

MEMORIAL TO SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Break The Silence

/ Location /

Minneapolis, MN

/ Category /

General Design

/ Abstract /

The Memorial to Survivors of Sexual Violence is the country's first permanent, public memorial to honor survivors of sexual violence and to symbolize publicly that the community believes them and stands in solidarity with them. This project has inspired others across the nation to honor victims.

The Memorial uses two prominent metaphors: **mosaic** and a **ripple effect**. The mosaic represents that even broken pieces can be put together to create something whole and beautiful. The ripple effect represents the multiplying power of breaking the silence; by telling our stories, we unconsciously give other survivors permission to tell theirs.

/ Narrative /

Survivors of sexual violence surround us—every 73 seconds, someone in America is sexually assaulted—and no one built memorials to them, until now.

Sarah Super launched the initiative for the memorial to honor survivors of sexual violence after surviving a horrific sexual assault. Super founded Break the Silence, which created a forum for survivors to connect with others. The Memorial was inspired by the hundreds of stories shared. “This memorial represents our willingness to share the burden of pain, to act, engage and remember the reality of sexual violence that has happened and continues to happen here... This memorial is a permanent public symbol that says to victims/survivors- **“we believe you, we stand with you, you are not alone.”**- Sarah Super, founder of Break the Silence.

Role of the Landscape Architect

In 2015, Super approached the Landscape Architect to collaborate in creating the

design concept for the Memorial. The design process began with conversation, an effort to wrap our hearts and minds around touching this level of trauma, and finding a voice of compassion and advocacy. The Landscape Architect managed the overall design process through site selection, permitting, selection of a contractor, construction documentation, and construction administration.

The nation’s first permanent memorial to survivors could not have happened without the many donations that came from individual survivors and allies. Furthermore, many materials and services from numerous vendors, contractors, and design professionals were donated or given at a reduced cost to support this project.

Design Intent

The Memorial is located in the heart of Minneapolis, a site chosen for its stunning view of the Mississippi River and the Minneapolis skyline, its proximity to existing recreation paths and secure visibility. The

Memorial stands on the land of the Dakota Oyate and brings awareness to the high level of sexual assault experienced by indigenous people.

The Landscape Architect designed this memorial to not just fit into the landscape, but to emerge from it. A central plaza is supported by sculpting of the earth to embrace and nurture those who enter the plaza. A threshold is created through this form that signals entry to a sacred space. The metaphors of a ripple effect and mosaic are integrated through the design.

Three Monuments

The mosaic metaphor was interpreted into design starting with the three monuments that anchor the outside edge of the Memorial, beacons that welcome visitors as they approach. The Landscape Architect thoughtfully directed the use of materiality, form, and color to give gravitas to the experience of survivors and worked collaboratively with mosaic artist and sexual

assault survivor Lori Greene throughout the design and construction process. The mosaic panels express the journey from feeling alone and frightened back toward connections within the community.

Along the edge of each column is a polished black granite spine engraved with words of support – You are Not Alone, I Believe You, We Stand with You. These polished spines reflect back our image as community members, inviting us to stand in solidarity with the survivors. Each column is capped with a crown illuminating the journey and providing a thousand points of light and hope.

The Circle

The Landscape Architect collaborated with Sarah Super to realize her vision for a sharing circle inspired by the Break the Silence ceremonies. After passing the last column, we are led into the circle that creates a

gathering space, first crossing a threshold of broken stone paving representing shattered lives and communities. The plaza floor of colored concrete is sandblasted in a pattern of rippling rings like water, that radiate outward overlapping each other. Each ripple represents the courage of each survivor to break the silence and share their story, giving courage to others to share their story of survival.

Memorial Longevity & Sustainability

The Landscape Architect incorporated sustainable design features, carefully considering materials and constructability as important factors for how the Memorial will be seen and used for years to come. Selecting high quality, locally-sourced materials from within Minnesota was critical. Plantings were selected with low water and low maintenance considerations. In addition, after leading the project through an art conservator process, the Landscape Architect created detailed

maintenance guidelines supported by a maintenance fund to ensure the Memorial's longevity.

