

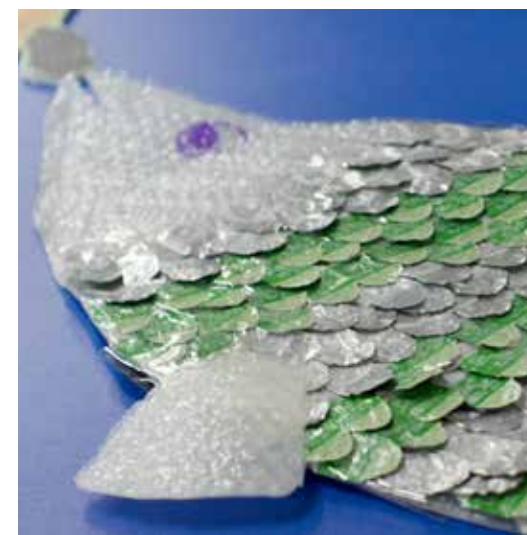
# ART

# BOOK

**A retrospective of connection, learning, and collective action through art.**

students  
r\_build









**Students Rebuild is a collaborative program of the Bezos Family Foundation, inspiring young people to connect, learn, and take collective action on critical global issues.**

**Since 2010, more than one million participants in 83 countries and all 50 U.S. states have created nearly 6 million works of art and raised more than \$4 million dollars to benefit over 50,000 children.**



Every year Students Rebuild challenges young people worldwide to respond to a critical issue faced by their peers around the globe. Each Challenge involves students learning about the problem and then making a simple, symbolic art piece. For every piece of art received, the Bezos Family Foundation donates funding to programs helping people impacted by the issue.

This approach allows young people a way to explore ideas, bridge culture, and pairs global learning with creative exploration. Young people begin to see themselves as problem-solvers and contributors, and their artistic effort is transformed into impact.

At the end of each Challenge, Students Rebuild partners with artists and institutions to exhibit a selection of handmade art from hundreds of thousands of students. Why?

- **To share and celebrate** the amazing and thoughtful contributions of young people.
- **To highlight** the transformational work of our nonprofit partners whose efforts on the ground are making the world better and more equitable.
- **To raise public awareness** for global social justice issues and those most vulnerable.

From L.A. to Iowa to Japan, our art exhibits reimagine and celebrate the creative, compassionate actions of students around the world. This book tells their stories.



**“When we make something with our hands,  
it changes the way we feel which changes the  
way we think which changes the way we act.**

– CARL WILKENS, HUMANITARIAN AID WORKER



# Cranes for Japan Challenge

2011

**CAUSE:** Rebuilding youth centers after Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami

**LOCATION:** Sendai, Japan

**ART:** Origami paper cranes – symbols of hope and healing in Japan

**MATCH:** \$1 per crane, up to \$500,000

**PRIMARY PARTNERS:** Architecture for Humanity, DoSomething.org

**PARTICIPATION:** More than 2 million cranes from 38 countries



Vik Muniz

## Vik Muniz Poster and Cranes Exhibit in Sendai, Japan

An astonishing two million cranes arrived at the Students Rebuild office in response to the Paper Cranes for Japan Challenge, inspiring internationally-recognized artist and photographer Vik Muniz. With help from local elementary and middle school students in his Brooklyn neighborhood, Muniz worked in his signature mosaic style, using thousands of origami pieces to create a breathtaking image of a unified crane. This was photographed and used to create a visionary benefit poster featured in the *New York Times*, with sales benefiting Architecture for Humanity's work to rebuild community spaces in the Sendai region of Japan.

In Sendai, other youth-made cranes were used in a public exhibit collaboratively built by local artists, designers, and youth volunteers. Displayed in the Sendai train station to welcome visitors to the region, colorful strands of cranes cascaded from the ceilings and lined the walls of the central lobby, a reminder and celebration of the compassion and hope that arrived from all over the globe.





