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SARA TING, consultant planning a monument to diversity

SOUTH BOSTON

Message of equality finds place in the sun

Project in works for monument to poetic harmony

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"Are you greater than the sun that shines on everyone: Black, Brown, Yellow, Red & White the sun does not discriminate."

Chinese-American Sara Ting wrote that verse more than two decades ago. Since the poem first appeared in a self-published volume of poetry, it has inspired posters, symposiums, and television public service campaigns.

This fall, plans are taking shape for a monument that will make the sun poem a fixture on the city's landscape.

"This message is about helping us all move into the future in harmony and peace," said Ting, a Jamaica Plain consultant on diversity issues and former reporter for WHDH-TV, Channel 7, who envisions a monument as a living symbol to ethnic and racial equality. "Boston is an international city. People come here from around the world. Hopefully they will take this message back to their countries and share it with people."

Ting and the volunteer supporters she has recruited from the ranks of the city's business elite say they also aim to dispel Boston's lingering reputation as a racially divisive city. Minorities are the majority of Boston residents, according to 2000 Census data. But some of the city's longtime residents lament that the city continues to grapple with its history, in-

cluding the 1970s school busing crisis.

"It's one of those things that can help dispel that" tension and the city's reputation for racism, said Thomas P. O'Neill III, the former state lieutenant governor who serves as a trustee in World Unity Inc., a group Ting established in 1993 to combat racism and prejudice.

O'Neill, the chief executive of O'Neill and Associates, a government relations and communications consulting firm, said the poem's message inspired him to join. The same is true for Michael J. Hemingway, a former vice president at the State Street Corp., who recently left Boston for a job in New Jersey but continues to put in volunteer hours as the group's vice president, treasurer, and webmaster.

"That whole concept of all people being created equal — the poem sort of brought that to life," Hemingway said.

Persuading officials to donate land for the public art, however, has been a difficult task, said Ting, who started looking a decade ago.

"We had been looking all over the place, at the Charlestown Navy Yard, in East Boston, on Fan Pier," said Ting, whose search ended last year when city, MBTA, and Boston Children's Museum officials came together to allot space for the structure in a park planned for the Fort Point Channel waterfront next to the museum.

This summer, the T is building the park as a community perk included in Silver Line construction nearby. Once construction wraps, T officials will transfer the land to



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO/DAVID L. RYAN

Sara Ting outside the Boston Children's Museum, where a monument to diversity that she has been promoting will be erected. Ting's poem is the basis for the monument.

the Boston Redevelopment Authority, according to Rich McGuinness, a BRA senior waterfront planner.

He said city officials plan to sign a long-term lease turning the area over to the museum, which

plans to include the park in an expansion project currently in the planning stage.

Museum officials have spoken with Ting's group, said Boston Children's Museum spokesman Rick Stockwood. But he said it was premature to comment further.

McGuinness, however, said the city's lease with the museum could be finalized as early as this fall. The BRA official added that the monument could take the shape of an interactive fountain that children could wade in during the warmer months.

"Clearly we've crossed the major hurdle," said Ting, whose group has raised about \$250,000 via an annual fall gala and other activities.

Once the land deal is signed and the monument design is ready, the group plans to raise millions more to pay for construction and an endowment to assure its future maintenance.