

# Citizens' group aims to beautify Kenmore's iconic concrete silos

What began as a whimsy – “hey, let’s decorate the concrete plant!” – has become a citizens’ campaign to add color and character to Kenmore with public artwork and beautification projects. The Arts of Kenmore is proud to support this new community self-improvement project.

It all started in April, 2015 when the City of Kenmore invited residents to a workshop conducted by Peter Kageyama, author of “For the Love of Cities,” to discuss ways to make the city “more interesting and fun.” The appealing topic drew a sizeable crowd in this friendly city of 21,600 at the north end of Lake Washington.

Many ideas were generated at the “For the Love of Kenmore” workshop. But attendees overwhelmingly voted as the best idea a proposal, offered half in jest, to decorate the large, grey concrete silos that sit high on the town’s waterfront, alongside state Highway 522 and the Burke-Gilman Trail.

Then the whimsy became a mission. Now in the hands of a group of community organizers called the Hwy. 522 Beautification Projects, the project added a slogan – “Let’s Beautify This!” -- and has launched a crowdfunding and social-media campaign to raise \$21,000 to complete the silo-decoration project next year.

The independent organization has received no city funds, nor any major corporate underwriting, and anticipates funding the project mostly with the private support of local residents and the businesses community.

The Hwy. 522 Beautification Projects receive administrative support from the Arts of Kenmore Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that will provide tax-exempt status for 522 donations. This fall, AOK will issue a “call to artists” and manage a competition to develop original artwork to be attached to the three 60-foot silos at the CalPortland Co. concrete plant. The public will be invited to preview the entries.

The project was organized by Kent Sturgis, a book publisher, and Dennis Mendrey, owner of a Kenmore real-estate company. First, the two men negotiated an agreement with CalPortland Co. The company will maintain the artwork on its silos for at least five years and will illuminate the art.

With an agreement in hand, in January Mendrey and Sturgis recruited a working committee of volunteers consisting of Andrea Hansen, a business consultant and fundraiser; Erica Ridout Gast of Brainstorm Collective, a graphic-design studio, which created the group’s visual images; Sara Solum Hayashi, curator for the Kenmore Art Show and the City Hall AOK Gallery; Derek Wyckoff, owner of 192 Brewing Co.; real-estate broker Steve Hall, researcher John Koudela III, and Leslie Harris, community relations manager for the City of Kenmore.

Donations can be made at [www.gofundme.com/letsbeautifythis](http://www.gofundme.com/letsbeautifythis). Mail checks to the Arts of Kenmore, PO Box 82767, Kenmore, WA 98028. Make checks out to AOK, but write "522 public art" on the check.

For more information, contact Andrea Hansen at [letsbeautifythis@gmail.com](mailto:letsbeautifythis@gmail.com).

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