



ALL THE
POSITIVE
ENERGY
BECAME
CONTAGIOUS

CEDRIC
DOUGLAS

ARTIST AND FOUNDER OF THE UP TRUCK



When doing community engagement work, photos cannot capture everything, but they do try. In this book you'll see many the happy faces and the hard work that created a portrait of Dudley. But there are these microcosmic amazing moments that always go unseen and escape the camera. Many occurred during "Faces of Dudley".

One such highlight for me happened towards the end of the event when a man in an electric wheelchair had just had his photo taken inside the Inside Out Truck. He needed to get down via a temporary ramp and my truck – with the exhibit of Raquib Hakim's photographs inside – was blocking it. Jaime, the Inside Out Truck operator asked me if I could move the truck.

Now the truck was parked in front of the library and there were about thirty people in line snaked around it, residents walking all along it, and Raquib's fragile work inside. It would have been extremely difficult and unsafe to move it with so many people around. Through instinct I said to Jaime, "There're about thirty people here. There is no reason why we cannot help this man down this ramp." So I yelled, "Come on everybody can we help him down the ramp!" and about eight or nine people including Jaime and Norman from Inside Out all grabbed hold of his wheelchair and we slowly and safely guided him down the ramp.

It was really beautiful to see everybody jump to the call and help another community member in need. I think all the positive energy that was being spread that day became contagious.

After that moment we all went back to work.

Twenty minutes later the man in the wheelchair came back with an old worn picture frame. Inside the picture frame there was a black and white picture of a basketball team. The man in the wheelchair pointed and said, "This is me in college, this is my college basketball team from 1959."





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He talked about how much he loved playing basketball and how important and great his team was. Then it hit me! He wanted to share that memory with me, with us, with everybody; everyone that helped him come down that ramp and everyone that was there, his community.

As people we very seldom have these opportunities to share; to share a piece of ourselves with each other, with strangers, with our community. As a community we helped him come down that ramp. And as a result that man in the wheelchair opened himself up and shared a piece of himself with us.

This was a special moment that will always remind me of why I do this work and how important it is. As artists we share our ideas and our visual aesthetics with the world. But we must also ask how can we invite people in the world to feel more open, and willing to share back with us, with their community, and with the world.

— CEDRIC DOUGLAS



