LOS ANGELES, CA—The USC Roski School of Art and Design has received a USC Good Neighbors Grant to launch a new program: RAD in The Neighborhood. This new initiative falls within an ongoing USC Roski and California African American Museum (CAAM) partnership and will provide high-quality, weekly after-school visual arts and design programming and mentorship for students from Ánimo Jackie Robinson High School (AJR). Roski’s renowned faculty and graduate students will join partner education staff in creating project-based classes that include youth made graphic novels, sculpture, ceramics, photography and applied forms of design. The program kicked off in August with 23 high school students from the nearby high school joining artists and educators to begin a zine project led by the Able Arts Work program.

Roski MFA candidate Noé Olivas works with a student from AJR High School.

“It’s takes a community to create change and we are honored to have strong partners to implement a deep dive into the arts for area students and introduce them to self empowerment to be gained through the arts and higher education,” stated USC Roski Dean Haven Lin-Kirk. “I give my heartfelt thanks to our partners: the California African American Museum, Green Dot Public Schools and Ánimo Jackie Robinson Charter High School, as well as other organizations supporting this project including Able Arts Work. This is truly an outstanding community committed to the capacity for positive change through the arts and community engagement.”

Program lead Suzanne Lacy states, “This is an opportunity for USC Roski graduate students, already developed as artists, to learn a bandwidth of skills including classroom teaching, curriculum design, and community engagement.”
THE PROGRAM
As school budgets get tight, the arts are often the first programs to be cut and, consequently, critical career paths for innovative, creative young people suffer. Although AJR is fortunate to have two talented and enthusiastic arts teachers, the school numbers 650 students with visual and dramatic arts offered only to the 10th grade class. USC Roski and RAD in the Neighborhood partners seek to bridge this gap by offering all AJR students the opportunity to participate in a high-quality, comprehensive, two-semester art and design program during the 2018-19 academic year.

The after-school sessions include instruction in a variety of 2 and 3 dimensional media. Examples of workshops include: creating zines, sculptures and installations, photography and video, and applied forms of design. Students will also visit Roski’s facilities each semester to meet with young arts professionals in our programs, as an important introduction to careers in the creative arts. Professional skills will be emphasized through learning how to develop an art resume and portfolio, critical components of art school and college applications.

The curriculum for RAD in the Neighborhood’s weekly after-school program centers around the ongoing exhibits at CAAM, drawing the students more deeply into the museum experience and the various ways to express themselves and their cultures through art, while acquiring skills that can be used in many professions.

RAD IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD’S GOALS
Program goals are to strengthen the high school-to-college pipeline through exposure to art and design education and career possibilities and pathways; build skills in the areas of art and design; facilitate high school student relationships with college professors and connect students with near-peer mentors in the creative fields; enhancing youth and family understanding of art and design; and improving students’ social-emotional learning (SEL) through activities that require self-awareness, self-management, and relationship building.

1. Strengthen the high school-to-college pipeline:
   - Increase the students’ comfort with the college campus environment by visiting Roski’s undergraduate facilities, the graduate art building at 30th and Flower, and the new state-of-the-art graduate design space located in the LA Arts District.
   - The program will also give each student the opportunity to build relationships with Roski faculty who can serve as advisors and mentors.
   - Emphasize the development of personalized art and design resumes and portfolios—critical components to any application process—to help open the door to art and design studies in higher education.
2. Building skills in art and design and an understanding of professional pathways:
   • Focusing on fundamental visual arts and design skills including drawing, illustration, cartoons and graphic novels; sculpture and pottery; printmaking and color theory; as well as photography and video essentials.
   • Each student will create their own artworks, and the sessions will culminate in May 2019 with a student show open to the public—a valuable opportunity that will enhance their artistic resume as well as encourage family participation.

3. Connecting students with near-peer mentors/role models in the creative fields:
   • The student-to-instructor ratio in the program is approximately 1 to 5, giving each AJR student more individual attention and more opportunities to get involved in the projects and ask questions; resulting in a more personal experience and individualized artwork.
   • Planning for a future is daunting. The AJR students will have the chance to connect with college students with similar interests, whose age will make them more approachable for the students and their experiences more relevant.

4. Improving students’ leadership and self-management skills:
   • The essential requirements of art and design, as with many creative disciplines, are an excellent foundation for these important skills because they require the three important areas of personal development: self-awareness, self-management and building relationships with others. Having strong social-emotion learning skills is seen as one of the indicators of a student's likelihood to continue on to college and succeed across all areas of life. Reinforcing and strengthening these areas of learning through activities that inspire passion and a sense of accomplishment can help build students’ confidence in these skills.

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Program Credits
This project is made possible in part by generous support from the USC Good Neighbors Grant Program and the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Partners include USC Roski School of Art and Design, California African-American Museum, Ánimo Jackie Robinson Charter High School, Green Dot Public Schools, and Able ARTS Work.

About USC Good Neighbors:
USC Good Neighbors, created in 1993, provides financial support to university-community partnerships involving collaboration between USC faculty and staff and local nonprofit organizations that have a visible, positive impact on the neighborhoods surrounding the University Park and Health Sciences campuses.

About USC Roski:
The Roski School of Art and Design at the University of Southern California is a unique, supportive environment for creativity, experimentation and collaboration in the visual arts. The school encourages interdisciplinary approaches to studio art, design, curatorial practice and critical studies. With equal emphasis on making and thinking, the USC Roski School prepares artists, designers, curators and writers to contribute in new and meaningful ways both to their fields and to society at large.