

AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR PROGRAM

Graffiti artists, or “writers,” are public servants. They create beauty in places that normally are abandoned to urban decay or ugly and manipulative corporate advertisements. While corporations fill our urban landscape with billboards and product placements for consumer goods we do not need, graffiti artists instead add color to unused space, beautifying rooftops, alleys, and abandoned buildings that would normally be eyesores. Corporations take resources from our communities, demanding that we buy from them yet we never see the benefit of our investment. Graffiti writers most often live and work in the neighborhoods they paint. They are the kids sitting next to you on the bus, the person that buys a newspaper from your store every morning, the big tipper at the restaurant where you wait tables. Graffiti artists participate in their communities by sharing their talents and skills as artists.

We believe in the encouragement of graffiti. Graffiti may start in your neighborhood as a small number of plain and unexceptional names written in marker, grease pen, or spraypaint. There is no need to be concerned, like any artist, the graffiti writer improves with practice, and soon the entire community can share their large-scale multi-color masterpieces. Although it's tempting to cover up the smaller “tags,” it is important to understand that graffiti is a process art and that most taggers go on to become spraypaint muralists that when encouraged can create some of the most exciting and cherished works of art in any community.

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT GIVE GRAFFITI THE THUMBS UP



“I just wanted to tell you how much it means to see that there are people out there that understand the value of graffiti. We've paid local youth to paint the retaining wall in front of our building twice, both times they did a great job but the city came along painted over the art with brown paint! This “clean up,” done without our permission, had completely demoralized both us and the local youth, but now that we know there are groups like you out there we are ready to try again.”

Betty M. Robinson



“I'm so tired of driving around my city and seeing endless walls painted the color of human feces. When our city government is so misguided and harmful, it's empowering to know that there are people out there sticking up for our kids and encouraging them to express themselves. Keep up the good work!”

Victor E. Vasquez

