

Touchstones bring strength to Homeboy staff...

As part of the *Touchstones: A Creative Journey* community art initiative, Fabian Debora held a workshop with 70 staff from Homeboy Industries. This was his experience.



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There were those there from corporate America and those who were more grassroots, so it was amazing to utilize these Touchstones in a way that brings everyone to equal ground. Touchstones kind of neutralizes everyone. It doesn't matter what corners of the city you come from, it allows vulnerability to take place. We're the ones working with the population on the ground level and sometimes assumptions exist, our biases can play into it where we think they don't care, they don't feel the way we feel, and this creates division. So with the Touchstones, I got creative, I said why don't we utilize these touchstones to make a commitment, a commitment to the organization of Homeboy Industries. I asked, 'What brought you here?' Sometimes, because of the demands of life, we lose sight of why we're here in the first place, so I asked them to make a commitment, set it in stone, and keep it near their computer, on their desktop, someplace



where it's visible, so that when we lose sight and become discouraged and defeated, or whatever the thing is that may come about, we don't lose sight, that we have set in stone our commitment to what brought us to Homeboy, and why we're doing this work. It's cool, too, because when I walk around the building I go 'Oh, I see you have your stone there. How are you following your commitment?' and we giggle and laugh and it breaks the tension, and it brings connection. That's the beauty of Touchstones.

Since the beginning of the *Touchstones* community art initiative in January 2015:

Over 9,000 people have participated in *Touchstones* workshops as a part of *Windows Programs* and workshops in the community.

AWBW has held 112 community outreach workshops. This number does not include Leaders who have facilitated workshops with agency staff and outside their agencies in local communities.