To bring the Memorial from design into fruition, it took five years of fundraising, courage, and sacrifice led by Super. The Memorial was completed in October of 2020 and is now open to the public. This memorial is the country's first. It will not be the last.

WE BELIEVE YOU, WE STAND WITH YOU, YOU ARE NOT ALONE — THE **MEMORIAL TO SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE** IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND, A *RIPPLE* — IT WILL REVERBERATE TO GIVE VOICE TO SHARED TRAUMA, TO SHARE COURAGE TO THOSE WHO SEEK IT, TO REVEAL THAT WHICH IS HIDDEN, AND TO...

—BREAK THE SILENCE—

“ THE MEMORIAL IS ONE WAY COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE TAKEN A STAND AND VOICED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO’VE BEEN VICTIMIZED. OUR GOAL WAS TO BREAK THE SILENCE AND RESPOND TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND RAPE CULTURE AS A COMMUNITY IN SOLIDARITY WITH VICTIMS/SURVIVORS. ”

- SARAH SUPER, FOUNDER OF BREAK THE SILENCE

2015 - SUPER SPEAKING AT A BREAK THE SILENCE CEREMONY LISTENING CIRCLE



2020 - SUPER SITTING IN THE NATION'S FIRST MEMORIAL TO SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE



SARAH SUPER LAUNCHED THE INITIATIVE FOR THE MEMORIAL TO HONOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AFTER SURVIVING A HORRIFIC SEXUAL ASSAULT. SUPER FOUNDED BREAK THE SILENCE, WHICH CREATED A FORUM FOR SURVIVORS TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS. THE MEMORIAL WAS INSPIRED BY THE HUNDREDS OF STORIES SHARED.



—BREAK THE SILENCE—

Fundraiser for Nonprofits Assistance Fund

HELP TO BUILD OUR COUNTRY'S FIRST PERMANENT MEMORIAL TO HONOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE



FUTURE LOCATION: BOOM ISLAND PARK, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA



THE NATION'S FIRST PERMANENT MEMORIAL TO SURVIVORS COULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT THE MANY DONATIONS THAT CAME FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVIVORS AND ALLIES. THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT MANAGED THE OVERALL DESIGN PROCESS THROUGH SITE SELECTION, PERMITTING, SELECTION OF A CONTRACTOR, CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTATION, AND CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION.

WE ARE BREAKING THE SILENCE THAT SURROUNDS SEXUAL VIOLENCE.

- \$20
- \$50
- \$100
- \$500
- \$1000
- \$ Other

Fundraising goal: \$400,000

Please make checks to:
"Nonprofits Assistance Fund: Break the Silence"

