

## Mural project gets \$100,000 donation

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WINSTED — The largest grant ever awarded to a single nonprofit in Connecticut was given to the American Mural Project on Friday, according to the Alcoa Foundation. The AMP is the single biggest piece of indoor artwork in the country, the foundation said in a statement.

Nearly 10 years ago Ellen Griesendieck, the creator of the mural and the president of the American Mural Project was painting pictures of Americans working at various jobs. From these paintings came the idea of combining the images in to a single painting, according to the AMP Web site.

"I had been with people doing tough uncompromising work in copper mines and orange groves, driving cabs, and doing open heart surgery, and I realized these men and women were heroes to me," Griesendieck said Friday. "I decided to do a painting, a big painting, paying tribute to this American energy."

Griesendieck wasn't sure at

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Submitted photo

From left, state Sen. Andrew Roraback, R-30, state Rep. George Wilber, D-63, Frank Finch, Ellen Griesendieck, Winsted Mayor Maryann Welcome and Alcoa's Human Resource Manager Laurie Roy hold two checks totaling \$100,000 that were donated to the American Mural Project in Winsted on Friday.

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first how big the mural project would become.

"You don't start off thinking 'I'm going to do something huge'," Griesendieck said. "In the first six months of working on the project, not too many people took me seriously, but once I got going people started believing."

Two grants were given to AMP totalling \$100,000 from the Pittsburgh-based Alcoa, a global resource that invests in improving the quality of life in 29 countries

around the world where Alcoa operates.

According to a press release from Alcoa, the funds will enable AMP to implement an intensive promotional and public relations plan and to invest in curriculum and program development.

Laurie Roy, Human Resources Manager of Alcoa in Winsted and a board member for AMP, feels the grant will help an organization that is great for kids and the community.

"The Foundation is thrilled to be part of a program that connects children

both to the arts and to the work ethic that has built our country," she said. "We also look forward to the impact the AMP will have on the community's revitalization and economic development."

The grants were given at a small event held Friday at 100 Whiting St., the home of The American Mural Project. State Sen. Andrew Roraback, R-30, attended the event.

"I don't think there's any project that's more emblematic to the renaissance of Winsted than the American Mural Project," Roaraback

said. "Today's contribution from Alcoa makes a strong project even stronger."

The mural is still a work in progress, but when finished, it will be 45 feet tall and 120 feet wide. The mural will be housed in a restored 120-year-old brick mill. In addition to the mural, the project will include an active curriculum program, artist space, a theater, community meeting space and a visitor's center, Griesendieck said.

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