

Therapeutic Art Making at RAW and the WAMX Pollinator Project

LAURA GRAY / MAY 5, 2022



Therapeutic Art Making at RAW and the WAMX Pollinator Project



How WeCare Supported this Local Non-Profit's Mural Project

IntelyCare understands the value of community building, which is why we strive to not only make new connections, but support those that our corporate staff and clinicians have already made in their own communities.

In the fall of 2021, we piloted WeCare, a program designed to identify and support organizations that our corporate staff and IntelyPros are already involved in. The idea was to provide micro-grants of \$500 each to small projects across several communities in order to inform a larger community support effort.

One of the fantastic community organizations that surfaced as a result of this effort was Raw Art Works, aka RAW, based in Lynn, Massachusetts. RAW believes

that all kids should be seen and heard and that everyone has a story to tell. Their programs serve youth in grades 4 – 12, and provides them with safe spaces to authentically express themselves through art.

By grounding its programming in art therapy practices, RAW leverages the power of art to help make sense of what is going on in the lives of their youth. Projects and methods vary greatly, but the underlying theme is to use creative tools to support healthy growth.

Below, we interview Cindy Sous, Product Design Manager at IntelyCare, who is an alum and current board member of RAW. We also share an overview of the project that Cindy's WeCare microgrant supported.

The Interview

IntelyCare: Thank you for applying for a WeCare microgrant on behalf of RAW and for sitting down with us to chat about what community means to you, how you're building it in your own life, and how RAW fits into that big picture. We're excited to learn more about you and the project that was funded by the microgrant! Let's jump right in.

Can you tell us a bit about your connection to RAW and how it has helped you build community in your own life?

Cindy: When I was in high school, I was a part of a couple different groups at RAW. After graduating college and building my professional career, I began volunteering to give back to RAW, eventually joining as a board member.

One of the things I felt helped me build stronger relationships within the community was learning how to make connections on a deeper level. The "They Look Like Me (TLLM)" series, "Courageous Conversations," and the prompts in each group all require a level of vulnerability. RAW makes a genuine effort to get to the root of the question, "How are you really feeling?" and provides spaces where you can lean into your inner voice more. It has been refreshing to be able to share

my story with others and to hear the stories of others who are much different from mine.

IntelyCare: How did you come to be on the board of directors for RAW, and what is your vision for the organization?

Cindy: After graduating college, I began volunteering as a mentor at RAW to help high school seniors through the college application process. I continued to connect with RAW staff about how I could help support the community. I also volunteered to host a design workshop as a guest artist. RAW staff saw my commitment and eventually asked if I would be interested in joining the board.

My vision for the organization is to see RAW grow both in size and perspectives. With newer generations walking through the doors, we need to continue to adapt and constantly rethink, "How can we best support and provide a space for our newer generation to thrive?" I know RAW staff are constantly working towards this goal, but I would love to see how these efforts and perspectives can be extended beyond RAW staff into the board and even into the communities that aren't currently part of RAW. We have had some conversations and relationships with Lynn Public Schools, but it would be awesome to see how RAW could be more integrated into the schools. I would also love to see more opportunities where RAW can extend to other cities outside of Lynn that also could use more resources. RAW has so much to offer; it would be amazing to see how we could support more kids and get more folks in the community involved.

IntelyCare: We are curious about how to foster better connections between different communities. Do you have any recommendations based on what you have seen work successfully?

Cindy: I think what has really worked to foster better connections is providing a safe space for folks to be able to share their stories knowing that there are people who want to listen and provide the support and encouragement needed to realize the power in everyone's voices.

IntelyCare: Before we let you go, can you tell us a little about the project that the microgrant funded? We'll take a deeper dive after the interview, but it would be

great to get an intro from you.

Cindy: The WeCare microgrant supported the WAMX Pollinator project. The original pollinator concept was based on the idea that pollinators are in the community as artists, first and foremost. This was started by a former RAW Art Therapist and is now being transformed and continued by Senior Expressive Art Therapist, Ali Miller, who leads WAMX (Womxn Art Muralists). Pollinators are artists AND disseminators of community resources.

IntelyCare: Thank you so much! We are so excited and humbled to have a connection to the community as strong as you. Thank you for being such a meaningful contributor to the world around you, both inside and outside of IntelyCare.

More about Womxn Art Muralists [[WAMX](#)]

RAW chose to use their WeCare microgrant funds to buy paint, brushes, and other supplies for a large-scale mural project led by WAMX (Womxn Art Muralists), a team of young women and marginalized genders united by a love for creating public art. This group has most recently created murals throughout the city of Lynn, featuring portraits of local influential womxn. For this project they wanted to focus on providing resources for the community.

Read on for details about WAMX's project and where you can view it.

