

The Best Buddy, Teri Leiker

This piece is dedicated to Teri Leiker, one of the victims of the shooting. I first learned about her through the marching band as we are dedicating our first stampede performance to her. She was a very active and loved member of the community. I learned more about her through some research and afterwards I was inspired by her legacy and kindness to make this painting.

The medium is gold metallic marker and acrylic paint on a canvas board. I combined my art style that I have developed over the years experimenting and creating with henna or mehndi paste. This involves a mix of modern and contemporary Indian art where I have tried to find my place. I translated this style to fit a 2-D medium by using markers instead of cones.

The black and gold color palette is inspired by the bold and spirited outfits Teri wore to stampedes, a CU tradition she loved supporting. I also incorporated important elements of her life into the designs themselves in order to weave her story into the piece. The “31” and “K” from the letter t and the “1989” in the letter e represent her legacy working for the King Soopers, a place she loved and found independence. The symbol at the bottom of the letter t represents the special olympics that she participated in when she was younger, playing track and field, basketball, and softball. The “BUDDY” and “11” in the letter r represents her time volunteering for the Best Buddies program here in Boulder. This was also the inspiration for the title of the piece. The “SPIRIT” in the letter r represents the spirit she embodied and shared with the band, an organization where I am beginning to find a home. Finally, the hearts represent her heart of gold.

While I wasn't fortunate enough to know Teri in this life, I can tell that she was so dearly loved by the community. Her joy, perseverance, love, and laughter will live on in the Boulder community as we tell her story. Because the world would be a better place if we were all a bit more like Teri Leiker. She is dearly missed but not forgotten.

