

Community Builders Speech

by Marcos Montoya, delivered July 1, 2015



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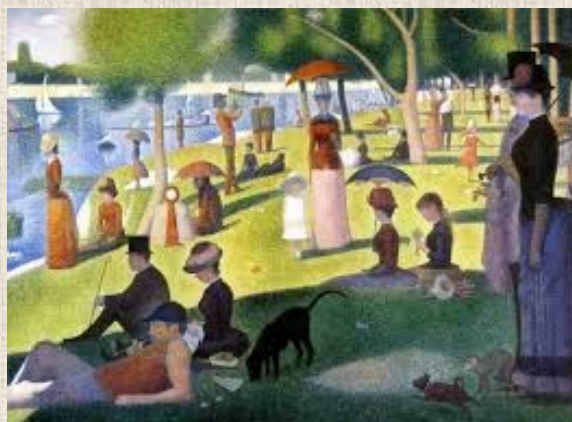
- Marcos Montoya

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you all for being with us tonight. This night has represented a month of learning and change for each of us in this program. Each and every one of the stories and causes given to us by our community leaders has been absolutely amazing. Though we could only choose several organizations to give our grants to, all of your causes are wonderful and important. Though I cannot speak for everyone, I want to donate my time to as many of you as I can, because each of your causes have given me a new point of view or introduced me to an issue which had been previously unknown to me. Thank you all for the wonderful work you do, and for inspiring not only me, but others in this program to make strides for a better world. Sue Rzendzian has not only been our leader, but our mentor and friend through this whole experience, which would not have been possible without her.

Over my time in this program, I have become more aware of the issues around me. Before, I had only known much about international issues, and never knew that people in my own community had equal and even greater needs. I have learned that the strongest change stems first from an individual, then from a community. As an example, look at the Georges Seurat painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. Known as the father of a technique called pointillism, Seurat used millions of small dots to create the painting. The style developed from Seurat’s interest in color theory,

and he discovered that painting with dots of unmixed pigment would create colors far brighter and more vivid than mixed paint. This is true in us. When we, the dots, each bring our special talents and knowledge to solve a problem, we can create a much greater effect when we work as one. Rather than relying on someone else to mix the pigments we show, we can all take an active role. We can each put a dot on the canvas; and through communication and cooperation, we can place dots where our particular color is needed, and create a far brighter picture for the future.



In this, in our community leaders, we have the brightest, most unique colors in this city. These people have chosen to take on the hardest and most complex subjects, with the least amount of resources, but through their hard work, they’ve each made beautiful amazing changes. Whether their heart is with those experiencing homelessness, children in need, the plight of neglected animals, or any of the worthy causes they advocate for, these men and women have helped create the biggest, brightest, most emotional works of art in this city, though they may not be physically visible.

The rest of us hold this power as well, but it is our choice to either paint in harmony, working with others in understanding and empathy in whatever canvas or path we choose, building a lasting impact for many to experience, see and earn from; or, we can leave our brilliant color on the palette for ourselves, to wither and be washed away by time.

Ladies and gentlemen, without people willing to give their talent, money or time, to a worthy cause, these organizations could not be as successful as they are. Give a little to someone else, through whatever means you can. These organizations are the paintbrush. They allow us to use our talents and resources in the best way we can. If you give a little of yourself, you may not be able to cover much on your own, but you dot added to the many before you, can make the vision of these leaders, and the many before them, just a little more complete; and our strides will be there for the future to appreciate, care for, add to, and learn from. George Seurat's 1886 painting has hung in the Art Institute of Chicago around 40 years: cared for, preserved, admired by millions, and an inspiration for many to begin their own work. Let us create something brilliant, vivid and beautiful. Thank you, to our leaders, Mrs. Rzendzian, the members of community builders, and the family and friends joining us.