**“Art is a very powerful tool for social change. People really don’t know that until they start to get practically involved with it. When you expose people to an experience that’s artistic, it transforms, it changes the way they see things and it changes the way they see themselves.”**

**—VIK MUNIZ**





Above: Tiny cranes made by students.  
Left: A large paper crane mosaic created by Vik Muniz for the Students Rebuild benefit poster.



# One Million Bones Challenge

2013

**CAUSE:** Vocational training for youth survivors of conflict and genocide in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

**LOCATION:** Somalia and Democratic Republic of the Congo

**ART:** Clay and paper bones – symbols of shared humanity and remembrance of lives lost in the conflict

**MATCH:** \$1 per bone, up to \$500,000

**PRIMARY PARTNERS:** CARE, One Million Bones, and Global Nomads Group

**PARTICIPATION:** More than 1 million bones from 31 countries



Naomi Natale

## One Million bones laid on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

In 2012, Students Rebuild joined forces with installation artist Naomi Natale and placed one million handmade paper and clay bones on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Natale envisioned this site-specific installation as a visual petition for lawmakers and citizens alike, standing against ongoing humanitarian crises and conflicts around the world, with a focus on central and east Africa.

The artistically crafted bones arrived from across the world, many with messages, poetry, prayers, and names written on them. Clad entirely in white garments, volunteers somberly laid each bone on the grassy lawn, evocative of the mass graves so prevalent in war zones. Nearby, speakers and performers hosted workshops, cultural celebrations, and other activities to raise awareness while activists lobbied Congress to advance legislation in conflict zones. Students Rebuild hosted a live webcast of events and interviews with attendees.

In addition to the National Mall, there have been bone-laying events in New Orleans, Chicago, New Mexico, the Balkans, and on college campuses across the U.S., where observers connected global conflicts to local issues, such as gun violence.





**“The most powerful thing we can do to effect change is to use art as a means of introducing people to the issue and offering actions related to it. Art is an incredibly powerful tool with which to build and inspire a community, and to connect people with an issue in the most personal of ways.”**

**—NAOMI NATALE**





Above: Volunteers lay paper and clay bones on the National Mall.  
Right: A young student creates a clay bone for the event.





