



# Bringing the bones to D.C.

*UPS delivers powerful message to National Mall*



**T**he weekend of June 8, 2013, the National Mall in Washington, D.C., became an open mass grave.

On 200,000 square feet of grass in front of the U.S. Capitol, 1 million artistic renderings of human bones were carefully arranged to bring awareness to the millions of people around the world who have died as a result of genocide.

More than four years in the making, this historic project served as both a stirring art installation and a logistical triumph for UPS.

## Inspired to take action

It all began when New Mexico-based artist Naomi Natale read a book on the mass atrocities that occurred in Rwanda in 1994.

“It’s inconceivable to me on so many levels that what occurred in Rwanda 20 years ago is happening again today in Sudan and the Congo,” Natale said. “I won-

dered, if we could actually see a mass grave, would that inspire us to take action?”

Working with the Bezos Family Foundation, CARE and many other groups, Natale began to turn her vision into a reality by asking individuals, students, artists and community groups to make bones that would be used in the visual petition against genocide. While the bones were being created out of materials like clay, paper pulp and plaster, the next order of business was figuring out how to transport them to Washington D.C.

## Planning and preparation

Even by UPS standards, ensuring that 1 million delicate, handcrafted bones arrived at the National Mall from locations across the country on the same day was a monumental logistical challenge.

“I quickly realized that this wasn’t just a logistics project,” said UPS Customer Solutions Manager Randy Leach, who headed the project. “It was about people’s



Thousands of volunteers, including UPSers (inset), come together to lay 130,000 pounds of handmade bones on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.



hearts and passions — people who truly wanted to make a difference in the world.”

Transporting 130,000 pounds of bones to Washington, D.C., from more than 40 locations as far north as Juneau, AK, and as far south as Tijuana, Mexico, required the combined expertise of UPS Freight, Customer Solutions and package operations.

As the time to move the bones to Washington drew nearer, teams of UPSers all over the country, armed with boxes, pallets and shrink-wrap, helped package the bones and prepare shipping documents. All of the pickups were made on the same day, even though some of the locations were so remote that personal vehicles had to be used.

The palletized shipments then traveled through UPS Freight’s LTL network to the Washington, D.C., Service Center, where Manager Rob Stevens and his staff prepared the bones for their final trip to the National Mall.

### Delivering the bones

It was just before sunrise on Thursday, June 6, when the first of 11 UPS Freight trailers was “dropped” along the National Mall.

Even before the forklifts arrived, a small team of UPSers, including UPS Freight’s Special Projects Manager Jonathan Bush and Director-Operation Support Dwayne Dagenhart, began unloading boxes from the trailers, using hand trucks to move them to strategic locations along the Mall.



*“This brought to light a reality that myself, and probably a large portion of America, had not realized. I was honored to be part of this project ...”*

– UPS Freight Road Driver Dennis Martin

By the end of the day, more than 200 pallets had been unloaded and placed. Despite the torrential rains that heralded the arrival of Tropical Storm Andrea, the team started again Friday morning, unloading the remaining pallets and collecting empty boxes.

### The laying of the bones

On Saturday, June 8, the sun came out, and some 2,000 volunteers converged on the Mall to begin the laying of the bones.

Among those volunteers was Laura Lane, President of UPS Global Public Affairs, who was stationed in Rwanda with the U.S. Foreign Service before, during and after the 1994 genocide. Only one person on Laura’s staff survived the mass slaughter, despite tremendous efforts to save them.

“I lost a lot of personal friends and colleagues during that time,” recalls Laura, who, along with her

daughter, helped unload and collect empty boxes on the Mall Saturday morning, but left before the laying of the bones. “I wanted to be a part of the ceremony, but it was just too emotional for me ... I kept thinking of everyone we lost.”

But, she adds, “I’m so proud to work for a company that cares enough to be part of this project. Our involvement is a larger statement about what UPS stands for as a company, and what we stand for as a nation, to ensure it never happens again.”

### Reclamation of the bones

Dismantling the exhibit by reclaiming the bones from the Mall proved to be an even greater challenge as UPS contended with more bad weather, including thunder, lightning and tornado warnings. Between Monday, June 10, and Wednesday, June 12, all of the bones were collected and repackaged, many headed

to their final resting place at a permanent exhibit in New Mexico.

“I cannot put into words the level of teamwork that was involved,” said UPS Freight Road Driver John McKown, who, along with fellow drivers Dennis Martin and Tom Mitchell, drove the bones their “final mile” from the D.C. service center to the Mall.


“From coordinating the pickups all over the country and Mexico and getting everyone at UPS on the same page to delivering 1 million bones and then carefully and respectfully recovering those bones and getting them to their next destination — only UPS could do that. It truly makes me proud to be employed by such a great company,” John said.

Natale estimates that, start to finish, 150,000 people were involved in the One Million Bones project and about 100,000 visited the exhibit on the National Mall. ■



Dedicated UPSer Dwayne Dagenhart (above) braves Tropical Storm Andrea to place 1 million artistic renderings of human bones (l.) on the National Mall. Naomi Natale (far right) signs for the massive delivery from UPS Freight drivers John McKown and Dennis Martin.



 For more information on One Million Bones, visit [onemillionbones.org](http://onemillionbones.org).