

**December 21,  
2016  
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## **AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows Collaborate with Local Barbershop on World Map Mural**

On Friday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1 p.m., Rochester Youth Year/AmeriCorps VISTA members will unveil a 6 foot-by-12-foot world map mural they painted with community members on a wall at T & Dave's Barbershop, 1009 Genesee Street, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Ward.

Rochester Youth Year is an AmeriCorps VISTA-sponsored social justice fellowship that strives to eradicate poverty for Rochester youth and families, strengthen communities, and promote community-centered leadership. Members perform indirect, capacity-building service for Rochester-based organizations to create, expand, and sustain asset-based, anti-poverty initiatives. Since 2007, Rochester Youth Year members have engaged 7,885 local volunteers and generated \$1,721,011 in cash and in-kind resources for local organizations. Members support attendance initiatives, financial literacy, and holistic well-being through community-centered projects. By creating this mural, members hope to bring communities together through art.

T & Dave's barbershop is nestled within a group of small businesses on the corner of Terrace Park and Genesee St and is a pillar in the 19<sup>th</sup> Ward community. Patrons range from construction workers to heart surgeons, college students to senior citizens, all of who come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse stories to tell. To honor their clientele, T and Dave's now displays a world mural visible from the sidewalk, where passersby can glance in and "visit" Somalia, Ireland, or Argentina.

"The mural originated as a source of art therapy for our members to escape the daily stressors of life, but has turned into a genuine source of community connection and sense of belonging, both for Barbershop clients and for our VISTA members," says Julie Elliot, Rochester Youth Year VISTA Leader and a 2015 University of Rochester graduate.

For more information on Rochester Youth Year, visit [www.youthyear.org](http://www.youthyear.org).

**Media inquiries regarding the mural can be directed to Julie Elliot at (845) 826-2523 or [Rochester@youthyear.org](mailto:Rochester@youthyear.org)**