# The Water Challenge

2014

**CAUSE:** Access to clean water and hygiene stations for schools and communities

**LOCATION:** Tanzania

**ART:** Paper beads – the symbology of African beads includes beauty, culture, power, and identity

**MATCH:** \$1 per 20 handmade beads, up to \$500,000

**PRIMARY PARTNERS:** charity: water and Global Nomads Group

**PARTICIPATION:** More than 800,000 beads from 25 countries



Anita Quansah



Vik Muniz

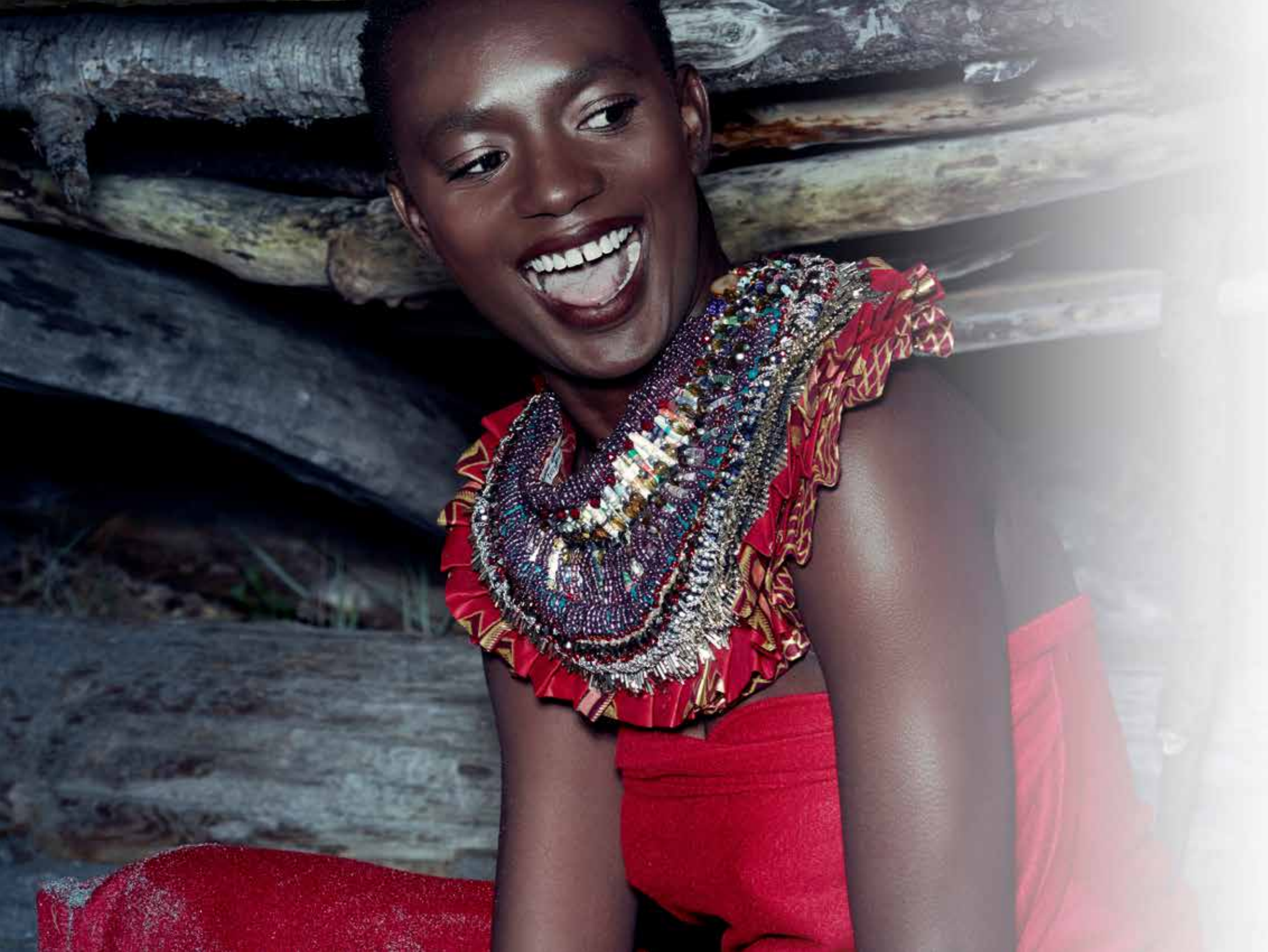
## Anita Quansah Paper Bead Gown and Collar and Vik Muniz Poster

London-based, African-born luxury fashion designer Anita Quansah brought incredible creativity and vision to the Water Challenge. Moved by the strands of beads created by young people across the globe—symbolizing African beads used to celebrate important life occasions and communicate cultural messages—she focused her creation on the cultural role women and girls play in collecting drinking water.

The result was a bespoke, African-inspired beaded collar and gown. The feminine but heavy gown made from safety pins and metal hoops symbolizes the burdensome and often painful job of women gathering water. A fun and colorful African collar balances the piece, representing the joyful freedom achieved when clean water is made more accessible to women and communities. Paper beads, all made by students from recycled materials, adorn both pieces.

Returning artist and collaborator Vik Muniz also mosaiced and collaged hundreds of paper beads into student portraits, brightly illustrating four Tanzanian school children who benefitted from the Water Challenge. Transformed again into a benefit poster, Muniz's creativity supported the work of charity: water across Africa to provide wells and sanitation access near schools and youth spaces.





**“The pursuit of hope,  
while transforming lives  
through art, was one of the  
fundamental reasons for my  
partnering with Students  
Rebuild. Celebrating a  
universal language that drives  
the vehicle of hope, which is  
indeed art and creativity.”**

**—ANITA QUANSAH**





Above: Detail of poster.  
Left: Central image of Vik Muniz's Water Challenge benefit poster.





