

ARTIST STATEMENT



"METAPHOR" IS A COMMUNITY MURAL
DESIGNED BY JONATHAN THUNDER AS PART
OF THE COLLEGE OF ST. SCHOLASTICA'S
MURAL INITIATIVE PROJECT.

MURAL LOCATED AT 2301 W. SUPERIOR ST, DULUTH, MN
VISIT AICHO AT 202 W. 2ND STREET, DULUTH, MN
AICHO.ORG | 218-722-7225

"When burned for healing or ritual purposes, the smoke from braided sweetgrass is thought to attract good spirits and positive energies. It is used as a smudging tool to purify people's auras, cleanse objects, and clear ceremonial areas or healing spaces of negative energy. When I was asked to create the design for this mural I was given the idea for the sweetgrass braid by the staff at AICHO. They mentioned it was a good metaphor for AICHO's 3 main focuses in the pursuit of cultural resilience: **housing**, **culture** and **indigenous food systems**.

In the image you see a figure known in Ojibwe stories as "Deer Woman". This figure has taken on the role of symbolizing strength to Indigenous Women in books and artworks produced by contemporary artists in our community. Deer woman sings to a little yellow bird, a Goldfinch - the spirit of the Anishinaabe language. Through this element of identity, strength and knowledge of one's self can be obtained. Meanwhile, corn and squash are two of the many natural foods used in Indigenous cooking. Food is medicine and another means by which, through gardening and youth empowerment, AICHO has been revitalizing Indigenous culture." - Jonathan Thunder



THUNDER
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