



A UNIQUE COLLABORATION BRINGS ART AND CELEBRATION OF CULTURE TO DOWNTOWN CAMAS

Camas, WA, May 1st, 2024—Thanks to a partnership between a Camas senior student, her art teacher, Ziply Fiber and the Downtown Camas Association, there will be a block in Downtown Camas that artistically celebrates beauty and cultural diversity. The community is invited to a Ribbon Cutting & Art Unveiling for this [Camas Culture Art Block](#) on Friday, May 17th at 5pm.

Hayes Freedom High School student Maria Navarro Alejandres wanted to create a greater awareness and celebration of cultural diversity in Camas with a mural showing an artful depiction of her Mexican heritage, but locations for a painted mural can be hard to find in downtown. The Downtown Camas Association (DCA) was considering adding colorful art panels to 5th Ave to add to the downtown's charm and aesthetic, but an exact plan hadn't yet been developed. When Maria and her art teacher Miranda Wakeman connected with the DCA in the fall of 2023, the plan for an art block began to develop! The DCA reached out to [Ziply Fiber](#) which owns the building on 5th Ave and the project partnerships grew. Students from all the high schools in the Camas School District were invited to submit art showcasing their culture. Six art pieces were juried and selected and

will be professionally printed on 4 foot high by 8 foot wide outdoor panels and displayed on 5th Avenue between Birch and Cedar as the Camas Culture Art Block. The other high school student artists that will have their art shown include Xander Acain, Shalaka Deshpande, Charlie Irwin, Blu A. Jimenez and Bailey Lim. Individual artist statements will be available describing the meaning and significance of the artwork as it relates to their culture and also what they hope their audience will learn, feel or grow from their artwork. The DCA is grateful for each student's artful contribution to Downtown Camas.

"It is tremendous to have this collaboration lead to such a meaningful addition to Downtown Camas," says Carrie Schulstad, Executive Director of the DCA. "We have more diversity in Camas than you might think and we want to celebrate that! The DCA values art promotion, student engagement, inclusivity and expanding our downtown aesthetic beyond 4th Ave, our main street. This project speaks to all of these! It has been wonderful to partner with Ziplly Fiber for the wall space to host the Camas Culture Art Block and to work with our downtown Minuteman Press and a local installer to bring this to fruition. We're grateful to the owners of Attic Gallery as well for sharing their space for the reception. These are the kinds of projects that show just what a community can do together."

"Ziplly Fiber is proud to serve hundreds of residential and business customers in Camas with a fiber-optic network that will serve this community for generations," says Kevin Guillen, Community Development Manager for Ziplly. "We're thankful to collaborate with the Downtown Camas Association and students from across the school district to celebrate the diversity in the Camas community."

The Ribbon Cutting & Art Unveiling will start at 5pm on Friday, May 17th at the corner of 5th Ave & Cedar St and will be followed by a reception generously sponsored by Ziplly at the Attic Gallery space, 421 NE Cedar. Refreshments and live student music will add to the festivities. All are welcome.

The Downtown Camas Association is Camas' nonprofit Main Street Program and works year-round to strengthen and promote Downtown Camas through partnerships, events, beautification and historic preservation projects, economic development, advocacy, and tourism functions. For information on the DCA and downtown events and initiatives, visit www.downtowncamas.com.