

I am writing in support of Kevin King's nomination for the Making a Difference award. Kevin has certainly made a difference as an artist, an educator, and a community activist who builds up his neighborhood through the arts.

Smaller communities within a city have their own identities. Perception of these identities may differ. Within a community, people see their neighbors, their homes, and the businesses, organizations and churches that give a community its identity. They also cope with its negative aspects, but their community is home. Outsiders see something different – a place where you drive through with locked doors and never go at night. Kevin King sees the positive side of West Montgomery where he lives and has used his skills as an artist and educator to help everyone else see it too.

An artist himself, Kevin realized that space, materials and support can be hard to come by for many people. He knew his neighbors and friends could benefit from a place to learn and create and The King's Canvas was born. It is a space where people in West Montgomery come for the space to create, access to materials, and instruction in visual arts. It also provides a place where artists can display and market their work. Kevin helps the King's Canvas artists learn about the business side of the arts as well. He works with children, too, nurturing the next generation of West Montgomery artists.

Beyond the important work that goes on inside the King's Canvas, Kevin tries to promote his West Montgomery neighborhood in other ways, including the creation of a colorful mural on the side of the King's Canvas building. The organization has commissioned other murals across the city of Montgomery.

The goal of the King's Canvas is "to provide access and opportunities to underdeveloped artists." To that end, more than 200 artists have received supplies and access to work space. Community businesses and artists have taken part in entrepreneurship and development classes.

While Kevin collaborates with other artists on projects in downtown Montgomery, his work in the West Montgomery has changed the community in large and small ways. His sustained efforts to make his community a better place deserve recognition and make him an obvious choice for the Making a Difference award.

Sincerely,

Deborah Boykin

Folklorist