The Project – WAMX Pollinators

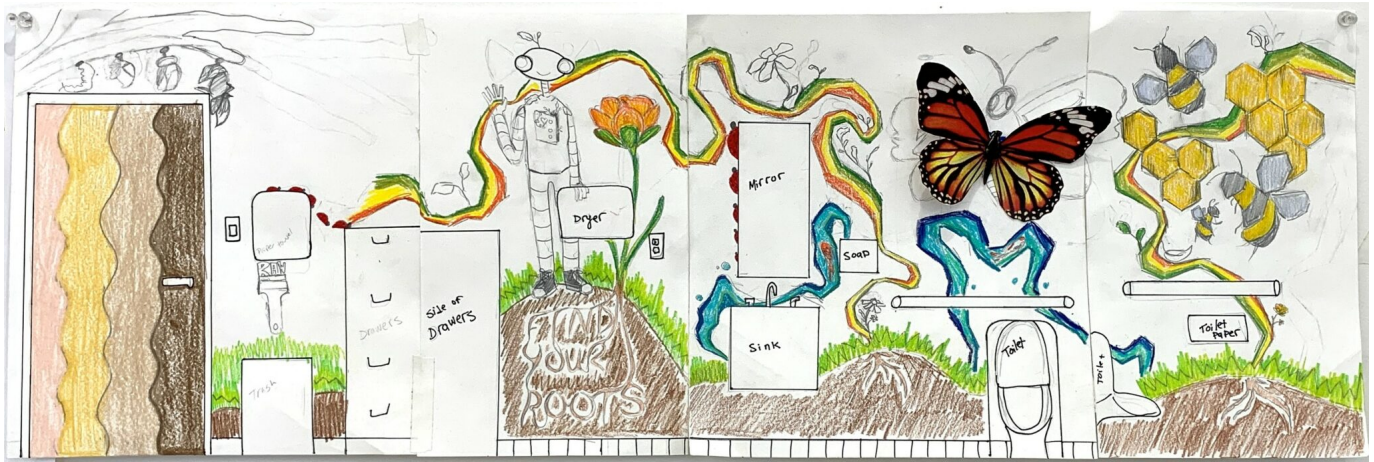
For their public art murals, the individuals in WAMX committed to a theme – Pollinators. They shared this statement about the project with us.

"We all act as pollinators in our communities in some capacity by collecting nutrients in the form of information, ideas, resources, and imagery wherever we go. WAMX pollinates spaces with art to help the community come together, to learn, grow and connect with one another. WAMX believes in art being ethically and inclusively made by and for our community. WAMX believes in the power of art and we take that power and responsibility of being a public artist very seriously. WAMX uses art to express feelings, pose questions, and amplify youth voices."

With this guiding mission in mind, WAMX embarked on their project by transforming an electrical box in Central Square, Lynn, MA into a mural featuring flora and fauna. This inaugural mural will be completed this spring.



The group also began a mural in RAW's fourth floor bathroom. For this mural, they took a unique approach, splitting into two teams of artists with separate, but complementary visions. One team worked on a cool-toned mural that includes vines, flowers, bees, and birds, while another team worked on a warm-toned mural that grounded itself in depictions of earth as a source of all living things. Symbolism, the words "finding your roots," and QR codes embedded in the work all give viewers something to grasp in their pursuit to think deeper and learn more about the messages conveyed by the art.



Symbolism

WAMX put a lot of thought into the organic symbolism of the creatures depicted in this mural project. Here is what each represents:

Moth: housing, eviction, emergency shelter support

Butterfly: immigration and refugee support

Honeybee: sexual health and education

Bumblebee: body image and self-love

Beetle: mental health resources (focus on anxiety, depression, and suicidality)

Hummingbird: food insecurity

Bat: domestic violence and healthy relationships '

Ladybug: LGBTQIA support, education, and resources

Impact

Art has the ability to help us access new feelings and to think about things differently. For WAMX, the hope is that the Pollinator mural project leads people to have hope for the future, feel connected to their community, and understand that they are intrinsically valued for who they are. We all could use a little more hope and

connection these days. We are honored to have played a supporting role in the art that WAMX has created, and we look forward to seeing what else they do in the future!

SHARE

Join Today!

If you are a nurse or nursing assistant looking to join our network of nursing professionals, please visit our IntelyPro Application.

Get Started

Related Articles



MAY 6, 2022

What Mother's Day Means to Me

MAY 4, 2022

Why We Need to Reimagine the Healthcare System: Creating a More Sustainable Future for Nursing

COMPANY INFORMATION

About IntelyCare

Careers

Events

Joint Commission

[COVID-19 Updates & Resources](#)

[Shop](#)

FOR NURSING FACILITIES

[Platform Overview](#)

[Facilities We Serve](#)

[How It Works](#)

[IntelyCare Staffing](#)

[IntelyCare Scheduling](#)

[Get Started](#)

FOR NURSING PROFESSIONALS

[Solutions Overview](#)

[How It Works](#)

[Why Join IntelyCare](#)

[Application Process](#)

[Download App](#)

[Join the Team](#)

[Finish Your Application](#)

CONTACT INTELYCARE

[Contact Us](#)

careteam@intelycare.com

[1-84-INTELYCARE](#)





©2022 IntelyCare, Inc.

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)