THEWELL™

Atlas of Belonging

Arts practice as civic practice. Mapping as an act of belonging.

Every young person carries an inner geography. Yet these maps rarely make it onto paper, and the places that make youth feel safe, seen, and welcome remain uncharted. **The Atlas of Belonging** invites young people to become the cartographers of their own worlds, and invites you to help draw the map.

At a glance

- **Youth-led mapping** of safe and meaningful spaces, places, ideas— created by youth, for youth. We are as interested in the maps as we are the "territory." This will build on the work of The Well's Youth Cartography Fellows, funded by The Mayerson Foundation and the Johnson Foundation.
- **The Atlas is partially funded by the Ohio Arts Council**, grounding this work in the state's commitment to creative expression. Additional funds from the Earl Reeder Fund, College of Creative Arts, Miami University
- **Our work is Inspired by Alan Wight's Cincinnati Food Atlas** (cincinnatifoodatlas.com), a model for community-rooted, story-rich cartography. Alan will be our lead inspirer for this work.
- **Anchored by a Miami University partnership** bringing student expertise in arts administration and entrepreneurship with a Capstone Cohort Project.
- **Built through collaboration** with youth-serving organizations alongside artist/social practice/wellbeing mentors across our region.

An atlas made by youth

The Well's **Youth Cartographers** (WanderRoots.Org and https://www.instagram.com/weare_wanderroots/) are digitally mapping the spaces where young people feel safe and welcome — not as passive subjects of study, but as authors of their own experience. The result is a the footprint of a digital mapping project as well as artwork, social research, and an invitation to see our community through the eyes of those who will inherit it.

The Atlas of Belonging takes that work and expands upon it with youth-created maps, artwork, stories, poetry and more. Beyond what was there, or is there, what CAN be there? This project will result in a bound, printed book.

Why partnership matters

Because a single perspective can only draw a single map. The richness of this atlas depends on the breadth of voices and lived experiences behind it.

- **A primary partnership with Miami University (Oxford, OH)** brings students in Art Administration and Art Entrepreneurship into the work as part of their **February–May 2027 Capstone project**, pairing youth vision with emerging professional skill.
- **Youth-serving organizations** extend the atlas into new neighborhoods and communities, ensuring the map reflects the full landscape of young lives.
- **Co-creation** partners help shape the project rather than simply lending a name to it.

What you gain as a partner

- **Direct engagement** with a youth-led arts initiative rooted in your community.
- **A voice in the design** of a project shaped alongside its partners.
- **Meaningful visibility** for the young people you serve, on their own terms.
- **Recognition on your terms** — public acknowledgment with logos embedded in the book or quiet contribution, as you prefer.
- **A shared record** of the places your community holds dear, preserved in an enduring atlas.
- **The Atlas itself.** Partners will receive one Atlas of Belonging and a discount on a limited number of books.

Partners

- Miami University Arts Administration/Arts Entrepreneurship Capstone Project
- University of Cincinnati's Department of Environment and Sustainability in partnership with Christ University (Bangalore, India) on a Capstone project examining the Ecologies of Displacement and Belonging
- Bobby Minelli and Household Books considering Books of Belonging
- The Well's Youth Cartography Fellows

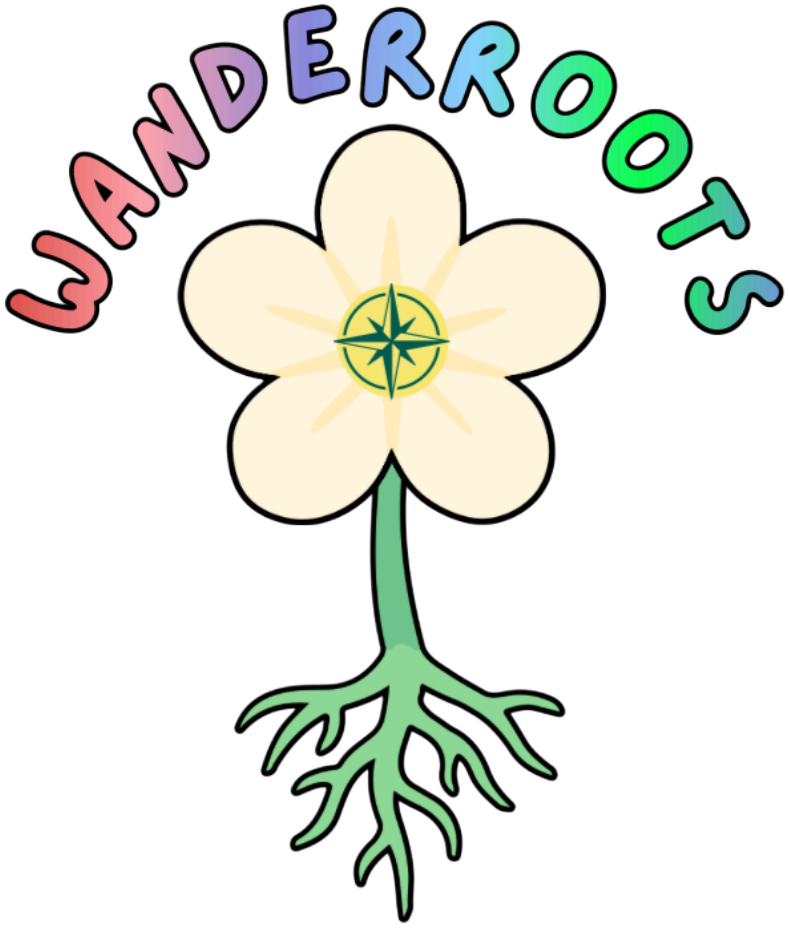
Who we're looking for

Organizations that do meaningful work with youth — after-school programs, arts collectives, libraries, community centers, mentoring initiatives, and any group that keeps a door open for young people. If you believe that the young people you serve have something worth mapping, you belong in this work.

How the Atlas Takes Shape: A Timeline

Phase	Dates	Focus
Partnership Development	Sept – Dec 2026	Preliminary partner meetings to ideate and align on design concepts and themes.
Workshops & Making	Jan – Mar 2027	Youth cartographers and partners create together — maps, art, stories.
Submissions Due	April 2027	Preliminary maps, artwork, and content submitted.
Design & Print	May – August 2027	Book design and printing of the Atlas

Celebration	Sept 2027	Community gathering to launch and honor the finished Atlas



Reach out to Stacy@TheWell.World to set up a time to connect.

www.thewell.world