

2023 Totem(s) Build

The general public, and Sonoma Community Center staff and members are all invited to participate in our upcoming 2023 Totem Build. You can make one or more pieces that can be placed on a pole to make up to 10 totems from three to six feet tall. Each finished piece must be able to slide down a 1.5-inch pole. In the past some artists have chosen to make all the pieces for a single “uniform” Totem. Free reclaimed clay will be provided by the Center. **Or you can just come to the event and observe the process and/or participate in the build!**

Guidelines:

1. Each piece must have 2-inch holes (one on the top, one on the bottom) so that a metal pole can pass through it.
2. Weight and size? The size depends on artistic intent, but each piece usually varies between 1 to 6 pounds. Some smaller pieces will probably be used as “spacers”, and larger pieces can be accommodated and may become the center piece or used as a base.
3. Each totem will need a bottom and top piece:
 - a. Bottom pieces should have 2 holes and should be bigger and heavier than the other pieces and be able to balance the rest of the totem pieces.
 - b. The top piece should only have one hole at the bottom to keep water from entering through the totem. The top piece sometimes becomes the “signature” of the totem such as animals (birds, dogs, cats, etc.), landscape items (rocks, trees, etc.), vegetables (apples, pears, pumpkins, etc.), kitchen utensils (tea pots, jars, plates, etc.), or anything else you can think of...
4. Unique shapes and multiple colors are best. We’ll need some flat and small tubes that can be used as “spacers” to add stability and height adjustment.
5. We will probably make 10 totems that will vary between 3 to 6 feet tall. We will need about 100 pieces (or more) to give us enough variety to choose from to make each totem a unique-stable piece of art.

We anticipate that the Totem Build will take place during one of the weekends in April 2023 – weather permitting and assuming we have enough pieces. This is a joyous event that everyone is invited to participate in... We survey all the pieces, start organizing the pieces for visual impact, theme, size, color, etc., and then through a process of trial-and-error start building the totems. Once it is settled that a totem is completed, we use clear caulk and glue them together. We let the “glue” firm up overnight, and by the next day take the tape off and do any cleaning or “fine tuning” that is needed to make them structurally sound and visually pleasing.

The Totems become the property of the Sonoma Community Center and become one of the Center’s major fundraisers. They’ve been sold at the annual Chili Bowl and Muse or purchased after being installed in the Secret Garden. They’ve been priced from \$400 to \$2,000, depending on their size and appearance. Participants may purchase them too at the end of the event! **A recent sample totem may be seen in room 209 at the Center.**

If you have questions most of the Monitors are familiar with the process of making Totem pieces. Contact either Megan or Roger if you have any questions. Roger is on site every 2nd and 4th Saturday and drops in on other days.

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