



# The Art & Soul of Buckeye

by Tori Woods

Plans for a new park in the Buckeye neighborhood include (clockwise from top) James Simon's concrete jazz statue; photos of Buckeye life by William "Chip" Carter; Francisca Ugalde's Buckeye-inspired mural; and Angelica Pozo's colorful, music-themed ceramic mosaics.

**Y**ou could easily drive past it without noticing. On the corner of East 118th Street and Buckeye Road, a circular enclave of brick paving stones and a curved cement bench rest in front of a small patch of trees. The corner gives no hint of its vibrant identity as a community gathering place for festivals and concerts. That's about to change.

Permanent art fixtures will be installed, including a series of seating walls, steps and a raised stage featuring tile mosaic work by noted Cleveland ceramic artist Angelica Pozo. A larger-than-life concrete statue of a wandering jazz horn player and his loyal dog, crafted by Pittsburgh sculptor James Simon, will watch over the park, which will double in size.

"This will be a calming park," says John Hopkins, executive director of the Buckeye Area Development Corp. Surrounded by concrete, the park springs up like an oasis of greenery and trees. Hopkins hopes

to bring programs, concerts and constant activity to the park, so residents will "not only see the visual beauty of the park, but really start to connect to it and use it."

BADC has teamed up with other organizations, including Neighborhood Progress Inc. (read "Going Public" on page 38 to learn what other areas of the city the group is targeting for public-art projects), ParkWorks, RTA and Cleveland Public Art to give new life to the area, inspired by the neighborhood's food-filled music festivals and the redevelopment of a theater and artist live/work space.

"It's a spinoff of our Soul of Buckeye Festival," Hopkins says. "We changed it to 'Art and Soul' to show our ambitions of this being an arts district."

After an open competition welcomed entries from a variety of artists, including newer, younger artists not previously involved with public art, two murals are also planned for the area.

"These building walls will be a way to delineate the space, and give it some visual character on a day-to-day basis," says Greg Peckham, executive director of Cleveland Public Art. "As this space evolves and as the neighborhood evolves, the art should be part of that evolution."

First- and second-place winners were chosen by a jury, and it is still being determined if one or both proposals will become the final murals. First-place winner William "Chip" Carter, 35, a native Clevelander living in Ohio City, is a Case Western Reserve University law professor with a passion for photography. His proposed mural includes large-scale photo installations of the faces of Buckeye.

"It will be creating images that revolve around things like entertainment, church, play — the kind of things that happen in a neighborhood that make it a neighborhood, as opposed to just a conglomeration of buildings," Carter says.

*continued on page 38*

*continued from page 37*

Second-place winner Francisca Ugalde, a 23-year-old Kent State University grad, is originally from Chile. Her mural proposal is a painting that incorporates historical and current images of Buckeye.

“It’s the idea that the people there can make it possible, that they have the potential within themselves and the community,” Ugalde says. “The raw material is all there.”

The process of raising funds and installing these elements will take time, but Hopkins hopes the park renovation and stage construction will be finished for the summer festivals.

“We’re really looking for people to drive through our neighborhood and say, ‘Wow, look what they’ve done in Buckeye,’” Hopkins says.

## Going Public

Neighborhood Progress Inc., in cooperation with Cleveland Public Art, has targeted five other city neighborhoods it believes are likely to grow and attract new residents as sites of future public art installations. Michael Murphy’s sculpture of a hand holding a lotus flower (right) is currently under construction at Quigley Circle in Tremont. The focus will then shift to the Detroit Shoreway, Fairfax, Slavic Village and Glenville neighborhoods as the plan moves forward. — TW

