

For Immediate Release: Vestal Social Justice Night 2022 Expands in Scope and Impact

March 24, 2022 (Portland, OR): As one of eleven recipients of Metro's Community Placemaking grant this year, Montavilla's Vestal Elementary expands their annual **Social Justice Night** in partnership with PSU's Artist as Citizen Initiative and the arts nonprofit, Montavilla Jazz. The community-wide celebration will feature collaborative artistic works – by both students and professionals – focused on two of Vestal's five pillars of social justice: **community diversity and family identity**. On this special evening Vestal will invite one of Portland's most culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse neighborhoods to come together in celebration of social justice, art, food, music, and community.



- WHEN:** Evening of Thursday, May 26, 2022; times TBA
- WHERE:** Outside on the playground and in the gymnasium of Vestal Elementary (161 NE 82nd Ave). Dinner will take place across the street at The Yard prior to the festivities!
- WHO:** Open to the Vestal community, partners, and neighborhood residents
- WHAT:** Vestal Social Justice Night 2022 - Featuring Student-led Social Justice Projects and Art Exhibits, local arts and crafts vendors, and Three Jazz World Premieres!

Vestal Elementary has boldly stepped into its role as a community hub, galvanizing the Montavilla neighborhood with its Social Justice Night, generating positive values and neighborly goodwill. This year's Social Justice Night will feature student-led social justice projects and exhibits created in response to stories centered on the topics of community diversity and family identity gathered in interviews with fellow students and community members. The Artist as Citizen Initiative will lead PSU Capstone students and Vestal 4th graders who will build skills in storytelling, interviewing, and creativity through the work of creating artistic responses.

The event will raise awareness for local artists through their work with Vestal partners, and their artistic contributions to the event. Montavilla Jazz resident artists, stars of Portland's jazz scene who have a history of working with Vestal students over previous years, will perform the World Premieres of music crafted as a compliment to the students' and community members' stories. In the spirit of collaboration, many featured, creative works will reflect the experience of celebrating community, identity, and social justice.

2022 Featured Jazz Artists:

- Denzel Mendoza - GRAMMY winning trombonist, improviser (Haley Heynderickx, American DREAMers; Vestal featured artist 2021)
- Machado Mijiga - Multi-instrumentalist, producer, and educator (Djungol Jim, DoubleDash; Vestal guest artist 2020 & featured artist 2021)
- Mary-Sue Tobin - Saxophonist, bandleader, and educator, (Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble, QuadrAPHONES; Vestal resident artist 2018 - 2021)

A welcoming dinner will take place before the performance at The Yard food carts, located directly across from the school, with complimentary meals (procured through grant funding) provided by participating food carts and coordinated with support from Samira Mohamed owner of Mira's East African Cuisine. In this way Vestal and its partners will further support BIPOC-owned food carts directly through payments for food for the event and by raising awareness of and visibility for their unique businesses and their immigrant stories.

PSU students, working with Erica Thomas, founder of Works Progress Agency, will create a multipart podcast documentary featuring themes from the evening. This episode about Vestal's Social Justice Night 2022 will utilize field recordings captured during the project phases and live event with recordings managed by PSU's Sonic Arts and Music Production (SAMP) students and Friends of Noise. The podcast will be hosted on montavillajazz.org, in addition to premieres on local radio stations.

For more information, visit montavillajazz.org.

Primary Project Partners:



Vestal Elementary School - Vestal is a K-5 school branded as a school for social justice that utilizes social justice standards, student voice, critical dialogue, and meaningful action, to strengthen students' academic proficiency and social and emotional skills development thereby creating and sustaining a forward-thinking caring school and community.

Artist as Citizen Initiative (partner since 2018) - PSU Artist as Citizen Initiative is a BIPOC-centered, interdisciplinary initiative that encompasses innovative curriculum, educational outreach and community-building. Artist as Citizen provides a hands-on, community-based experience that delves into the process of artistic activism.



Montavilla Jazz (partner since 2016) - Montavilla Jazz is a nonprofit community organization that engages an inclusive cross-section of musicians, collaborative artists, students, music lovers, neighbors, and businesses, promoting forward-thinking artistry and offering platforms for risk-taking, experimentation and the creation of new works, adding to the diversity and strength of our community.



Additional Project Partners

- Mira's East African Cuisine
- Works Progress Agency
- Friends of Noise
- Vestal PTA
- IRCO SUN Community School at Vestal

Works
Progress
Agency



Metro's Community Placemaking grants support community-led, equity-focused, arts and culture-based efforts. Learn more at oregonmetro.gov.



For additional information, media materials and interview inquiries, please contact:

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