Beginning in September 2017, Wilmington Renaissance Corporation (WRC) partnered with 4Youth Productions to create West Center City: A Family Portrait. The project involved 12-15 middle school photography students and participants in 4Youth’s afterschool programs. 4Youth Productions’ student photographers captured images of various families, and through a series of conversations, learned about their stories and community. Through multiple workshops, including photography and interview skills building, the students created public art by turning the photographs into murals.

These dynamic images were installed on exterior walls on 8th Street and along Catawba Street Alley, located directly across from The Rock Lot, as part of the implementation of the Vacant to Vibrant plan. The murals are all illuminated at night as art works, in an effort to increase their impact. These portraits/murals were unveiled in June 2018 at the Rock Lot’s season kick-off event, which included a neighborhood block party.

The engagement of youth to interview, photograph and ultimately create public art that highlights the community in a positive way is another example of how WRC uses creative placemaking.

This project gave WRC the ability to engage young students and community members, in their homes, through the medium of photography. It has been especially impactful in continuing to allow us to build bridges with the West Center City community.

This project generated substantial community impact on both personal and public levels. The interaction between these youth artists and the West Center City community members created connections that blossomed into the product of powerful works of public art.

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