

Impact Statement

Chuheng Lou, Grade 8

School trip to visit Dr. Helen Brooke Taussig's portrait in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2024

Oil, charcoal on canvas board, 18 x 24 inches.

Jericho Middle School, Jericho, NY

Unsung Hero: Dr. Helen Brooke Taussig

My Unsung Hero is Helen Brooke Taussig, a cardiologist who played a critical role in the surgery to save infants from Tetralogy of Fallot, otherwise known as "Blue Baby Syndrome." After I came across her name from the ARTEFFECT competition list, I researched her story and was moved by her accomplishments and contributions to medicine. Before Taussig, pediatric cardiology did not even exist. Her work resulted in the creation of a surgical procedure that saved thousands of babies suffering from a lack of oxygen in their blood. This breakthrough also helped lead to open heart surgeries for adults. Amazingly, all of this was achieved by Taussig in the face of discrimination. As a woman, she was rejected by many medical schools, ultimately earning her degree from Johns Hopkins University.

My Unsung Hero was in charge of the first development of operation for the Blue Baby syndrome. She helped save so many lives of people, but her story is still unknown. The elements and aspects that I most want to express is her gorgeous life story and the great work she has done. Seeing through all her background, I find out, she was not just a responsible doctor in the operating room, but she also helped the women who were suffering with mental and physical illnesses by demonstrating her commitment to ensuring drug safety, leading to profound changes in drug regulation. Therefore her work left an indelible mark on pediatric cardiology and public health advocacy.

My artwork expresses the importance of Taussig's contributions by creating a scene that occurs in a museum. The theme I want to show is a time period that happens in the future. This Unsung Hero is now known by people because of her great contributions to cardiology surgery, and she has been honored in an art gallery in order to show the later generations her achievements. This was illustrated in my artwork by showing a class trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

In the progress of creating this artwork, I have been developing different ways and techniques to improve the quality of the art. In order to achieve my goal of this artwork, I have created different versions of sketches and drawings to illustrate the theme. The reason that I choose to paint in oil is that I want it to seem more realistic and interesting.

Throughout my research, I learned a great deal about Taussig's achievements in pediatric cardiology. However, her story also inspired me and taught me about perseverance and how important it is to help others. Despite facing rejection as a woman in a male dominated field, Taussig never gave up and continued her work to help countless others. Thousands of children were saved by her medical breakthrough.

My artwork and impact statement will be put on display outside the school library. Hopefully others will be inspired by her work, too!