



Gender Achievements Art Display DIY Project

Civic Circle Area: Listen and Learn, Voice

The impact of COVID-19 continues to change our daily lives and routines, but volunteering and civic engagement are just as important as ever. This project can be modified to adhere to social distancing guidelines set by local and national authorities, to do virtually or to do at home and deliver via mail or drop off.

Create art displays depicting what people have achieved beyond traditional gender roles. First, discuss traditional gender roles and then address the diversity of people who have excelled beyond those stereotypes. Put up the art displays in a space to share with others.

Let's first define some keywords:

- **Biological Sex** is the label assigned to you at birth based on your biological traits, such as chromosomes and hormones.
- **Intersex** refers to someone who is born with biological traits that don't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.
- **Gender** relates to social and cultural roles and behaviors. There are different sets of gender expectations or norms for people across cultures and time. Gender is commonly related to being male and female and how you are expected to be as a man or a woman.
- **Gender Identity** is your internal sense of gender, such as being a man, a woman or a nonbinary person. Someone whose gender identity corresponds to their biological sex is referred to as *cisgender*. Someone whose gender identity differs from their biological sex is often referred to as *transgender*. Male and female are common gender identities, but because they're unique to each individual, there can be as many different gender identities and expressions as there are people!
- **Gender expression** is how you express your gender, such as through how you act and dress.
- **Gender Stereotypes** are accepted judgments or biases about a person or group. They are often oversimplified and not always accurate. Gender stereotypes are stereotypes about how people should behave and what they can do based on their genders. They can create unfair treatment and inequality due to a person's gender.

Why Is It Important?

Not everyone easily fits into traditional gender roles. Imposing traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes can limit what certain people are able to do and can contribute to discrimination and gender inequality. There is often a lot of societal and peer pressure to fit traditional gender roles, which is why it matters. However, there are many people within our communities that daily defy these gender stereotypes.

Here are three examples of people not falling into traditional gender roles:



- A boy who wants to grow up to be a stay-at-home dad. There may be an expectation that he should have a career outside the home to earn money for his family. He doesn't fit the traditional role, because the work he wants to do is traditionally considered that of a mom or a woman.
- A teenage girl who is interested in science and robots. She doesn't fit the traditional role of a girl, because science is often associated with boys. She might face gender discrimination, such as people assuming that she doesn't know about science or telling her that girls shouldn't study STEM.
- A nonbinary teenager who dresses and expresses their gender differently from day to day. They may be gender stereotyped and expected to conform to traditional male or female roles, even though neither gender role fits. This gender stereotyping might lead to bullying.

In this project, you will explore the accomplishments of people who have defied gender roles and norms.

What You Need:

- An expert to help facilitate a conversation about gender achievements, gender inequality and traditional gender roles
- Examples and stories of people across different genders and their achievements for people to use as inspiration for their art
- Space to hang displays
- Materials to create art displays (ex. markers, paints, construction paper, pens and paper)
- Optional: Drinks and snacks

Steps:

1. Find a location to display your art. You could reach out to the community to share it in a local coffee shop or at your school if this is associated with a class. Consider doing the event outside or in a large enough space to adhere to social distancing guidelines. For a virtual option, consider creating digital artwork and sharing it online.
2. Find an expert on gender issues to facilitate the conversations. Consider resources at your school and local nonprofits that specialize in gender issues.
3. Obtain supplies to create art.
4. Do your research! Find people who've made great achievements beyond traditional gender roles and use their stories to inspire people's artwork. Have each attendee acknowledge the person in an art description statement that will be displayed alongside the completed art piece.
5. Conclude by coming together to reflect on the process and takeaways.
6. Display the completed art pieces along with artists' statements and a statement of the overall project aim.

Reflection Questions:

- Before this project, have you thought about the pressure others might feel to fit into traditional gender roles when they don't identify with them? Do you compare yourself or



your thoughts and actions to the expectations of traditional gender roles? If so, please share.

- How can we help one another to feel accepted to achieve life goals that fall outside of traditional gender roles?
- How do you think creating art helps us to understand self-expression of gender?