# Healing Classrooms Challenge

2015

CAUSE:	Providing safe, therapeutic learning environments for children in Syrian refugee camps
LOCATION:	Jordan and Iraq
ART:	Paper pinwheels – symbols of a return to childhood and play
MATCH:	\$2 per pinwheel, up to \$400,000
PRIMARY PARTNERS:	The International Rescue Committee and Global Nomads Group
PARTICIPATION:	More than 300,000 pinwheels from 27 countries



## Student-Designed Tent Created with Pinwheels



Valerie Sloane and Montlake Students

Artist, educator, and Students Rebuild team member Valerie Sloane led fourth- and fifth-grade students from Montlake Elementary in Seattle through a design workshop, challenging them to create an interactive museum exhibit that featured the pinwheels and educated viewers about the lives of Syrian refugee children. The result: A Pinwheel Tent representing the temporal homes and structures so many displaced people now live in.

Designed by students and generously fabricated by Blue Sand Construction, the pinwheel tent was installed in the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, California for six months, inviting visitors to reflect and take action. The back of the tent presents a mirror that positions the viewer next to a life-size image of two young Syrian boys with the prompt: “What actions can you take, even small ones, to make a difference?”

The Museum used the Pinwheel Tent to further educational opportunities about humanitarian crises, weaving it into speaking sessions with Holocaust survivors and having it as a centerpiece when screening the new documentary film, *Cries from Syria*.

