



Voices On Canvas Inc 'Youth Changing Community Perspective through Art' 1st Annual **LEGO** Competition

"Building Community Block by Block"

Youth were challenged by Voices On Canvas Inc during its 3rd annual art competition, July 2010 to build a virtual community block by block using LEGOs as the art medium. Youth ages 8 to 16 were invited to explore community planning and development through collaboration and art. City officials, architects, city planners, sustainable experts, private citizens and many more were on hand as they began to build. The rubric required each entry (team) to collaborate with other teams as they built a section of a city block to scale in a time frame of four weeks. The sections were then brought together and assembled into a community with roadways, alleys, and green space within 1½ hours. During this time period entries were judged on how well the instructions were followed, creativity, concept of a community block, and a narrative description of how and why each individual build best serves the community, but most of all collaboration.

(R.) Mr. Matt Bond of the Denver Water North Dept. stresses the importance of water in community planning and development.



(R.) Police Sergeant Knutson of District 2 emphasizes the importance of design in deterring crime.



HISTORY OF THE COMPETITION

July 31st 2010 participating youth teams were required to attend a LEGO Town Hall Meeting. During this meeting teams received entry packets containing hundreds of LEGOs and instructions from professionals, city officials and VOICI staff.



(L.) Sustainable architect Niccolo Casewit AIA explains the rubric and fun of exploring building community block by block.

(R.) Ms. Penelope Zeller, Zoning Chair of Skyland North City Park introduces attendees to the new Denver Zoning Code, and points out the importance of addressing the needs of a growing population.



(R.) 2010, The late Denver City Council Women Carla Madison of District 8 presents Ms. Kathleen Casteel, Executive Director & founder of Voices On Canvas Inc. with a Mayoral Proclamation from Denver's Mayor John Hickenlooper proclaiming August 1st through the 7th, 2010 as Voices On Canvas Week.



In 2008 Ms. Casteel envisioned a virtual community built with LEGOs. 'Building Community Block by Block' where youth would use Lego building blocks in lieu of paint and canvas became the theme for the 2010 Youth Speak Through Art Competition. In collaboration with sustainable architect Mr. Casewit in this event the objective was developed to open dialog between youth and adults, as youth collaborative built of city blocks and continued that dialog through community building, creating a community where people live, work, and play surrounded by "living streets" and sustainable green spaces.



Above, Ms. Carla Madison lends her knowledge of the new Denver Zoning Codes during the Lego Town Hall Meeting.

All youth who take part in the competition received certificates of participation, acknowledging their efforts of work in collaboration and in building a community mixed and matched (mixed land use) to fit neighborhood circumstances, visions, and values; the key to building a real community that benefits all within and without. The connecting thread throughout this urban community closes the gap between people and their daily needs, wants, and desires.

