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Dominican art collaboration part of San Rafael city tour

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Dominican art collaboration part of San Rafael city tour

Twelve Dominican students completed an “Arts and Community Engagement” course during the spring semester that was part of a San Rafael city-wide effort to promote the new "Creative San Rafael" campaign. Their work was featured in a city tour on June 12 that culminated in the opening of a Youth in Arts gallery on C Street.

Lynn Sondag, chair of [Dominican's Department of Art, Art History and Design](#), and Pam Scoggins of the Downtown Streets Team, spoke in front of the course project in the storefront windows of the former Sabor of Spain restaurant at 1301 Fourth Street in San Rafael.

Dominican students collaborated with men and women from the Downtown Streets Team, a nonprofit created to reduce panhandling and homelessness. They first met March 27 in the San Marco studio on Dominican's campus to brainstorm and begin creating smaller scale images -- mostly using collage materials --that were scanned and printed larger to cover the big empty storefront windows.

The installation date was April 10.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the Marin Independent Journal front page story about the collaboration.

The opportunity and hands-on experience to collaborate on a community project was rewarding for Dominican students.

“What struck me first was that I could not differentiate between the members of my class and the members of Downtown Streets. We reflected then saw pictures from our unique perspectives. It was a connection on an entirely new level - a meeting of minds, beliefs, and goal,” said Sophie Miller, a sophomore [Occupational Therapy](#) major and Student Leader in the [Service Learning program](#). “The tasks we were assigned made us celebrate our differences and our similarities and made us proud of them and the individual viewpoints we provided. The pictures, quotes, and discussions provided us a medium through which to connect. We had a topic to consider, a task to perform, and we did so as we became acquainted with each other. By the end of the day, I had formed a friendship - one founded on respect, shared interests, and common goals.”

Said junior [History](#) and [Political Science](#) double major Erika Rosales-Shelfo, “Once we started doing activities and depicting images, the diversity of people’s thoughts unfolded and were formulated in one big class. Just like tunes and lyrics synchronizing to project a song. It was and it is an amazing experience as we continue to work together for a final project. Nevertheless, for the Downtown Streets Team to have been so open with ideas and trusting on the first day is something that I am honored having been a part of.” This is the first stage of the visual project involves the interpretation and illustration quotes from San Rafael artists. Community partners joining Dominican in this project are Youth in Arts, the Business Improvement District, Art Works Downtown, Fortnight Collective and the City of San Rafael.

Sondag and Service Learning program director Julia van der Ryn taught the one-unit course at Dominican.

“This course and project illustrated the potential for collective creative interventions to bridge difference and engender civic pride,” Sondag said. “Creating art provides each of us with opportunities for personal expression and creativity, and through collaborative art making processes we each can develop a greater awareness and respect for difference.”

[CLICK HERE](#) to read more about the project.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read Dominican student insights.