

East Side sculpture inspired by MLK

July 29, 2015



Photo: Matthew Busch, For San Antonio Express-News / For San Antonio Express-News

Cynthia Hornsby, former executive director of the Davis-Scott YMCA and current volunteer, left, talks to Beverly Watts of the San Antonio Housing Authority, right, at the dedication of the new "Open Hand, Open Mind, Open Heart," art piece at Pittman-Sullivan Park in the East side neighborhood in San Antonio on Wednesday, July 29, 2015. The project is a collaboration between City Council District 2, the Department for Culture and Creative Development's Public Art San Antonio, Transportation and Capital Improvements, Parks and Recreation, and the Davis-Scott Family YMCA. The committee commissioned Boston artist Douglas Kornfeld to create the 32-foot tall sculpture consisting of perforated steel and metal tubing, opening up the neighborhood to the city of San Antonio.

A new public artwork inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s message of non-violence was unveiled Wednesday at Pittman-Sullivan Park on the city's East Side.

The 32-foot tall sculpture, entitled "*Open Hand, Open Mind, Open Heart*," consists of perforated steel and metal tubing depicting an open hand with two internal 5-foot diameter openings. The original piece by artist Douglas Kornfeld of Boston faces a view of downtown San Antonio.

The sculpture is intended to be an interactive piece. As one steps through the lower stainless steel ring, one's hand is open, mimicking the open hand of the sculpture. This action symbolically connects the visitor to the piece and the non-violent philosophy of Dr. King, according to Kornfeld.

“Dr. Martin Luther King and his philosophy of social change inspired the artwork by non-violent action,” Kornfeld said. “The open hand depicts a gesture of non-violence and is reinforced by the open ring in the palm further depicting a non-aggressive pose. The ring at the bottom of the arm is designed to encourage visitors to step through the artwork.”

The artwork is 32' high, 17' wide and 10" deep, and is situated at Pittman-Sullivan Park on a hillside location adjacent to a recently-installed walking trail. The sculpture's circular base also serves as a respite with limestone block seating. The total budget was \$80,000, including \$20,000 for design and \$60,000 for fabrication.

“Our center city is a gateway to surrounding neighborhoods filled with history, culture and the promise of a prosperous future. San Antonio's historic East Side is a great example of this crossroads of history and progress,” said District 2 Councilman Alan E. Warrick at the dedication ceremony Wednesday morning. “It is fitting that this new public art piece is located at Pittman-Sullivan Park, as it has served as an everyday community gathering space for area residents and has also welcomed thousands of people from around the country for the city's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. March and Commemoration. This artwork beautifully conveys the history and significance of our East Side.”

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For more information on the city's public art program, including a public artworks map, visit www.GetCreativeSanAntonio.com.