

The Lost Generation

Memorial Garden

In Dedication to Victims of Gun Violence





The Lost Generation Memorial Garden

The Memorial Garden project was initiated in early 2017 by a group of New Haven mothers who have lost children to gun violence, and who found each other through a support group sponsored by the New Haven Police Department. The group advanced their cause with support from the Urban Resources Initiative (URI), a local non-profit affiliated with the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, which provided staff and student interns to help develop their vision and seek out potential memorial sites. Led by Marlene Miller Pratt, the group gained support from the City of New Haven and local alders, and in 2018 identified a city-owned parcel on Valley Street in Westville for the construction of the memorial.

The Goals for the Memorial Garden are to:

1. Designate a serene, peaceful place for families to remember, honor and celebrate loved ones who were lost to gun violence;
2. Raise awareness of the impact of gun deaths within a community, and beyond; and
3. Serve as an inspiration for communities and leaders to work cooperatively to address the multiple roots of violence.

The Team

In April 2018, the Mothers group was referred to the architecture firm of Svigals + Partners to facilitate a process of engagement to develop a design for the memorial. Svigals + Partners led a collaborative visioning process that included the initial group of mothers, URI staff, additional victim families, community members, local advocacy groups, the New Haven Parks Department, and a volunteer team of local designers. Through these workshops, victim families shared their personal stories of loss, grief, and struggle, as well as their path to recovery and hope.

The Design

The final concept design, titled “The Lost Generation,” was informed by the recognition that each death has a compounded impact on the community. In the words of Marlene Pratt, gun deaths represent “an entire generation and lineage lost.” Those lost include children, parents, siblings, and friends. The central sculpture in the concept proposal represents the community as a collage of figures, with some figures depicted by voids – illustrating the ever-present sense of absence when loved ones are lost to tragedy.

Created as a perspective sculpture, the figures will only be perceived in alignment at select viewpoints, and will then dissolve out of a recognizable pattern as you move around the sculpture. This serves as a reminder of both the fragility and strength inherent within the family unit and the community.

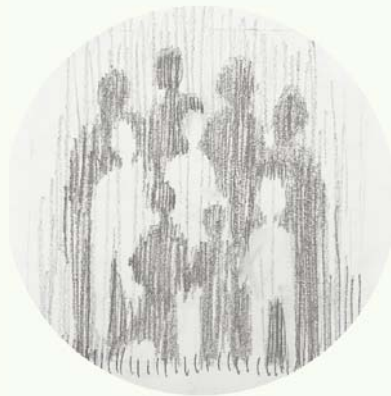


Illustration of perspective sculpture



MEMORIAL GARDEN FEATURES

Heart:

Center of garden with flowering plants. Views of West Rock & central sculpture.

Perspective Sculpture:

Stepped seating, or future footbridge connection to West Rock trail project.

Water's Edge:

Stepped seating, or future footbridge connection to West Rock trail project.

Chimes:

Row of wind chimes masks the sound of traffic.

Memory Tiles:

Stones engraved with images or memories of loved ones.

Curved Garden Walls:

Stone sitting walls bordering low, mounded gardens.

Magnitude Path:

Bricks engraved with ages and dates of individuals killed in gun-related incidents in New Haven since 1980.

Entry:

Dedication Marker, accessible seating area, and view of central sculpture.



Acknowledgements:

The Mothers & Families

Urban Resources Initiative

City of New Haven

New Haven Parks Department

New Haven Police Department

New Haven Fire Department

Alderman Richard Furlow

Westville Village Renaissance Alliance



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