



Peacebuilding through Art Inspired by Nature

MILESTONES 2025

Celebrating the Year: 9 Singing Tree® Murals and More

Creating connection from human being to human being, fostering joy and enthusiasm for life, meeting challenges together with objectivity and compassion: these are the aims of the Unity Through Creativity Foundation. What does it take for people to feel safe with each other, to want the best for each other, to put the lives of others on par with their own? How can we welcome challenges and heartbreaks as opportunities to grow together as communities and individuals? These questions are foremost in our thinking as we continue to develop our programming, and in particular the Singing Tree® Mural Project, which has been our focus for the last few years. This past year has brought us opportunities to share our work with many communities, and we are delighted to share the fruits of those efforts with you.



- 1565 people – youth, adults and elders – created 9 Singing Tree® murals, two collaborative art projects and a two-day International Day of Peace Symposium
- Youth and adults received intensive training in peace literacy, collaboration and creativity skills
- UTC affirmed the initiative for El Paso to celebrate being an International City of Peace

Singing Tree® Murals



[The Desert Willow Branches to Roots Singing Tree of Propagation and Regeneration](#)

This project was funded by NOAA and led by certified Facilitator [Fernanda Lugo](#) in conjunction with a citizen science propagation of El Paso's native trees. She taught participants how to clone trees using a process called "Branches to Roots" where suckers generate roots and can become trees. People from ages 7 to 85 from many heritages - Hispanic, Chinese, Indian, Native American, European, African-American - came together to add their vision of blossoming, watering and working for a world where everyone thrives. The coming together of people to nurture nature and people is the world we are striving to build.



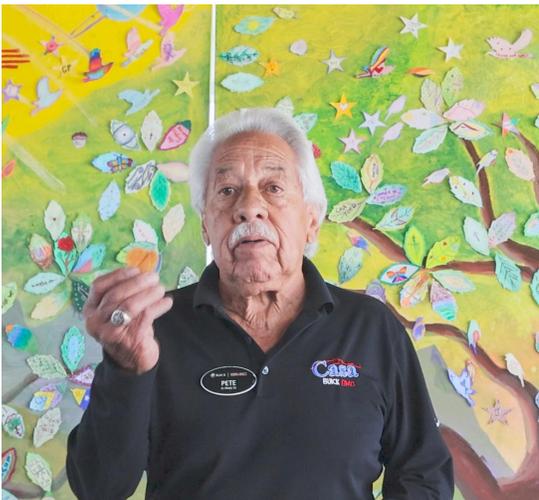
University of Texas at El Paso Students during World Water Week added to the mural.

Casa Singing Tree of Trust, Love, and Community

440 employees from [Casa Auto Group](#) Texas and New Mexico made this 8' x 16' mural. The Casa Singing Tree project began with a Lead Design Team that included the three owners and twenty managers and executives. They selected the theme of trust, love, and community, designed the mural, and painted the background.

Then the five UTC facilitators took the mural to CASA Ford, Buick, Kia, Nissan in El Paso;

Casa Autoplex in Las Cruces and Casa Toyota, Alamogordo, New Mexico where employees contributed images to complete the mural. For many, the leaves symbolize their vision of heaven, the birds stood for dreams, the stars for someone who has passed away and the acorns for a vision of the future.





[The Singing Tree of Our Values](#)

150 6th-8th grade students and five teachers at Scott Valley Junior High School co-created The Maple Singing Tree of Our Values. Certified Facilitator [Andrea Marchyok](#) oversaw the project. She was assisted by her co-worker, Elizabeth Lahey. The mural was created in 5 sessions over three months. Each session consisted of 9 classes with 150 students total and the Lead Design Team - students who volunteered to come back during their lunch breaks throughout the project. The Karen Copey Foundation contributed funds for materials. The foundation is named after an architect in the Mt. Shasta community who donated funds to promote more arts in the schools of Siskiyou County when she passed away.

