

## GROW JUSTICE: FIGHT HUNGER

JUSTICE GARDEN • GAN TZEDEK • גן צדק



In our Justice Garden, adjacent to the Grow Justice Mural, volunteers of all ages tend organic produce grown to feed homeless families at local shelters. The thriving garden is a centerpiece of wide-ranging programs that foster social action, community-building, and Jewish learning. By practicing the Jewish value of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), our community literally sows the seeds of justice for people in need.

## BE PART OF THE PROCESS!

*"This is something that everyone should see. It really grasps you. The more people that see and understand the meaning of justice, the more engaged they will be in taking action."*  
— California State Senator Jerry Hill (D-13th District)

The first step of the Grow Justice mural process was the design, and the second was the painting and installation. However, this communal work of art isn't complete without the third and final step: your participation through interpretation. As you study the mural, what are your thoughts? How do you feel? How might you practice *tikkun olam* and help repair our world?

We invite you to share your personal discoveries as you study the mural.  
Write the PJCC at [editor@pjcc.org](mailto:editor@pjcc.org)  
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To learn more about the Grow Justice Mural, visit [www.pjcc.org/mural](http://www.pjcc.org/mural)

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GROW JUSTICE  
MURAL AND GARDEN

## THE BEGINNING



In 2013, the PJCC launched Grow Justice: Fight Hunger, an influential social justice initiative that involves the community. The Justice Garden is the heart of the project where produce is grown for homeless families, and it also provides a living context for year-round programming with an interactive curriculum.

Adjacent to the Justice Garden is a stunning companion piece, the Grow Justice Mural. Facilitated by PJCC Artist-in-Residence Jay Wolf Schlossberg-Cohen, 745 community members helped create the 1,560 sq. ft. mural. At the design workshops, participants were given texts

that related to Judaism's imperative for justice. Schlossberg-Cohen integrated these personal interpretations into the final large-scale work, which he painted, aided by the community.

The mural is divided into four sections and one title section. The five sections represent the five Books of Moses; the four outer sections are open Torah scrolls and the fifth section is the closed Torah. The open scrolls invite the visitor to approach the mural in the tradition of the Torah: to study, interpret, discuss. The central closed Torah represents humanity's call to action.



## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

## HUMAN RIGHTS & DIGNITY

## TORAH COVER

## ECONOMIC JUSTICE

## FOOD JUSTICE



The mural begins with a warning: a whale that can't breathe either in the air or in the water, and burning, splintered California Redwood trees. We see a world made uninhabitable because of humans' interference. The ceramic (by E. Blaise DePaolo) incorporates a tumultuous, roiling, prayer-swirling cloud. But the warning is followed with hope and inspiration: two doves wearing *tallitot* (Jewish prayer shawls) with olives adorning the *tzitzit* (fringe).

The future, as seen through the eyes of the youngest generation, the new stewards of the land, is a message that runs throughout the mural.

The rainbow arch symbolizes the covenant between God and Noah that God will never again destroy the earth.



This part of the mural is primarily comprised of solemn faces in squares. The people have no mouths; therefore, their objections cannot be voiced. The artists have given voice to their trials by embossing their desires for equality in rectangular blocks along the bottom. Although not clearly visible in the image above, the words have been glazed in a bronze hue, a precious metal, imbuing them with prominence and permanence.

The glowing angels on the top of this section represent the children of the Holocaust. The artist regularly invites these children to play and be present in his Jewish works, because in life they were deprived of this opportunity.

The vertical ceramic panels symbolize the *Atzei Chayim* (Torah scroll rollers) and act as dividers for the sections. The panel that concludes this chapter depicts Moses approaching Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments.



The title of the mural "Grow Justice" includes an active verb and the imperative to take intentional action. It implores us to sow seeds of goodness that will germinate and blossom. It is a Jewish commandment to make the world better. At the top of this section we see colorless hands representing the Divine.



Viewers are confronted with a disturbing image depicting huddled masses that lack adequate housing. Houses and significant sums of unspent money are flying away, out of reach. This tragic but commonplace scene gives way to one of renewed hope in the images that follow.

The situation transitions as families in need receive clothing from the One Warm Coat drive. In the final tableau of this section, visitors are greeted by a happy, economically stable family, flourishing in front of an oasis of housing. In this idealized setting, all of humanity, alongside even the smallest of creatures (birds), enjoy the habitat required to thrive.



A bountiful harvest and amplified abundance are featured in this part of the mural's story, and it's purposefully located on the wall directly across from the PJCC's Justice Garden (turn page over for more garden information).

The volunteers in this section represent our extended community. And at the top of the artwork, in ceramic, is a *Sukkah* (hut)—a temporary dwelling that isn't

as strong as a house, but is strong in faith. The tiles are vibrant, organic, and irregularly shaped as if created by nature. The optimism reflected in the mosaic and vibrant paint colors compliment each other.

In the final vertical ceramic, we see a man planting a tree; a gift for the next generation.