

Hanby Arts Magnet School

Students put their personalities into Uptown mural

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ThisWeek Staff Writer

Inside the Westerville Grill, happy people speak with friends over food. Nearby, smiling, backpack-wearing children stroll past Hanby Arts Magnet School.

It's a scene from Uptown Westerville — as depicted by Hanby students in a mural on a second-floor hallway. The students in grades three through five have been coming in during lunches and recesses to work on the mural.

"I have a hardcore group of regulars," said local graphic designer Hyla Skudder, who is leading the effort.

Isa Rodriguez, 11, is one of the regulars. On a day last week, she was touching up green grass along the bottom of a mural section.

"But I also made two very ugly cars," she said.

The project began last year, when third-graders studying Westerville's history did drawings of Uptown buildings. Principal Jan Fedorenko liked the drawings so much she said they should be used for something else, Skudder said.

The school obtained a \$1,000 grant from the Westerville Education Foundation and Sherwin-Williams donated gallons of paint, Fedorenko said.

Skudder took photographs of scenes throughout Uptown, then a group of students volunteered to do more drawings based on the pictures. Those were transferred to the wall using transparent paper and permanent marker.

For the kids who didn't want to paint, Skudder handed out index cards with words such as "car" or "tree."
"All the stuff that really makes it



Maureen Kelly works on a mural of Uptown on one of the walls inside Hanby Arts Magnet School March 16.

By Chris Parker/ThisWeek

lively," she said.

Now, the mural shows buildings such as a colorfully painted Amish Originals Furniture store, Westerville Florist and Schneider's Bakery.

A Westerville police cruiser waits at the corner of State and Main streets.

Cars drive down the street and people stroll the sidewalks, one leading a dog on a leash.

"Now we're getting down to the last details," said Elaine Gray, 10.

Fedorenko said the school plans to eventually add homes and build-

ings all the way to the end of the hallway.

"I did the cafe and the Uptown Pharmacy," said Megan Koleske, 10. "It's fun ... especially when it's cold outside, I'd rather be (painting) in here where it's warm."

Others share her sentiments.

"They like to paint here so much they inhale their lunches," Skudder said.

The photos she took hang below the mural as reference points. Some students have scribbled their names

beside sections bearing their handiwork.

"I'm working on that person, but I'm going to do the Old Bag of Nails," said Kerri Migliore, 11, a paintbrush in hand.

Some of the young artists paint carefully, in realistic colors, Skudder said. Others take more liberties.

"There's the more creative, free spirits who say, 'well, I'm just going to make this purple,'" she said.

All in all, the project allows the students to put their own personalities into a depiction of their town, said Skudder, who is also an artist in residence at Robert Frost Elementary.

"I never got my teaching certificate, but I love to do this," she said.

The Uptown mural isn't the only one to grace Hanby's walls. Downstairs, a mural showing colorful fish and other sea creatures swimming through blue water covers the wall and the doors to storage areas. Art teacher Jancy Cossin has been leading this endeavor.

"When it's finished, every single kid in the building will have done a piece of it," she said.

That means at least 261 pairs of hands will have contributed.

The mural is tied to the school's "fish philosophy."

Inside Hanby's front doors, made of construction paper showing a similar sea scene, is the philosophy the school is following this year. It says: "Play. Choose your attitude. Make their day. Be there."

The philosophy has found its way into many aspects of life at Hanby, all using the "fish" theme.

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