

ARTFORUM



Parents and students returning to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida on February 25, weeks after the shooting that left 17 dead. Photo: David Santiago / Miami Herald.
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FLORIDA CITY AFFECTED BY GUN VIOLENCE RECEIVES \$1 MILLION PUBLIC ART GRANT

The city of Coral Springs, Florida, in partnership with the city of Parkland, Florida, has been awarded a \$1 million public art grant by the charitable organization Bloomberg Philanthropies to realize projects on gun violence following the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in February, which left seventeen people dead.

As part of the project “Inspiring Community Healing After Gun Violence: The Power of Art,” five artists—Kate Gilmore, Carl Juste, Steven and William Ladd, and R&R Studios—will be enlisted to make works that will be placed across both cities.

“The Marjory Stoneman Douglas tragedy has traumatized our community in ways we could never have imagined,” Parkland Mayor Christine Hunschofsky said in a statement. “We believe this project will be an important help with our community’s resilience.”

Members of the Coral Springs Police Department, Cultural Affairs division, licensed art therapists, and Marjory Stoneman Douglas students will all serve as members of an advisory committee that will meet with the artists. The initiative was inspired by the Coral Springs Museum of Art's Healing with Art program, which was established in the wake of the shooting in order to address the trauma experienced by students, teachers, parents, and the community.

Former mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg, the founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and the chairman of the nonprofit Everytown for Gun Safety, called the project "a powerful example of the ways public art can bring communities together and draw attention to important issues." He added: "I hope that it will help bring some solace to people who have lost loved ones to gun violence, including all the families in Parkland—and that it will help to prevent further tragedies by inspiring more people to act."

In February, Bloomberg Philanthropies invited mayors of US cities with thirty thousand or more residents to submit proposals for temporary public art projects that address important civic issues. Coral Springs was chosen from a pool of more than two hundred applicants. Fourteen finalists were announced in July. Earlier this month, Anchorage, Alaska, was announced as the first city to win a 2018 Public Art Challenge grant. Additional winning cities will be announced in the coming weeks.