

# The Dallas Morning News

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## ‘There is a life afterwards’: New downtown Dallas mural honors cancer survivors

A new artwork at Cancer Survivors Plaza captures the struggles, resilience and hope of four survivors through woven lines.



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Artists Mari King (left) and Joshua King (right) stand with cancer survivors and inspiration for “The Stories of Cancer’s Journey” Caroline Belote Vuylsteke ( second from left), Michael Waters, Farahana Kassam, Rev. Michael Enette Sr. stand in front of the art installation at Plaza of The Americas in downtown Dallas, Thursday, April 24, 2025. (Elías Valverde II / Staff Photographer)

A powerful new artwork at Cancer Survivors Plaza in downtown Dallas was unveiled last Thursday, bringing to life the inspiring stories of four cancer survivors.

Through a collaboration with Inspire Art Dallas and the Dallas Office of Arts and Culture, the work captures the struggles, triumphs and losses survivors face in their cancer battles.

Created by Joshua and Mari Hidalgo King of That They May Studio, the 116-foot-long mural spans the skybridge at Pearl and Bryan streets connecting the Plaza of the Americas and Cancer Survivors Plaza. The piece, part of the Kings' "The Line Project", uses jagged, intersecting lines and a palette of pink, blue and yellow hues to represent life-altering moments before and after each patient's cancer diagnosis.



A woman looks at the various points that make up Farahana Kassam's cancer journey as part of "The Stories of Cancer's Journey" art installation in downtown Dallas, Thursday, April 24, 2025. (Elias Valverde II / Staff Photographer)

Baylor Scott & White Health selected four patients for the project: Farahana Kassam, Mike Waters, the Rev. Michael Enette Sr. and Caroline, who didn't want her last name used. Their narratives became the foundation for the mural's design. Each survivor is honored with an individual section that connects to the others like puzzle pieces, symbolizing their collective strength and shared hope.

"We also want people to know that there's hope and that there is a life afterwards, too," said Jeshahnton Essex, chief operating officer of Baylor Scott & White Health.

It took two years for the mural to come to fruition. The Kings spent that time interviewing each survivor, listening to the emotional depths of their experiences to accurately capture their journeys.

"Even the bad moments are important to have, to be able to move forward," Joshua King said.

Kassam, one of those featured, is a two-time breast cancer survivor. She was first diagnosed in 2020 and again in 2022, and she described the interview process as intense but healing, forcing her to confront pivotal chapters she had been avoiding.

Although the artwork is deeply personal, Kassam hopes the mural offers broader inspiration to Dallas residents who pass by.

“There’s so much beauty and so much life around us,” she said. “So this is a moment to pause and just be.”

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