

From: [Leah D Nixon](#)
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Subject: Ferris Hosts 'Writings on the Wall'
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Included below is a press release regarding “Writings on the Wall,” an event designed to explore hate speech by fostering discussion. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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Ferris Students Explore Hate-Speech Through ‘Writings on the Wall’

BIG RAPIDS – Knocking out intolerance is motivating Ferris State University students to explore hate speech through a new medium this October, “Writings on the Wall.”

In an effort to create awareness of prejudice and stereotypes, participants are encouraged to anonymously write on cement bricks hurtful words and phrases used against them or their peers.

The bricks will make up a six-foot-wide and 12-foot-tall wall, which will be constructed in the Campus Quad. A ceremony to discuss the writings will be held at 4 p.m. Oct. 18, also in the Campus Quad.

“The wall itself is an accumulation of hate, pain, harassment, stereotypical comments, racial slurs, et cetera. But, the symbolism is created within the individual. What the wall symbolizes (is) different for each person,” said Bryan Lochan, a senior in Applied Biology/Pre-optometry from Grand Rapids.

Lochan, a resident advisor at Brophy McNerney Hall, is organizing the Writings on the Wall’s first campus-wide event with other resident advisers and members of Brophy McNerney. Other organizations helping with this event include ResLife, Office of Multicultural Student Services, Diversity and Inclusion Office, Physical Plant and other Ferris students.

“To me, (the wall) symbolizes empowerment and an opportunity to take a stand in what I believe in as a man, a man part of one race, the human race. It’s an educational process, a chance for me to learn from others and to meet others,” Lochan said.

The wall will be constructed by students in the Construction Management program on Oct. 14, where it will be displayed for four days before it is pulled down at the Oct. 18 ceremony.

The ceremony will feature speaker sessions and closing statements by Ferris associate professor of Anthropology Dr. Krishnakali Majumdar, Lochan, Student Government President Claire Gould, and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Dr. Fritz Erickson, among others.

“The wall itself is not the major point of this project, but rather the discussions that will follow,” Lochan added. “These discussions aren’t meant to point fingers at individuals who wrote on the wall, but (are used as) an example to talk in civil dialogue about how the wall made them feel and how we at Ferris can improve on such things.”

According to Lochan, former Brophy McNerney Hall Director Christy Brewer started this as a small-scale program within the hall. He said it was decided to expand the program to the rest of campus due to a great amount of response from the (Brophy McNerney Hall) residents.

Lochan says the focus of this event is to educate the public about diversity.

“Diversity is a tough subject to talk about and most individuals may think of diversity as just about race. We (in Brophy/McNerney hall) believe that it includes everyone, including age, sexual orientation, race, education and so forth. The purpose of this event is to promote this diversity and create a positive and equal community.”

Lochan says while this event is free, it may be a fundraising event in the future.

“Personally, I believe that everyone has the potential to make a positive change in this world. I’m hoping we can spark that passion in them through this program,” he said. “Our goal is to bring the entire campus together for something positive and I believe that this program can be a start.”

Volunteers are currently being accepted for 24-hour wall-watch security during the four-day period that the wall will be displayed.

For more information, visit

www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/diversityoffice/wall.

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