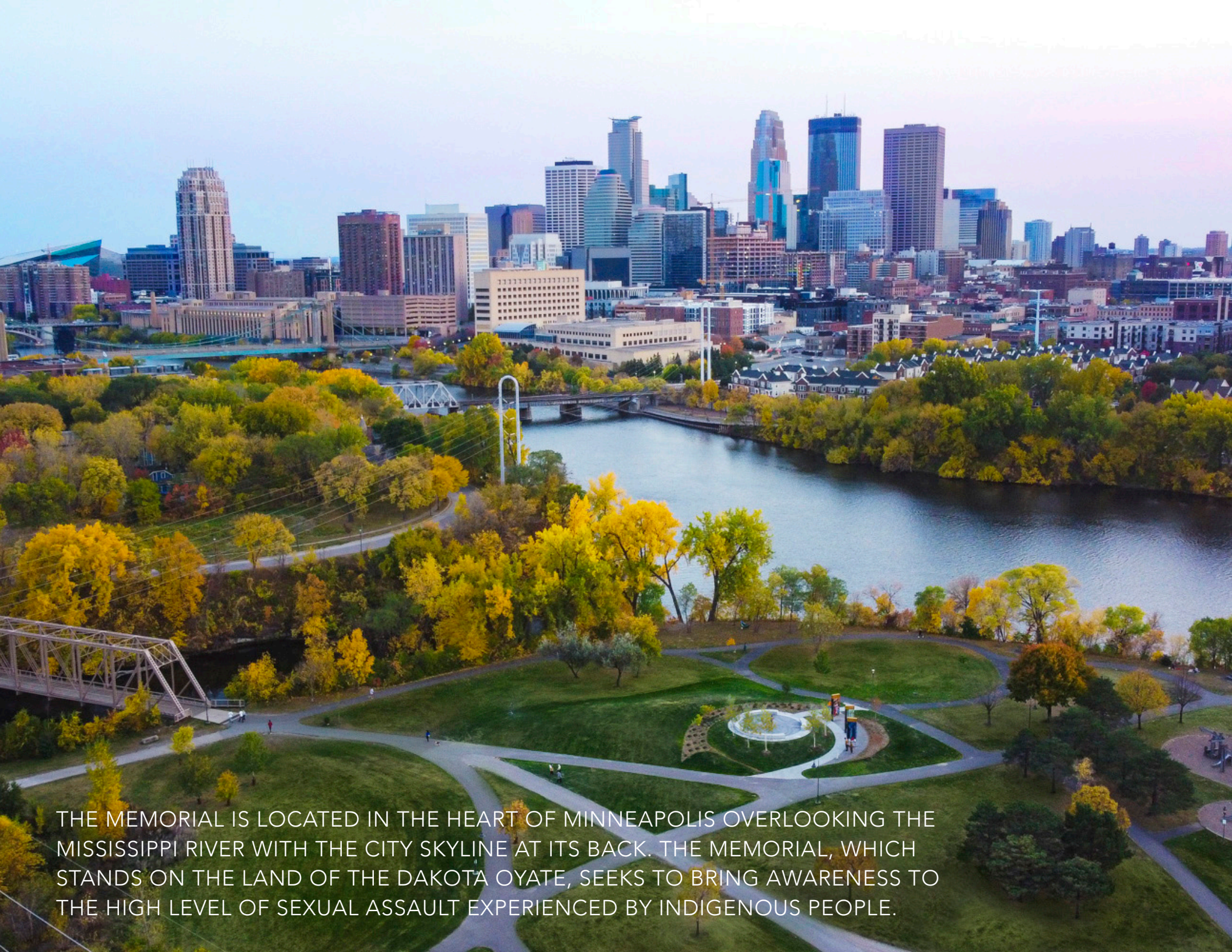
Mail to:
Nonprofits Assistance Fund
2801 21st Ave. S. #210
Minneapolis, MN 55407

