

## **CHILD AND YOUTH COMMISSION HIRES LOCAL ARTIST TO PAINT MURAL INSIDE THE LOBBY OF NEW OFFICES**

**Oklahoma City, OK (August 19, 2020)** – The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) selected local artist Anne Engel to paint a colorful Oklahoma-themed mural for their new lobby.

The mural utilizes Oklahoma's new branding colors and features elements from Oklahoma's prairies. In particular, the flower-scape incorporates the Oklahoma state wildflower, Indian Blanket. The butterflies pay homage to "Think. Prevent. Live." – a joint awareness campaign between the Oklahoma Child Death Review Board and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services aimed at reducing the incidents of child deaths. The artwork associated with this campaign included a smiling child and a blue butterfly.

When designing the mural, the artist drew inspiration from adult coloring books as she saw them as mediums that both adults and children can appreciate. "I wanted to keep the spirit and playfulness of children while still being mature and not so much like a little kid painting," said Engel. "I thought of adult coloring books because those are both for adults and kids but still maintains the spirit of a child."

When asked what she liked most about completing the project for OCCY, Engel replied, "As someone who is open about the fact that I was adopted, it is an honor to be able to help support such an organization that deals with the safety and well-being of children and youth in our state."

Born and raised in Oklahoma City, 22-year-old Engel said her journey of wanting to be an artist started at the age of five. "I knew from a young age, about 5 years or so – in art classes I used to take at elementary school," said Engel. "I loved to draw and color which eventually turned into painting in grade school and high school." "College is where my art skills really flourished," she added.

Engel recently graduated from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado with a Bachelor of Arts degree in graphic design. While in school, she discovered she identified most with art forms such as contemporary modern art and realism paint. She credits learning more about her culture and the many Native American artists who have used nature as a symbol of beauty for opening her eyes to painting and drawing more clearly.

When asked what three artists she would love to be compared to she listed: Van Gogh for his use of color, textures and bravery with brush strokes; Georgia O'Keeffe for her use of color and shading in her landscapes; and Ian Roberts a modern acrylic painter who does amazing work with landscapes and shadows.

Professionally, Engel enjoys using her art to advance the mission of businesses, government, and non-profit organizations. However, her dream project would be to paint a massive mural outdoors on a multiple story building.

Engel's mural can be seen inside the lobby at the OCCY offices. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the OCCY staff are teleworking but are available by phone, email, or by appointment. The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth is located inside the Cameron Building at 2915 N. Classen Boulevard, Suite 300, Oklahoma City, OK.

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**About OCCY:** Since 1982, the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth has helped create a transparent system for children, youth, and families by bringing accountability and independent oversight into Oklahoma's child and youth service system. Its mission is to improve services to Oklahoma's children by planning, coordinating, and communicating with communities as well as between public and private agencies.