

Alfred University's Art Force 5 paying tribute to suffragettes

10/24/17



Alfred University's Art Force 5

ALFRED, NY Art Force 5, a program at Alfred University that uses community-based art to inspire discussion on topics of equality and social justice, will recognize the 100th anniversary of equal voting rights being granted to women in New York State.

To mark the occasion and honor the participants of the Suffrage Movement, a team of “art superheroes” from Art Force 5 will take a five-day tour through the state the first week of November. At each of four sites, the public will be invited to paint a single tile in 300-plus piece mosaic portraits of noted women’s rights activists, such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Hester Jeffrey, Carrie Chapman Catt, Alice Paul, or Alfred University’s own Abigail Allen.

Students on the Art Force 5 team will research the suffragettes, design the portraits, and engage participants in conversations about the Suffrage Movement.

“Painting one tile will take one participant five to ten minutes,” said Alfred University student Mawia Elawad, a member of Art Force 5. “During that short time, amazing conversations occur amongst participants or between the Art Force 5 and participants. Often, people will sit much longer just because of the constructive and comfortable dialogue.”

The tour will commence Wednesday, Nov. 1, on the campus of Alfred University, where students will begin painting the mosaics from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., with a free pizza lunch from 12 to 1 p.m. in the Knight Club, Powell Campus Center. The Art Force 5 group will depart Alfred on Thursday, Nov. 2, for Brooklyn, and will set up at a local school on Friday, Nov. 3. The tour will continue to the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Conference in Albany on Saturday, Nov. 4, and on to Rochester (Susan B. Anthony’s home for most of her life) on Sunday, Nov. 5. The group will return to Alfred to display the final exhibition on Monday, Nov. 6, which marks the 100th anniversary of the state’s passage of equal voting right laws for women.

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.