OR

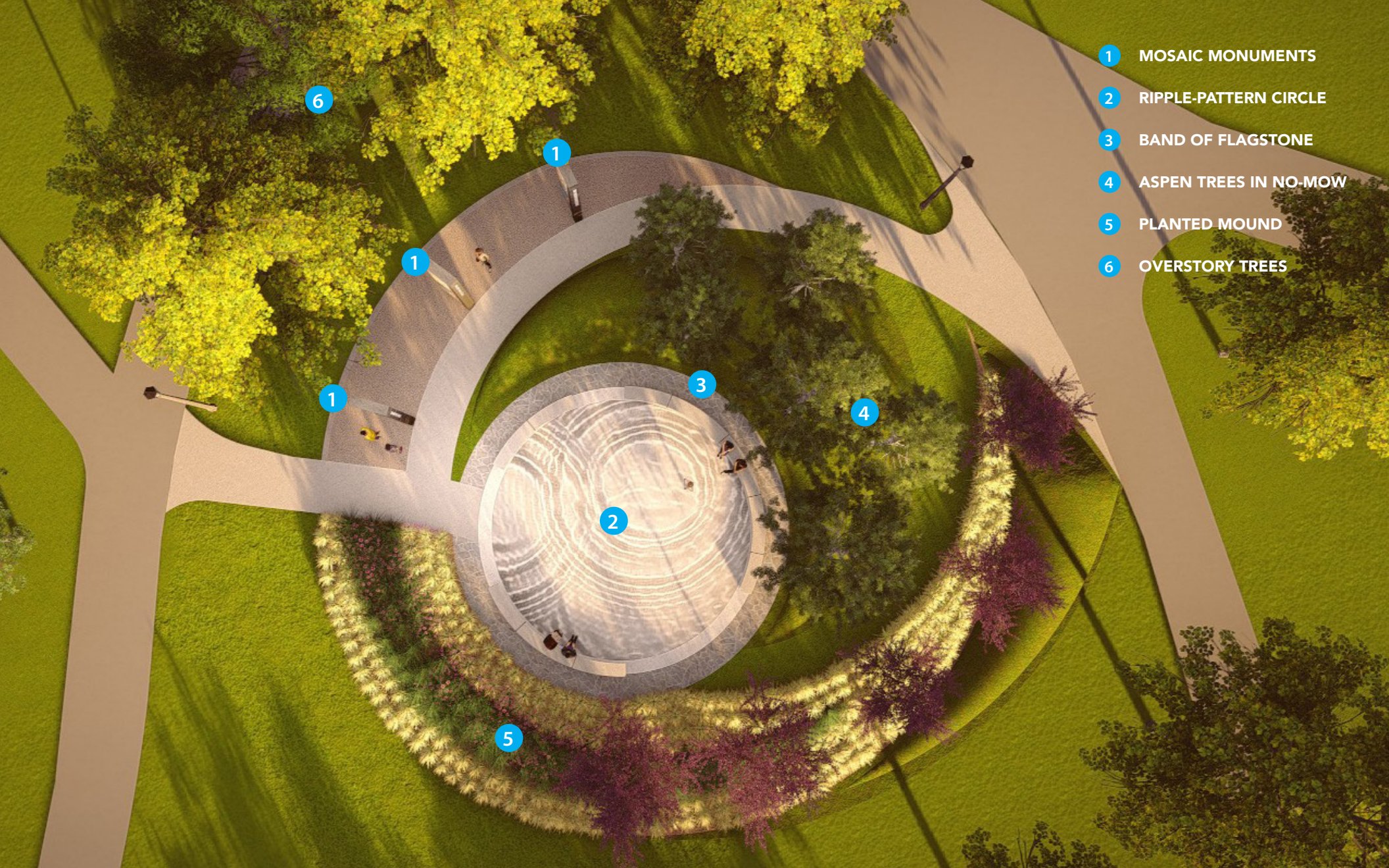
Give Online At:
<https://www.givemn.org/fundraiser/break-the-silence587269840615c>

Donations are tax-deductible. Thank you for your heartfelt support and generosity for our work!

<https://www.facebook.com/breakthesilenceday/>



THE MEMORIAL IS LOCATED IN THE HEART OF MINNEAPOLIS OVERLOOKING THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER WITH THE CITY SKYLINE AT ITS BACK. THE MEMORIAL, WHICH STANDS ON THE LAND OF THE DAKOTA OYATE, SEEKS TO BRING AWARENESS TO THE HIGH LEVEL OF SEXUAL ASSAULT EXPERIENCED BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.



- 1 MOSAIC MONUMENTS
- 2 RIPPLE-PATTERN CIRCLE
- 3 BAND OF FLAGSTONE
- 4 ASPEN TREES IN NO-MOW
- 5 PLANTED MOUND
- 6 OVERSTORY TREES

THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT TRANSFORMED THE METAPHORS OF THE **RIPPLE EFFECT** AND **MOSAIC** INTO A HOLISTIC DESIGNED SPACE COMPOSED OF THREE MONUMENTS WITH MOSAIC ART, A CENTRAL CIRCLE SURROUNDED BY BENCHES INTENDED TO INVITE DIALOGUE, AND A RIPPLE EFFECT PATTERN THAT APPEARS ON THE PLAZA.

