

Community wins grant to bring public art to Bailey Avenue

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[Bailey Fights Blight](#), [Community News](#), [News](#)

Buffalo, NY – More public art will soon be headed to Bailey Avenue thanks to a \$2,000 grant from the [Arts Service Initiative of Western New York](#) awarded to the [University District Community Development Association](#) (UDCDA). The grant will help continue the work started in Fall of 2014 with a project called [Bailey Fights Blight](#). The project, spearheaded by a reenergized [Bailey Avenue Business Association \(BABA\)](#), brought over 200 volunteers from the community, area schools and universities, and businesses to board vacant and blighted buildings and prime the boards for art along Bailey Avenue.



A new mural located on the side of 3162 Bailey Avenue that resulted in a partnership between the Bailey Avenue Business Association and Villa Maria College's Fine Arts Program.

The new program will use these boarded up storefronts as canvases for public art inspired by the businesses along Bailey as well as the history and culture of the street. The goal is to re-imagine vacant or underutilized properties as opportunities for future development. Collaborative work days will also strengthen involvement and engagement in the neighborhood, building relationships across business owners, residents, and students and helping a community transform its built environment through volunteerism.

“The increasing amount of public, private, and grassroots collaboration in University District over the past few years is a testament to the level of commitment residents and businesses have to this community. They’ve rolled up their sleeves and are tackling neighborhood challenges head on. It’s an exciting time for our corner of the city!” remarked Roseann Scibilia, Executive Director of the University District Community Development Association

Thanks to this grant, the UDCDA and BABA will be able to work collaboratively with [Nick Miller](#), a mural artist who recently moved to Buffalo. He brings his experience working closely with Philadelphia’s mural arts program, one of the largest in the country, and has done a lot of work with schools and engaging children in the artistic process.



An example of artist Nick Miller's work.

Nick Miller will lead a number of community workshops in the spring to allow residents, business owners, and students an opportunity to help craft the ultimate design of each mural. There will then be open painting days where members of the community will be able to come out and participate in the creation of each mural. Those interested can stay updated on the project online at www.udcda.org/baileyfightsblight.



Nick Miller recently completed a mural with the WASH Project on the West Side of Buffalo. The 34×12 foot mural is of the fighting peacock, a symbol of the Burmese Student Pro-Democracy Uprising led by Burmese students on August 8, 1988, in their struggle for an education and society free from government control and oppression. The mural pays tribute to the large number of Burmese refugees that now call the West Side home.

While issues of blight and disinvestment continue to affect Bailey Avenue, the corridor still benefits from the presence of many long standing local businesses including a very unique urban fashion corridor that boasts close to 20 colorful men's and women's clothing and apparel shops. These murals will be influenced by what is inside these stores, bringing the color and design work from inside the stores onto the walls of Bailey.

"The efforts of the UDCDA in working collaboratively with BABA on commercial district planning activities, including integrating public art along the corridor, has set the stage for business district revitalization that builds on Bailey-Kensington's rich history and culture." said Michael Clarke, Local Initiative's Support Corp.

Bailey Fights Blight has already helped bring together key community stakeholders, such as the Bailey Avenue Business Association, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, Junior League of Buffalo, LISC Buffalo, University at Buffalo, University District Block Club Coalition, University District Community Development Association, University District Council Office, University Heights Collaborative, and Villa Maria College.

“This grant will continue the critical work of enhancing Bailey Avenue storefronts to improve the commercial corridor.” stated University District Councilmember Wyatt.



Ibrahim Clsse, President of the Bailey Avenue Business Association works alongside Mickey Vertino, President of the University Heights Collaborative and UB Honors Students to board up a building on Bailey Ave and prep it for public art.

With nearly 20,000 cars traveling down Bailey every day, turning vacant and blighted buildings into pieces of art and visual statements on the neighborhood not only transforms Bailey’s physical fabric, but also can begin to change people’s perceptions and attitudes toward the street. They can capitalize on the cultural and artistic vibrancy of Bailey that is oftentimes overlooked or ignored. By looking at the issues of vacancy, vandalism, and graffiti as opportunities for community-driven change, artists, business owners, residents, and students can work together on community-based solutions to quality of life challenges.

The [University District Community Development Association \(UDCDA\)](#) is a full service agency offering a wide array of [youth](#), [teen](#), and [senior](#) service programs to residents out of the Gloria J. Parks Community Center located at 3242 Main Street while also spearheading [community](#) and [housing](#) development projects throughout Buffalo’s Northeast from its offices located at 995 Kensington Avenue. The agency works with residents, block clubs, community

nonprofits, educational institutions, and local government to invest resources in the people and places that matter most to the community.