Student Statement: "What I liked most was that we paint together. When people paint together, you get lots of creativity and the feeling of community and belongingness. Painting together makes an artistic community where you can be more open with each other, and you feel more welcome, more belonging. You learn new techniques. You learn from one another, which really fits this art project"

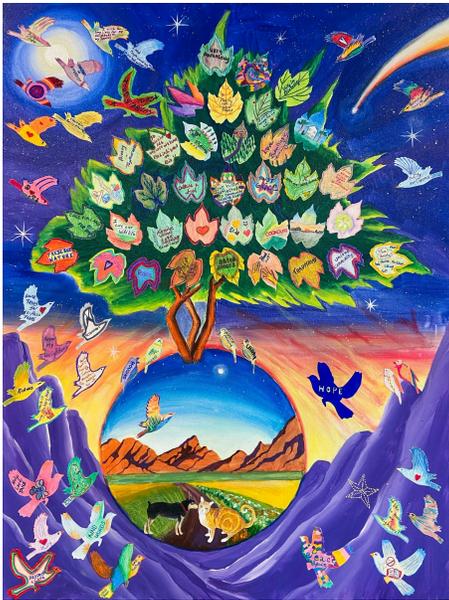
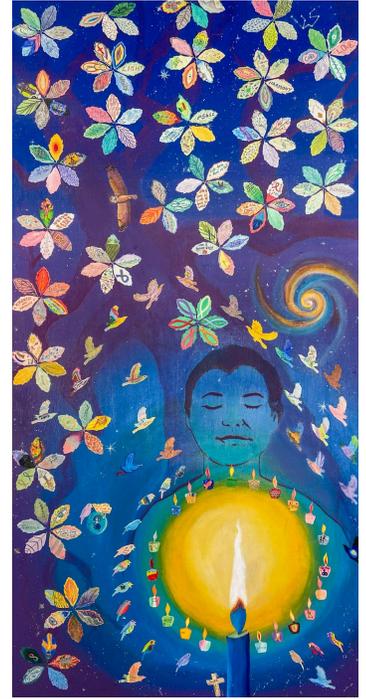




[The Elm Singing Tree of Light in the Darkness](#)

This painting was created for the benefit of Candlelighters, El Paso, a non-profit who serves children and their families experiencing cancer. It was made possible by a donation from CASA Nissan to Unity Through Creativity Foundation, who facilitated its creation. Over 100 people attending the International Day of Peace Symposium on Sept. 20th and 21st at the University of Texas at El Paso contributed images of Light in the Dark on the leaves and prayers for those being served by Candlelighters. The children and their families added images on the candles and birds. The central figure of a child holding a candle in the darkness stands for all children who are wrestling with hardship and challenge, specifically with cancer.

Facilitated by Laurie Marshall



[The Mulberry Singing Tree of What We Love About Our Neighborhood](#)

35 people attending District 7's Community Meeting were invited by Representative Lily Limón to add drawings of their appreciation and dreams for their neighborhood. They also shared the stories behind the drawings. The painting was unveiled three weeks later at the next community meeting. Facilitated by Laurie Marshall

"For 46 years my wife has been telling me I'm stuck. You got me unstuck."

- Participant





[The Rainbow Eucalyptus-Wisteria Singing Tree of Women's Leadership](#)

In November 2025, Unity Through Creativity Foundation was honored to facilitate an online Innovative Team Building workshop with 179 Japanese businesswomen at the J-Win Conference on Women's Leadership. The title of the workshop was "The Rainbow Eucalyptus-Wisteria Singing Tree® Mural of Women's Leadership - Team Building Through Art." The purpose of the two-and-a-half hour virtual seminar, led by Lili Lopez and Laurie Marshall, was to use art as an innovative tool for team building and increase the self-confidence of women leaders. UTC made a [booklet](#) in Japanese and English containing all the drawings and written contributions from the participants. Below is an excerpt.



Politics

I strive to embrace the diversity of people and opinions—a mosaic of perspectives—while staying mindful of maintaining my own axis, like a single, slender vertical line that runs through it all.

I hope the future will be bright. Toward that future, I choose to stay positive, and embrace wonderful experiences (white stars). At times, I may get hurt (red stars), but I will keep my eyes open and move forward.

The main color is purple, representing the pain and sorrow in my heart. Amid all that, I imagine the kind colleagues and supervisors who reached out to help me when I could do nothing as pink, with yellow at the tips of the leaves.