THIS MEMORIAL DOES NOT JUST FIT INTO THE LANDSCAPE, BUT EMERGES FROM IT. A CENTRAL PLAZA IS SUPPORTED BY THE SCULPTING OF THE EARTH TO EMBRACE AND NURTURE THOSE WHO ENTER THE PLAZA AND A THRESHOLD IS CREATED THROUGH THIS FORM THAT SIGNALS ENTRY INTO A SACRED SPACE.

MEMORIAL TO SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

THE MEMORIAL TO SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS A SYMBOL OF OUR COMMUNITY'S SOLIDARITY WITH VICTIMS/SURVIVORS. WE HONOR THEIR EXPERIENCES USING TWO METAPHORS: A RIPPLE EFFECT AND MOSAIC.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT, SEEN IN THE CIRCULAR DESIGNS IN THE SEATING AREA AND IN THE LANDSCAPE BEYOND, REPRESENTS THE MULTIPLYING POWER OF BREAKING THE SILENCE; BY TELLING OUR STORIES, WE UNCONSCIOUSLY GIVE OTHERS PERMISSION TO TELL THEIRS.

THE MOSAICS REMIND US THAT BROKEN PIECES CAN BE PUT TOGETHER TO MAKE SOMETHING WHOLE AND NEW, AND THE FIVE MOSAIC PANELS TELL A STORY OF RECOVERY. WHILE HEALING FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS NOT A LINEAR PATH, THE PANELS TELL A STORY THAT BEGINS WITH ISOLATION AND PROGRESSES WITH THE SUPPORT OF ALLIES AND THE SOLIDARITY OF A COMMUNITY.





PHOTO CREDIT: STAR TRIBUNE

THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT COLLABORATED WITH MOSAIC ARTIST AND SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVOR LORI GREENE TO DEVELOP THE MOSAIC PANELS - EXPRESSING THE JOURNEY FROM FEELING ALONE AND FRIGHTENED BACK TOWARD CONNECTIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. THE MOSAIC AS A MEDIUM REPRESENTS HOW SHATTERED PIECES CAN COME TOGETHER INTO SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL.

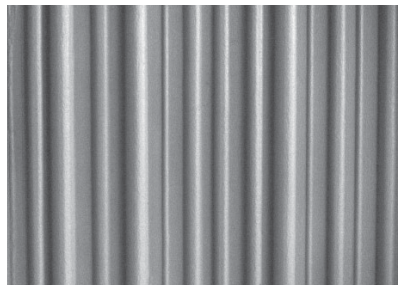


THE MOSAICS, CREATED BY LORI GREENE, BEGIN WITH A SHATTERED SURVIVOR CURLED UP ALONE IN A DARK WOOD. THEN A SECOND FIGURE ARRIVES TO HOLD HER AS SHE GRIEVES. MORE AND MORE FIGURES APPROACH, UNTIL THE SURVIVOR STANDS ON HER OWN, SURROUNDED AND SUPPORTED BY HER COMMUNITY.

...OW JUST WHO IN OUR LIVES HAVE BEEN IMPACTED. SURVIVORS
 ...EEN SILENCED BY A JUSTICE SYSTEM THAT FAILS TO HOLD
 ...TRATORS ACCOUNTABLE AND BY A SOCIETY THAT MOST OFTEN
 ...IDATES, BLAMES, AND SHAMES SURVIVORS IF THEY SPEAK UP.
 ...AS A COMMUNITY, ARE CHOOSING TO BREAK THE SILENCE
 ...OLATES SURVIVORS IN THEIR SUFFERING AND TO
 ...S PERPETRATORS. JUDITH HERMAN WROTE, "ALL THE
 ...TOR ASKS IS THAT THE BYSTANDER DO NOTHING...
 ...ON THE CONTRARY, ASKS THE BYSTANDER TO SHARE
 ...OF PAIN. THE VICTIM DEMANDS ACTION, ENGAGEMENT,
 ...MBERING."

