the 100th anniversary of the state's passage of equal voting right laws for women.

Dan Napolitano, assistant dean of the Alfred University School of Art and Design, founded Art Force 5 in 2006, when he was director of student activities. He said the event is part of a larger celebration commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1920 ratification of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote. Art Force 5 plans mosaic painting of a total of 19 women's rights pioneers between now and 2020.

Students on the Art Force 5 team researched the women's rights activists who are being depicted this week, and designed the portraits. During their trip to New York and Albany, and when back in Alfred, they will engage participants in conversations about the Suffrage Movement. The group will do the same for women's rights activists spotlighted over the next three years.

It is appropriate that Alfred University would take part in recognizing the Suffrage Movement. The University, founded in 1836, is the second coeducational institution in the United States and the first in New York State. Abigail Allen was the wife of Jonathan Allen, the second president of Alfred University, and dedicated her life's work to advancing the cause of coeducation and encouraging women to pursue higher education.