

## Art as Social Activism

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### Elks Lodge Meetings

- In June 2004, a core group of Fine Art and Visual Communication graduate and undergraduate students began biweekly meetings with artist Lily Yeh and the local African American Community at the Elks Lodge.
- Several Saturday meetings were also held, including a back-to-school event co-sponsored with the Elks and meetings at Mt. Zion Church to encourage more community involvement.
- These meetings began as story-telling events with individuals from the community to gain an understanding of their histories and personal relationships with the community at large.
- At later meetings, community members created drawings about their histories.



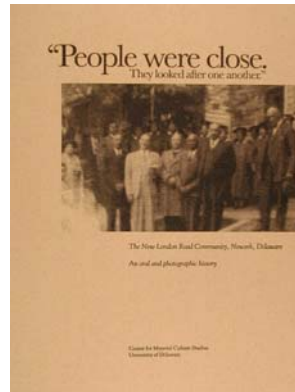
Lily Yeh listens to one local citizen tell a story about his personal history and relationship with the community.

### Drawings from the Community

- Local citizens were asked to create drawings about their community to create a sense of place through visual art.
- Their drawings were then transcribed into a quilt by a LIFE Cluster led by senior peer mentor Beth Ann Hoffman. Beth Ann's class also met with community members on several occasions.



The History and Art Connection LIFE Cluster created this quilt from community members' drawings.



The Village is a book based on local oral histories collected by students in Bernie Herman's Material Culture Studies class.

### Oral Histories

- Bernie Herman's senior seminar class in Material Culture Studies collected eight oral histories from leading members of the African American community.
- These oral histories provided the basis for a 100+ page book that the seminar students created.
- Bernie Herman and Ray Nichols collaborated to raise \$13,000 to have the book printed.
- The hardbound book will be distributed to about 100 households throughout the community.



Pages from The Village

### Community Monument

- In December 2004, Lily Yeh met with the community and was charged with designing a monument for the community based on all the information that had been gathered.
- On January 31, 2005, Lily presented her design proposal to the community. The proposal was for a mosaic monument and a totem pole area commemorating and honoring the local area.
- The community enthusiastically accepted the proposal.
- Students implemented and built Lily Yeh's design proposal under her guidance and leadership in collaboration with Virginia Bradley. The monument was constructed in front of the Elks Lodge.

### Multimedia Productions

- MFA graduate student Rebecca Dietz documented all of the meetings and events on video.
- From her footage, a 5-minute video clip was created as a demo CD. The demo evokes a sense of joy in the community.

### Classroom Integration

- The 467 class, Art as Social Activism, served as the base for this project. These students collaborated with Lily Yeh in the construction of the monument which she designed.
- Students in Virginia Bradley's Drawing 430 class used the oral histories as a basis to create four large scale collaborative drawings. Each drawing, size 8 feet by 9 feet, was exhibited at the end of the project.
- 100 students from five sections of the freshmen course Drawing 111 used the landscape around the Elks Lodge to create drawings dedicated to exploring a sense of place.



Artist Lily Yeh assists a budding artist in drawing a picture about his community.

### Student Reflection

- Students in the Art as Social Activism Class were required to keep journals of their involvement in the project.
- Each student was required to make a series of three pieces of artwork to portray their involvement artistically.
- Students also completed written evaluations of the process upon the project's completion.