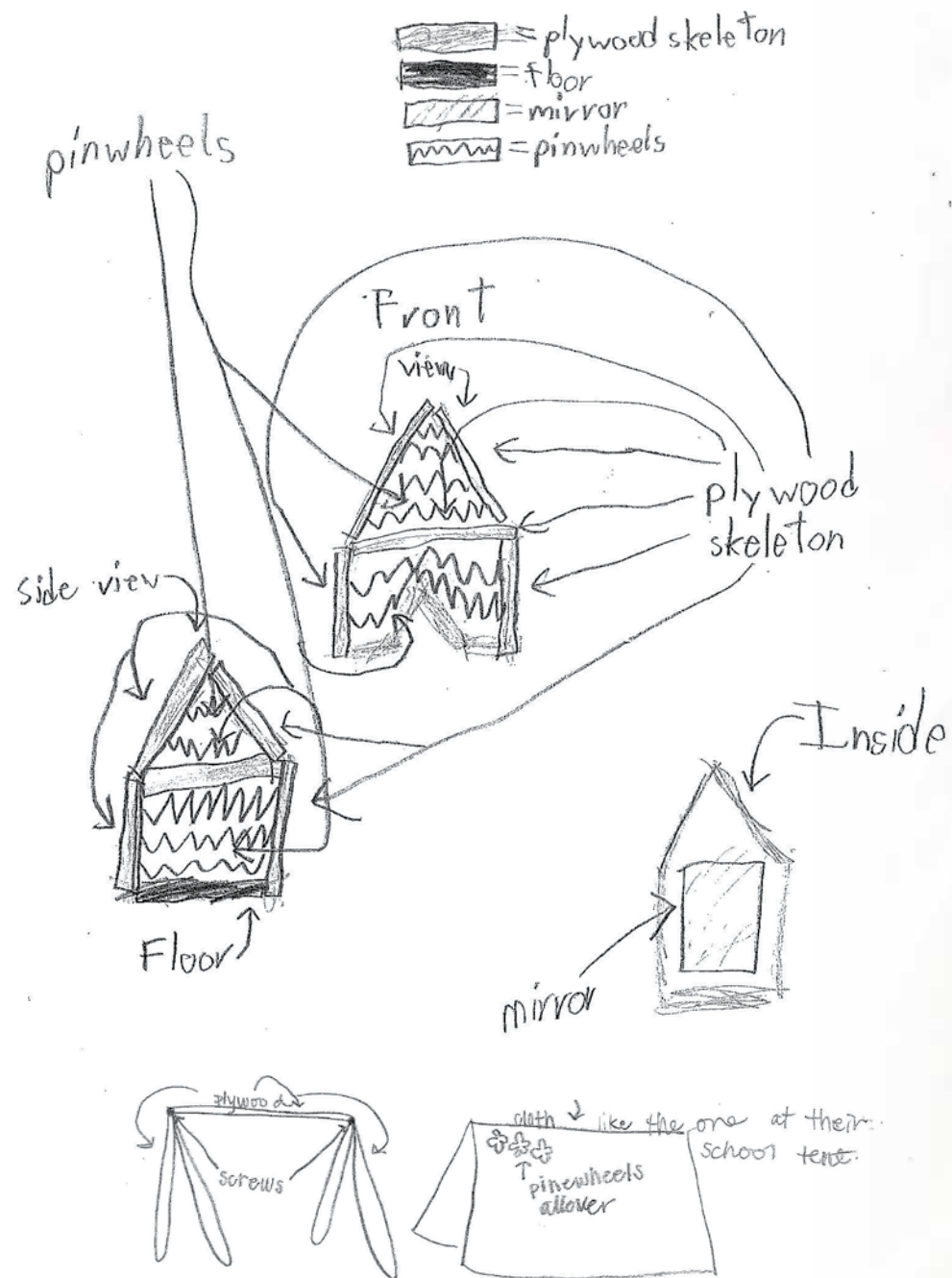




**“The collective ideas of students, and the wonderful collaboration of many partners, created a colorful, symbolic and meaningful Students Rebuild Pinwheels exhibition that spun absolute magic in the Museum of Tolerance.”**

**—LIEBE GEFT  
DIRECTOR, MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE**





**What actions  
can you take,  
even small  
ones, to make  
a difference?**

Above: Student sketches for the pinwheel tent. Right: A young girl visiting the tent's interior.





# Youth Uplift Challenge

2016

**CAUSE:** Supporting educational and vocational resources for youth living in extreme poverty

**LOCATION:** Nicaragua and Indonesia

**ART:** Paper hand prints – symbols of generosity and team work

**MATCH:** \$1.90 per hand\*, up to \$500,000

**PRIMARY PARTNER:** Save the Children

**PARTICIPATION:** More than 290,000 hands from 28 countries

\*Living on \$1.90 per day or less is the extreme global poverty rate



Teachr

## Interactive Community Art Piece and Screen-Printed Benefit Poster by Teachr

L.A.-based street artist Teachr centers his craft on two primary messages: A high-quality education should be accessible to all and peace and empathy should be at the forefront of learning. Teachr's perspective, combined with his unique street style, shines through in the screen-printed benefit poster and 50-foot interactive art piece created for the Youth Uplift Challenge.

Teachr and Students Rebuild also teamed up to host *Youth Uplift L.A.!* – a creative community event celebrating the Challenge at the Pico Youth and Family Center in Santa Monica, C.A., which provides resources to underserved young people. Teachr used paper hand prints featuring drawings, designs, and uplifting messages focused on service that students submitted for the Challenge to create custom art panels. By situating these on the sidewalk, Teachr created a participatory art piece and invited event attendees and community members to join the movement and trace their own hands on the boards. The day's events included street-art workshops with Teachr and youth leadership workshops with local entrepreneurs and community activists.





**“Working with Students Rebuild on the culmination of the Youth Uplift project, I found myself spending extra time just looking at and reading the creative hands that were drawn and sent. The experience inspired and humbled me, knowing there are so many great children out there willing to do wonderful things to help others.”**

**—TEACHR**





Above: Teachr hosting a stencil making workshop at Youth Uplift event.  
Right: A young boy adding his art to Teachr's interactive public piece.







# Facing Difference Challenge

2017

**CAUSE:** Youth peacebuilding in global regions with historic conflict

**LOCATION:** Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and the South Caucasus region

**ART:** Self-portraits – symbols of self-reflection, identity, and a commitment to embrace difference in others

**MATCH:** \$3 per portrait, up to \$600,000

**PRIMARY PARTNERS:** CARE and Search for Common Ground

**PARTICIPATION:** More than 200,000 portraits from 37 countries



Creative Arts Academy,  
Student Curators

## Portrait Exhibit at the Figge Art Museum and the TED2018 Conference

Committed to community-building and social justice, and inspired by the Challenge message of embracing diversity and compassion across difference, The Figge Art Museum in Davenport, Iowa joined Students Rebuild to host the Facing Difference Exhibit.