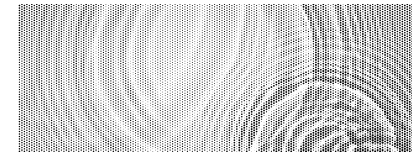
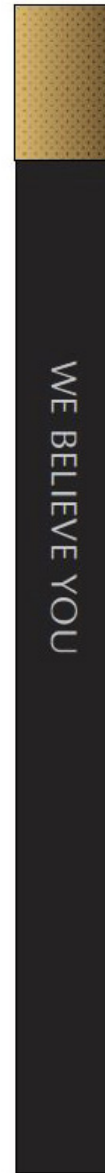
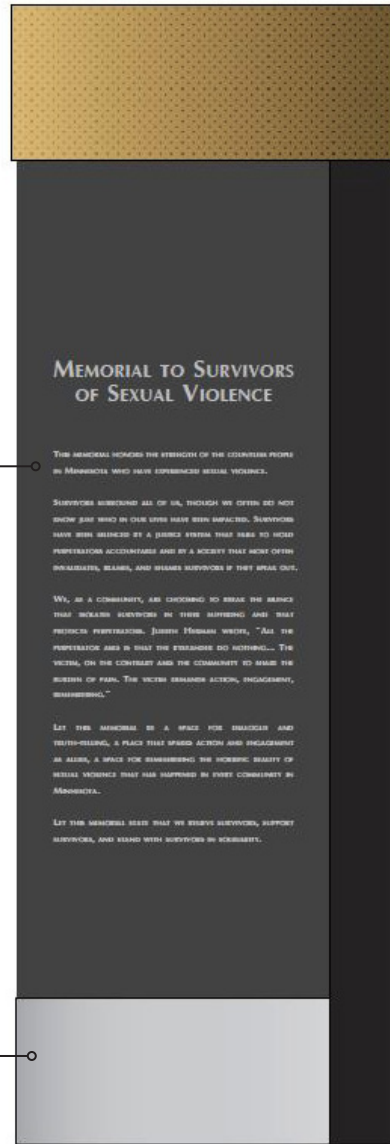
GRANITE INTERPRETIVE SIGN

