

Shapes for Hamilton Nothing Shy of Amazing

By D Holis *Mon, Apr 05, 2010*



If you haven't received your shape from the Shapes for Hamilton project, do so. There are two distributions this weekend: Saturday morning at the Poolville Community Center (10 a.m.) and Sunday morning at the Palace Theater (11 a.m.).

This goes far beyond the amusing and truly is an important moment in the life of the community. You really need to be part of it.

Colgate art Professor Dewitt Godfrey is the wrangler for this truly amazing project. He has overseen a team of Colgaters (staff and students) who have pull together the vision of New York City artist Allan McCollum, who devised a way to create unique shapes for every person on the planet.

McCollum chose the Town of Hamilton for this particular project, giving this small, rural community the opportunity to be part of something very special. Each of us is part of this project, which explores both the bounds of community and the nature of the individual within that group.

Not to get over philosophical about it, but this is a true opportunity to figure out our place in the bigger community. It also allows us to see how we are connected to others.

Saturday, as Godfrey and his team handed out the particular shapes created for each individual, each recipient seemed genuinely engaged. You

could see that they wanted to know what their shape looked like; what would represent them. Each seemed so pleased when they were given a small sheet of paper with an amorphous shape printed in black ink.

So many parents passing through the line said the same thing to their child/children: "That's you!"

And, of course, each person tried to decipher or divine what their shape looked like. Most figured it was some sort of animal.

But, the thing that stood out as people posed for pictures at the end of the line was our new connectedness. It was a bit surprising, bordering on the overwhelming at times.

I had no idea who many of the folks -- especially families -- were as they held up their shapes and smiled. But, now that we shared shapes, we had a bond, a modest one, but a bond nonetheless.

Maybe that is what McCollum had in mind. For that moment, when people compare what might be mistaken for a Rorschach inkblot, we had something directly in common.

And, maybe, we were meant to think beyond our shapes and figure out that we have much more in common than we thought. Doing that, we might also discover our connections to others.