The Figge Art Museum engaged middle school students from the nearby Creative Arts Academy to curate the exhibit, using thousands of self-portraits submitted for the Challenge. The result was a floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall collage of portraits with selections from

every participating Students Rebuild team. A central focus of the display was a walk-in picture frame, where visitors could see themselves surrounded by mirrors. Inside the frame, a prompt asked: “What can you do to face differences in others with courage and compassion?”

The opening for this powerful and educational exhibit featured community conversations with local youth advocates who shared spoken word poetry against prejudice and racism and highlighted Arno Michaelis, a reformed white nationalist who travels the world helping break the cycle of hate.

In addition to the Facing Difference Exhibit, Students Rebuild displayed a selection of student self-portraits at the world-renowned TED2018 conference in Vancouver, Canada. The exhibit was created in collaboration with TED-Ed which works to spark and celebrate the ideas of teachers and students around the world.





**“The Students Rebuild Facing Difference Exhibition at the Figge Art Museum provided a unique and powerful incubator for visitors to self-reflect and understand the importance of universal acceptance. Not only did the 2,000+ portrait display provide beauty and insight into lives and cultures from around the globe, but members of our own community: students, educators, city leaders, media representatives and the general public, learned how art can make an impact for world-change.”**

**—LAURA WRIEDT  
OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR,  
FIGGE ART MUSEUM**





Above: Young visitors to the Figge create self-portraits.  
Left: Students Rebuild installation at TED2018.



# Ocean Challenge

## 2018

**CAUSE:** Ocean and coastal community health, developing youth conservationists

**LOCATION:** The Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and other coastal communities

**ART:** Sea creatures made from recycle materials

**MATCH:** \$2 per sea creature, up to \$500,000

**PRIMARY PARTNERS:** The Nature Conservancy and Ocean Collectiv

**PARTICIPATION:** Over 270,000 sea creatures from 45 countries



Valerie Sloane in collaboration with Shedd Aquarium

### An Under the Sea Art Exhibit at Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, Illinois

Shedd Aquarium, a national leader in conservation education, research, and sustainability, connects over two million visitors each year to the underwater world. In summer 2019, the historic rotunda surrounding Shedd's Caribbean Reef exhibit served as the perfect backdrop for a three-month Students Rebuild Ocean Challenge exhibit.

A team of volunteers and staff worked to curate the exhibit, carefully sorting through thousands of artistic sea creature submissions and sending pieces to Chicago to be displayed. The exhibit included bubble-wrap octopi, compact disc sea turtles, recycled bottle fish, eggcrate clams, painted paper clownfish, and much more. Each shark, squid, sea snake, and jellyfish was handmade by young people from across the globe and presented against a backdrop of coral and seafloor photography so the creatures appeared to be swimming. Rising almost 12 feet high and forming a panoramic arc around the space, the display mirrored the Aquarium's most popular reef exhibit. Delighted visitors were not only inspired to imagine themselves underwater but invited to consider how they could contribute to environmental advocacy.





**“Art is a great tool to inspire action and serves as a way to make connections with teens, sparking their curiosity and compassion. At Shedd, we’re always excited to see when this kind of learning leads young people to take even deeper actions for environmental conservation.”**

**—MIRANDA KERR  
MANAGER OF TEEN AND LEARNING PROGRAMS,  
SHEDD AQUARIUM**





Above: Caption.  
Left: Caption.







A hand is shown holding a paintbrush, dipping it into a glass of water. The glass is on a wooden table. Next to the glass is a watercolor palette with various colors. Several markers are also visible on the table. The entire image has a pinkish-red tint.

# students r\_build

For more information about Students Rebuild, including artistic exhibits or upcoming projects, visit us online at [studentsrebuild.org](http://studentsrebuild.org) or contact Valerie Sloane at [valerie@bezosfamilyfoundation.org](mailto:valerie@bezosfamilyfoundation.org).