COLOR: MESABI BLACK
 FINISH: HONED/DIAMOND 8
 ENGRAVED TEXT HIGHLIGHT: WHITE



CONCRETE BASE

COLOR: STANDARD CONC. GRAY
 FINISH: VERTICAL STRIATED FORMLINER



ALUMINUM PERFORATED CAP

COLOR: GOLDEN BRONZE



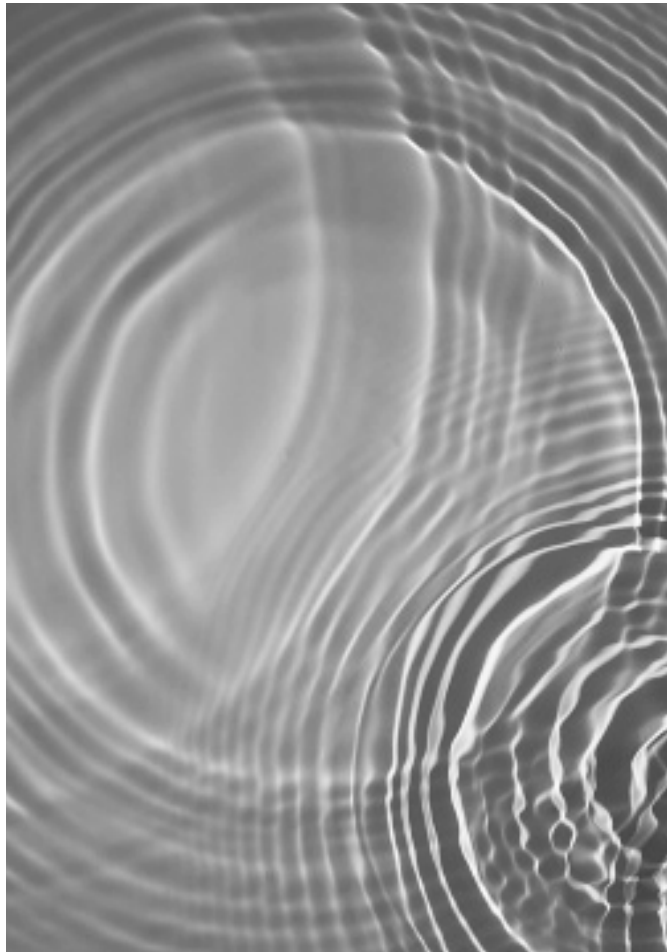
SOLID GRANITE SPINES

COLOR: MESABI BLACK
 FINISH: POLISHED
 ENGRAVED TEXT HIGHLIGHT: LIGHT TO
 MED. WHITE

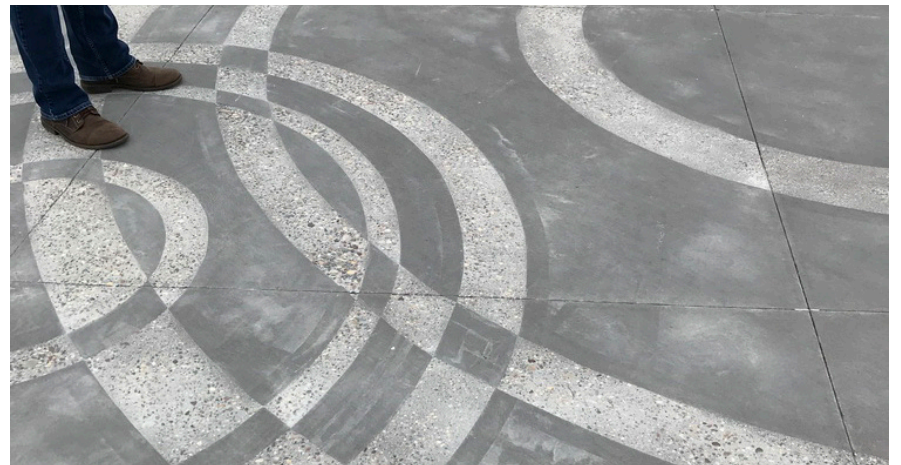
EACH MONUMENT HAS A POLISHED BLACK GRANITE SPINE ENGRAVED WITH WORDS OF SUPPORT THAT REFLECT BACK OUR IMAGE AND INVITE VIEWERS TO BECOME ALLIES IN STANDING WITH SURVIVORS IN SOLIDARITY. EACH COLUMN IS CAPPED WITH A CROWN ILLUMINATING THE JOURNEY AND PROVIDING A THOUSAND POINTS OF LIGHT OF HOPE.

