



For Immediate Release

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Teens Create Interfaith Mural on Display at the Saint Louis Science Center

St. Louis, MO – St. Louis area teens, representing four different faiths, created a unique mural of canned goods now on display at the Saint Louis Science Center. Taking their inspiration from *Humpback Whales*, a new giant screen film featured in the Saint Louis Science Center's OMNIMAX[®] Theater, the teens used 1,576 cans to depict a whale breaching the water.

The Center for Indian Cultural Education – Bal Vihar of St. Louis and Interfaith Quest organized the collaborative effort that brought together 30 teens selected from the Hindu, Muslim, and Christian faiths. Four teens from the Saint Louis Science Center's Youth Exploring Science (YES) program also took part in building the mural.

"The Saint Louis Science Center is excited to host this interfaith, interdisciplinary project," said Jenny Heim, Director, Strategic Planning and Projects. "The teens used both art and science to construct this beautiful mural with its compelling message about environmental stewardship. This project also gives the Science Center an opportunity to be a hub where people from our region's diverse communities can come together."

This is the second year teens have displayed an interfaith artwork at the Saint Louis Science Center. Last year, when the film *Jerusalem* was featured in the OMNIMAX Theater, teens created mural depicting symbols of their faiths and a silhouette of Jerusalem's skyline.

"A CANstruction project allows local youth representing various faith groups, from different regions in the area to come together and build on their shared values. By partnering with Saint Louis Science Center, we are able to share the energy and commitment this generation has for making the world a better place, by caring for nature and each other. Through the process of assembling the CANstruction, interfaith teens will enhance team work, interfaith dialogue and creativity. With all the recent negative press around youth and religion, we are pleased to display hard work, harmony, and interfaith understanding," said Beth Damsgaard-Rodriguez, who heads Interfaith Quest.

When the mural is disassembled, the cans, which were purchased through the generosity of local faith communities, will be donated to Operation Food Search. "It feels good knowing that we are able to donate all of this food to help those who are in need," said Neal Shekar, one of the teens who participated in the interfaith project. "At Bal Vihar, we study the Bhagavad Gita which teaches us to fulfill our duties by treating all people an extension of God. This also includes people who are not able to care for themselves."

The whale mural will be on display through April 10, 2015. It is located on the second floor of the Saint Louis Science Center, outside the OMNIMAX[®] Theater.