HEROES ELEVATE EMPATHY

‘Appreciating the Animal Beings’

for our continued, global conversation about who inspires us and why...

Heroes Elevate Empathy • Visit our Virtual Gallery: www.heroexchange.org
For more information, email Laura Kozaitis: laura.kozaitis@ourssp.org
The Heroes Elevate Empathy Project is an art project powered by young people and supported by an international community of schools, social organizations, and corporate partners who believe in the power of empathy improve our world. Together we facilitate a vital, creative conversation that elevates, inspires, and connects young people across geographic, economic, and cultural distances.

We believe that all of us, no matter the circumstances, have something to give, and that heroic figures, be they mythic or historical, everyday people or famous figures, challenge us to give more to our communities. Childhood heroes reflect a deep-rooted desire in young people to change and improve their world.

All around us, in both developing and industrialized communities, young people are hungry for such inspiration, and they desire to linger on these questions: “Who are my heroes?” “What qualities do they have that I admire?” “Why are these qualities important to me?”

This year marks the launch of our third international art campaign with partnering public, private, and homeschooled children. The theme for this new collaboration is “Animal Heroes.” Young people are encouraged to consider the nonhuman inhabitants of our planet. The goal of this project is to facilitate a cross-cultural conversation between young people in different areas of the world about the animal beings they empathize with and consider worthy of respect and admiration.

**Theme and Project Guidelines for 2019**

People share the planet with approximately 8.7 million species of living beings, and scientists estimate that 1–2 million of those species are animals. Animals are our companions, our workers, our eyes and ears, and for many, our food. They appear in ancient cave paintings and on modern commercial farms. We have domesticated some of them, while others remain wild and are sometimes endangered by our activities. They keep us company and make us smile. Some have literally saved lives. They are all worthy of our respect, for their marvelous abilities, characteristics, and valuable assistance in our interdependent world. If a certain animal inspires a student, please consider submitting a hero portrait and essay this year.

Any public, private, or homeschool community is welcome to participate in the Heroes Elevate Empathy Exhibition. The beauty of this opportunity is that the project is scalable to your school’s curriculum requirements and calendar. For example, one school is arranging to take on the topic of animals as a “theme-ester,” so it can approach the topic across disciplines and core subject areas. By building time into their social studies, history, science, and language arts classes, students can explore the many types of animals—the famous, the unsung, the extraordinary, and the common that they feel are worthy of our attention and empathy.

We recognize that other schools may have less flexibility. They can choose to work in a more concentrated way. For instance, a school could choose to take a week, after exams, for example, to focus on the topic in an after-school club or free period. That’s completely OK. The details are yours to design in a manner that makes sense for your school. We will not be providing curriculum stipulations or classroom exercises. We believe you and your team should use the topic and time spent on art creation in a way that will be meaningful to the children you serve. We be happy to connect you with partner schools also working on this year’s theme.

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Heroes Elevate Empathy • A Global Collaboration

**Portrait Specifications**
Final Portrait Dimensions: 11 by 17 inches  
Technical Requirements: Paper: Smooth bristol board  
Medium: Gouache paint colors or illustration markers (Note: Colored pencil or crayon colorizing can be accepted.)  
Accompanying essay should be kept a maximum of 500 words.

We encourage students to do a number of sketches and iterations of their heroes before they do their final portraits. Those iterations can be in any medium and any size desired. They will not be collected for display, but can be vital to the discovery process. While the way you approach the project is up to you, we do have detailed specifications to be followed for final artwork and accompanying biographical essays. The reason for this is twofold.

First, we want to be sure that all communities, regardless of their social, cultural, or economic situation, get the same opportunity to create art from fine materials in the same medium of expression. The second reason is technical. By having all finished art come to us at the same size and painted using the same type of paper and colors of paint, our framing and technical reproduction process is streamlined. All art materials specified for final portrait creation can be provided, free of cost, to schools that request it.

A selection of submissions from participating children will be exhibited in New York City to provide an engaging forum for further discussion of what it means to be heroic. This is our second international show, and we’d love for your children to be a part of it.

There will be no cost incurred by the school for the **Heroes Elevate Empathy Exhibition** itself. The primary goal is to spread inspiration among young people, peer to peer, through the creative process, and to showcase their work in a traveling **Heroes Elevate Empathy Exhibition**. Our secondary goal is to showcase our young artists’ work online, so more people may appreciate it.

**The deadline to submit artwork is November 30, 2018.** All artwork should be packed and shipped to Laura Kozaitis, 31 Longview Road, Port Washington, NY 11050. Be sure to email us a tracking code so we can follow the delivery. Be sure to check out our digital gallery and website: [heroexchange.org](http://heroexchange.org). We continue to update it and are looking for volunteers to help us post new content. If you’d like to learn more about our future plans and goals for the Heroes Elevate Empathy Project, please contact Laura Kozaitis (laura.kozaitis@ourssp.org). Thank you!

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