The Murray Murals Project is a collaborative effort between University of Utah art students and thousands of Murray youth and community members. These groups worked collaboratively over the course of the fall 2018 semester to create community-engaged, portable murals for nine Murray elementary schools. These murals now hang in the halls of these schools, giving students ownership of their artwork and of their communities. Participating elementary schools included Liberty (Fig. 1), Longview, Grant, Woodstock, Horizon, McMillan, Parkside, Twin Peaks, and Viewmont (see addendum to view images of all final murals).

At the start of this project, 2,800 students in nine elementary schools were asked to create drawings about themselves and their schools. They answered questions in their work such as, “What kinds of activities do you participate in?” and “What is special about your school?”, resulting in a compilation of drawings like Fig. 2. The student artists from the U then met with these students to gather even more information about the individuality of them and their schools. These student artists then drafted the mural designs, combining dozens of these artworks that best represent the individual schools.
After the designs were drafted, the artists then collaborated with secondary students from Murray to finalize color designs. The final line work (see Fig. 3) was printed on mural canvases, and secondary students (such as the individual in Fig. 2) and other community members joined the artists in the studio to paint the final murals. These students were taught basic elements of color theory, paint chemistry, and studio etiquette to ensure the success of the painting process, and to provide an additional educational component to their studio visit. The painting process took several weeks, allowing for multiple coats to be painted and to dry. After the murals were finally completed, the printers hemmed the edges and added grommets, and they were all taken to Murray High School for the unveiling ceremony.

For a specific example of this process, Fig. 5 illustrates the metamorphose of a Longview student’s original drawing depicting a “Lynx Queen,” the mascot of the school. This original drawing was digitally traced by the University of Utah student artists and inserted into the full mural design. Middle school and high school students chose new colors for the drawing within the chosen mural color palette, resulting in the final version of the drawing.

The students who participated in this project took part in a creative and cooperative endeavor, developing skills as artists and collaborators. In addition to fostering these skills, they now also take ownership in their school communities through this artwork. Students often search the murals for their artwork, then show their drawings off to their friends and family. The individuality of these murals also creates pride in the schools themselves, reminding families and community partners of the unique importance of their school and the specific opportunities it provides. The model used for this project, which involved such a large number of students, may be easily repeated in any school or community. By making funds readily available for the arts in Utah schools, opportunities like this that encourage creativity, ownership, and community-building through art will be available for all students.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

• Professor V. Kim Martinez, Tiara Cook, Molly McGinnis, Shannon Erickson, Regina Steinberg, Trish Saccomano, Hannah Christensen, Chalese Craig, Brittany Black, Erin Esplin, Martin Berry
• Department of Art and Art History at the University of Utah
• Beverley Taylor Sorenson Arts Learning Program
• Murray City School District, Murray Cultural Arts Program, & Murray City Arts Advisory Board
• The University of Utah Office of Undergraduate Research
ADDENDUM

Fig. 6. Grant Elementary School Mural.

Fig. 7. Horizon Elementary School Mural.
Fig. 8. Liberty Elementary School Mural.

Fig. 9. Longview Elementary School Mural.
Fig. 10. McMillan Elementary School Mural.

Fig. 11. Parkside Elementary School Mural.
Fig. 12. Twin Peaks Elementary School Mural.

Fig. 13. Viewmont Elementary School Mural.
Fig. 14. Woodstock Elementary School Mural.