

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Renowned Sculptor Mario Chiodo Joins Diane Brandenburg and Rotary Club of San José to Create the *Seeds of Peace Monument*



**San José, CA** — Napa Valley based internationally acclaimed sculptor **Mario Chiodo**, known for creating monumental works that celebrate compassion, unity, and the human spirit, has announced his latest public art collaboration — the *Seeds of Peace Monument* — in partnership with **philanthropist Diane Brandenburg** and the **Rotary Club of San José**.

Unanimously approved by the **San José City Council** on October 7, the *Seeds of Peace Monument* will stand at **Arena Green West**, adjacent to the SAP Center, as a landmark dedicated to **peace, unity, and shared humanity**. This collaboration marks an inspiring new chapter in Chiodo's career, continuing his legacy of creating art that not only stirs emotion but uplifts communities.

"Art has the power to move us toward understanding and connection," said **Mario Chiodo**.

"Working with Diane Brandenburg and the Rotary Club on a monument to peace is not only an honor, but a culmination of what I've always tried to express through sculpture — the strength of our shared humanity."

# Mario's Vision: Connecting The World

Mario's vision is to create and install Peace Monuments in cities around the world, each one a universal symbol of hope rising from local collaboration. This partnership with Rotary is one important example of what's possible when art and community come together to inspire peace on a global scale.

## A Monument Born of Partnership and Purpose

Philanthropist **Diane Brandenburg**, a longtime advocate for arts and peace initiatives, invited the Rotary Club of San José to join her in transforming Chiodo's vision into a shared civic effort. Brandenburg is underwriting the **\$2 million design and fabrication** of the artwork, while the **Rotary Club of San José Foundation** will contribute **\$300,000** and lead a **\$1.2 million capital campaign** to create a gathering space worthy of the monument's meaning.

"I'm deeply moved that Rotary has chosen to partner on this project," said Brandenburg. "Rotary's long tradition of service and its global mission to build peace make this a natural collaboration. Together, we're creating something that begins here in San José but will ripple outward—an energy of peace that touches our neighborhoods, our city, and the wider world."

The monument depicts a **central figure extending a dove and olive branch** above six children and a penguin representing the continents of the world—symbolizing humanity's shared hope and interconnection. Set along the **Guadalupe River Park**, it will offer a place for reflection and gathering, inviting residents and visitors alike to pause, connect, and imagine a more peaceful future.

Installation is targeted for **late Fall 2026**.

## Mario Chiodo: Sculpting the Spirit of Humanity

As a child digging clay from his backyard, **Mario Chiodo** discovered the magic of shaping emotion from earth—a spark that grew into a lifelong mission to tell stories of humanity through sculpture. Born to Italian parents, Chiodo was inspired by visits to Italy where he first encountered Michelangelo's *Pietà* and *The Slaves*, developing an early reverence for form, gesture, and feeling.

For more than **four decades**, Chiodo has created **large-scale public monuments** and **immersive artistic environments** across the country. His best-known works include *Remember Them: Champions for Humanity* in Oakland, which honors civil rights leaders and peacemakers from around the world. His projects often merge storytelling, emotion, and scale—turning public spaces into places of reflection and unity.

Beginning his career in the 1980s, Chiodo revolutionized the seasonal art and entertainment industry, designing for **Lucasfilm, Warner Brothers, Disney, Paramount Pictures, and Universal Studios** before transitioning into themed architecture and fine art. His works have appeared in Las Vegas, New Orleans, at Google's headquarters, and in major public and private collections.

A master storyteller, Chiodo brings deep empathy and vitality to his subjects. The *Seeds of Peace Monument* continues this tradition, uniting his artistic vision with Brandenburg's philanthropic leadership and Rotary's community mission to create a work that embodies **hope, compassion, and collaboration**.

"Peace is something we build together," Brandenburg said. "My vision is that this monument will stand not only as a work of art, but as a reminder of what's possible when a community, artists, citizens, and organizations like Rotary, join hands with shared purpose."

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## About Diane Brandenburg

Diane Brandenburg is a Silicon Valley philanthropist whose lifelong passion for the arts, education, and peace has shaped some of the region's most significant cultural and civic projects. Through the Brandenburg Family Foundation, she has supported public art, performing arts, and education initiatives across the Bay Area, including the **Children's Discovery Museum**, **ArtHouse Studio**, and multiple community revitalization projects.

## About Mario Chiodo

**Mario Chiodo's extraordinary studio is based in Napa Valley.** Mario is an internationally recognized sculptor and designer whose monumental works celebrate humanity, courage, and unity. Known for *Remember Them: Champions for Humanity* and numerous large-scale public installations, Chiodo's career bridges fine art, storytelling, and architectural design. His work continues to inspire dialogue, empathy, and the belief that art can help shape a more compassionate world.

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