Using yellow as the base color to represent hope, the wings are rainbow-colored so they can soar with dreams and aspirations. The expression is a smile, with a touch of makeup for a feminine look.

Each small flower represents a piece of music I love. Music stays with me through every feeling, from darkness to light.

The blue bird of happiness flies toward the light, holding sparkling treasures in its beak and claws.

Wisteria is seen as a company. Places with more wisteria color show how active women are. Thinking that lighter color parts still have a lot of potential can create a positive feeling.

Birds represent the people who work in a company. People doing flashy jobs stand out a lot. (Wisteria color) However, many people support them. (Wisteria color) A society where these supporters are noticed and respected is hoped for.

Since I realized it was wisteria, I used purple as the main color to evoke wisteria flowers. Even though my days are rather monotonous, just going back and forth between home and work, the yellow dots represent the small, everyday joys—the casual conversations with my family or fun chats with coworkers.

I wanted to use as many colors as possible to express my wish to communicate with diverse people, both in Japan and abroad, and to make my life colorful and full of variety.

My important things to protect myself. Keep balance of between yin and yang. Have strong mind. Have love and keep smiling.

I want to achieve self-actualization and other actualization by continuing to travel and take on challenges while being kindhearted and respecting diversity.

Leaves represent hope for healing from emotional pain, and the upper part of the flower contains that pain. By taking time to face myself and to do what I love, I find that the pain eases, which I expressed with a gradient.

The bird's body expresses a calm mind with a cream color, and the tail and legs use my favorite colors (green and yellow) to add a sense of healing. I want to move toward my goals with wings of passion (orange) and composure (blue).

The light blue drops are the tears I shed. Tears helped me release my painful emotions. My mind is still filled with sadness and light blue, but my body is slowly becoming my usual happy yellow self.

The rainbow on the body represents the acceptance of diverse emotions. Depending on the time, it transforms into various beings such as the moon, the sun, the heart, and the earth, and I hope to make life easier for everyone.

Two Other UTC Community Art Projects

Gravity Rocks Resistance

What happens when 120+ educators, artists, and activists gather to explore what it means to be rooted in community, to flow with creativity, and to face resistance with open hearts? Artist [Carrie Ziegler](#), a UTC certified Facilitator from Olympia, Washington, and Poet Jennifer Johnson" were honored to keynote the E3 Washington State Conference this year with a three-day collaborative offering. Together, through mural-painting, collaborative poetry, movement, and deep reflection, they facilitated a living experience—rooted in art, grown by community, and shaped by nature herself. A full description of this inspiring workshop is [here](#).



The Reverend R.R. Wilkinsen Puppet

UTC Facilitator [Jane Gabrielle](#) of Roanoke, Virginia, facilitated the creation of a large puppet celebrating the life of civil rights pioneer, [Reverence R.R. Wilkinsen](#). Among his many accomplishments, the Reverend stopped a dump from being put in the only African-American public park in Roanoke. His daughters and grandson were part of the project and joined the Daisy Art Parade. Photo Credit by Greg Vaughn, below right.



NEWLY CERTIFIED SINGING TREE® FACILITATORS!



We are delighted to recognize [Sonda Cheesebrough](#) (Morgantown, West Virginia), and [Andrea Marchyok](#) (Mt. Shasta, California) as fully certified Innovative Team Building Facilitators, using the Singing Tree® process.

EL PASO INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE: OUR SIGNATURE EVENT

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE SYMPOSIUM, EL PASO 2025

We joined over 5,600 other events throughout the U.S. on Sept. 20th and 21st to celebrate the UN's holiday. 115 people attended the two-day symposium, which was held at the University of Texas at El Paso. Workshops were given by local leaders in Youth and Democracy, Restorative Justice, Embodying Peace, AI and Consciousness, Strategic Non-violence, the Science of Meditation, the Ethics of Consumption and more.



"Remember that as you move into action, there are millions of people moving with you; that you not alone and that there are many of us rooting for the same vision of a world - a world of peace, a world of justice and a world where everyone belongs."
- Rivera Sun