



Mega Metta Mural encourages people to pay it forward and #sharemetta

11/1/15 - John O'Meara, Norm Kelly, and Paul Leighton had never met, but they shared a common bond. The trio wanted to raise awareness, pay it forward and make Providence beautiful to the more than two hundred and fifty thousand motorist who drive each week on Route 95 between exits 16 and 19.

SQA and Metta Students Founder Norm Kelly often passed the 14,000 square foot building at 85 Aldrich Street and thought it would make for a perfect canvas to get people to think about what #sharemetta means and to create a beautiful piece of art.

In 2012, Kelly created the Metta Students Foundation, awarding one thousand dollars each month during the school year to students who are making a positive difference in their community. To date, the Metta Students foundation has given out \$27,000. Born and bred in Providence Kelly thought the Metallurgical Solutions building could inspire others to also #sharemetta.

When the Metta Students Foundation approached Metallurgical Solutions owner John O'Meara, we knew this family-run business was the perfect fit. They care about their workplace, their employees and they have been proudly serving American manufacturers since 1989," states Metta Students Founder Norm Kelly.

Despite getting offers from well known reputable businesses who wanted to also create a mural for Metallurgical Solutions, John O'Meara chose to create his own artwork showcasing #sharemetta because he too wanted the massive project to pay it forward and also thank Providence.

"My partner Gregory W. Dexter and I have always been involved in programs that benefit children. When Norm Kelly first approached us with his request to #sharemetta we were only too happy to let him use the side of our building. Norm is a very unselfish individual with lots of energy, and we wish him the best of luck. All this, combined with the fact that we were always impressed by the "Whale Wall" that had been a mile north of us on I 95 presented us with an opportunity to do something to pay it forward while at the same time helping to beautifying the neighborhood. I believe the mural is breathtaking and will help get others to #sharemetta."

As fate would have it, Marine and fire fighter Paul Leighton had also passed the massive building. Unbeknownst the Metta Students Foundation he had dreamed of using his artistic talent to create an amazing mural on that very same wall. "When the Metta Students Foundation approached me to paint the mural I was ecstatic," says Muralist Paul Leighton. "Like most RI residents, I have passed by the Metallurgical Solutions building hundreds of times. I am a former service member, and have been an East Bay firefighter since my discharge nine years ago. I dreamt of creating a mural that would honor our country and the state of Rhode Island, as well as beautify our state's highway. This has been a tremendous opportunity, as well as a way to #sharemetta and give back to the community."

The mural took four weeks to complete, Norm Kelly and Glen Vanert power washed and primed the building while Leighton's team created the mural. One hundred gallons of paint were used for the entire building highlighting the five thousand square foot mural that showcases Rhode Island's beauty, using whales, fish, a lighthouse, the American Flag and #sharemetta.

Leighton documented the artistic endeavor through a time lapse camera. The media is welcome to use any of those pictures and stop by to take video and get interviews. [Here is a link](#) to the time lapse video.