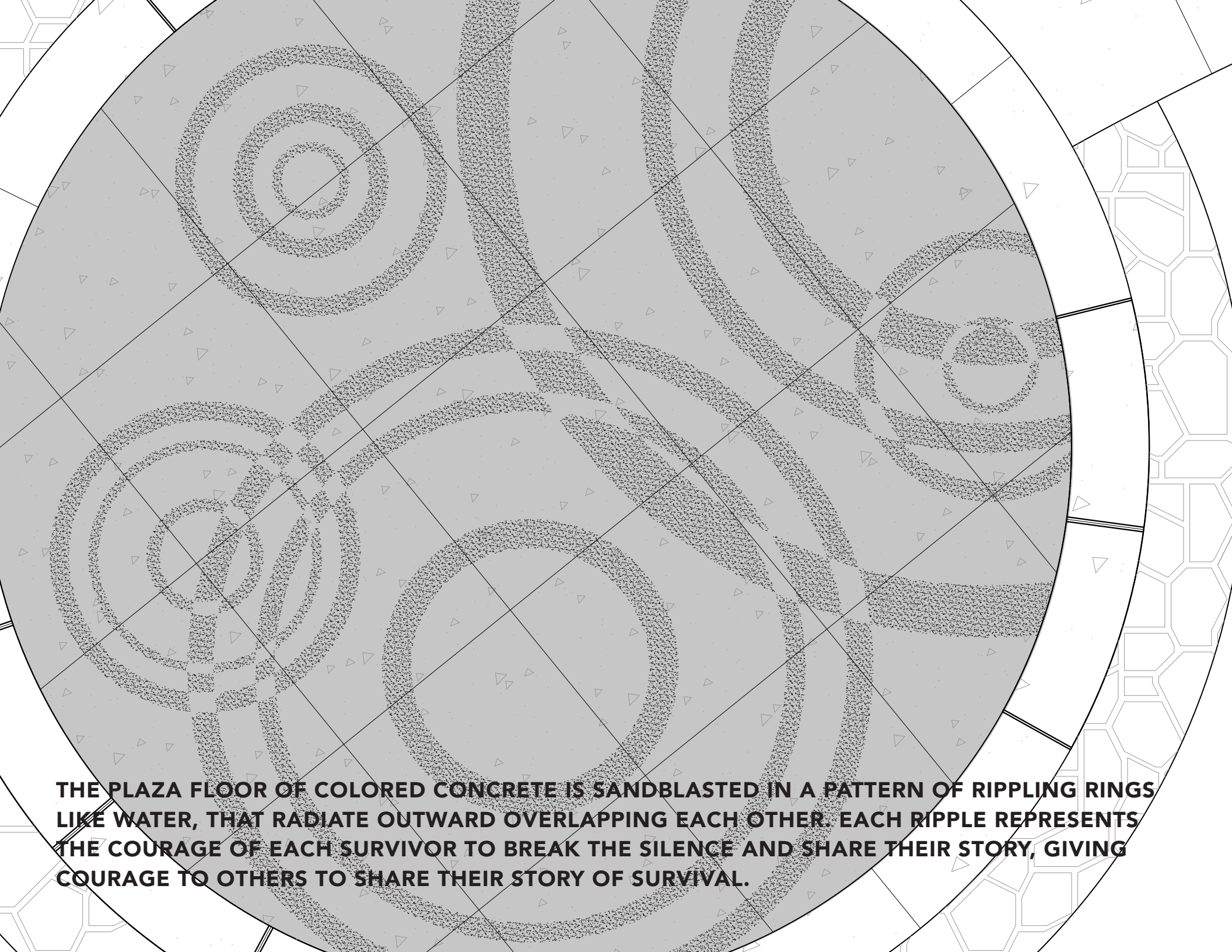
THE CIRCLE OF BENCHES IS INTENDED AS AN INVITATION FOR DIALOGUE, INSPIRED BY THE BREAK THE SILENCE EVENTS WHERE SURVIVORS SHARE THEIR STORIES.





THE RIPPLE EFFECT SEEN IN
THE SEATING PLATFORM AND
EXTENDING INTO THE LANDSCAPE
SIGNIFIES THE MULTIPLYING
POWER OF SURVIVORS' VOICES.





THE PLAZA FLOOR OF COLORED CONCRETE IS SANDBLASTED IN A PATTERN OF RIPPLING RINGS LIKE WATER, THAT RADIATE OUTWARD OVERLAPPING EACH OTHER. EACH RIPPLE REPRESENTS THE COURAGE OF EACH SURVIVOR TO BREAK THE SILENCE AND SHARE THEIR STORY, GIVING COURAGE TO OTHERS TO SHARE THEIR STORY OF SURVIVAL.

“ THIS MEMORIAL REPRESENTS OUR WILLINGNESS TO SHARE THE BURDEN OF PAIN, TO ACT, ENGAGE AND REMEMBER THE REALITY OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE THAT HAS HAPPENED AND CONTINUES TO HAPPEN HERE... THIS MEMORIAL IS A PERMANENT PUBLIC SYMBOL THAT SAYS TO VICTIMS/SURVIVORS - WE BELIEVE YOU, WE STAND WITH YOU, YOU ARE NOT ALONE. ”

- SARAH SUPER

**THIS MEMORIAL IS THE NATION'S FIRST.
IT WILL NOT BE THE LAST.**

