



# Public Art Project Blooms in Chicago

Posted by Ann Kalayil , Regional Administrator, Great Lakes Region on February 1, 2012

If you've been in downtown Chicago lately, you may have noticed a vibrant mural that has revitalized the 212 South State Street Building. This beautiful artwork is the result of a collaboration between GSA's Great Lakes Region and Portraits of Hope, a non-profit organization that creates art therapy and civic education projects for children and adults. GSA is proud to take part in a project that is helping the local community.

When Portraits of Hope needed a space to display their artwork in the Chicago Loop, they came to GSA because of our diverse array of federal property. The 212 South State Street Building windows made the perfect canvas for the program's young and talented artists. Portraits of Hope brought together students from Chicago Public School's Kenwood Academy High School and children from the University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital to paint 14 of the building's window panels in a colorful floral motif that symbolizes joy, life, youth, beauty, hope, inspiration, and renewal.

This unique collaboration culminated in a recent public dedication ceremony where GSA acknowledged that projects like this one help connect the government with the community it serves. Five students from Kenwood Academy attended the dedication and were able to see first-hand how their role in the project has transformed a building along one of Chicago's most famous streets. It was so nice to hear the students express a sense of pride in seeing their art publicly displayed. Though the end product was quite impressive, the entire team's – GSA, Portraits of Hope, Kenwood Academy High School, and Comer Hospital – partnership for a great cause was even more admirable.

The artwork was funded by Portraits of Hope using private funds that were made possible by the generous support of individuals, businesses, and foundations. The painted window panels will be on display throughout the year.