



MOSAIC IS MORE THAN ART PROJECT

A new opportunity for the school to engage with the community

In the Spring of 2019, the Education Foundation partnered with IUP's ArtsPath program to create a mural/mosaic to complete the last ten feet of the project begun in the 2018-2019 school year. This time, however, the project would include the participants at the Apollo Senior Center. That partnership created more than a public art project.

Last March, Jeff Wacker from ArtsPath, began meeting with High School art teacher, Dan Barrett, and muralist Bernie Wilke to discuss creating a 10 x 15 foot mural to serve as a backdrop for the final mosaic medallion to complete the PRIDE IN OUR PAST, FAITH IN OUR FUTURE public art display on the side of WE MISS BACK WHEN ANTIQUES's building that faces the Kiskiminetas River in Apollo.

The mural combines the evolution of the river with elements to reflect bygone days including a '57 Chevy, an elderly couple walking together, Jackson Falls, and the "singing" bridge replaced by the Leonard Miller Memorial bridge.

The art students were also introduced to stop-action film making using favorite books or their own stories as the basis for their projects.

Jeff then met with clay artist, Laura Jean McLaughlin, and Kim McAfee, the manager of Armstrong County Area Agency on Aging's Apollo Senior Center, to involve the Center's participants in the mosaic project.

This part of the project is very exciting as there is also an audio component by audiovisual artist, Ricardo Robinson, who recorded the participants talking about their memories of growing up and living in the Apollo area.



The mosaic's design is a compilation of the senior's recollections and symbolizes roller skating at the Valarena, the gazebo and oak trees in Owens Grove, the salt mines that offered employment, and the trolley cars that connected the small communities along the river.

The voice recordings will be part of the interpretive sign coming to the intersection of Kiski Ave. and First Street.

TAKEAWAYS

DON'T MESS WITH BINGO!

The project was met with some resistance as many of the participants didn't fully understand the scope of the project and weren't happy that it replaced bingo.

INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION

Two students from A-R's Class of 2019, Megan Tipton and Ben Seevers, got involved. The seniors enjoyed working with the students and trading stories.

FUTURE INTERACTIONS

- Life Skills/Learning Support students will visit the Center monthly bringing sweet treats that they baked and playing games, including bingo!
- The High School chorus is commemorating Veterans Day on November 13 with a musical tribute .
- 2nd graders will demonstrate making maple syrup and serve pancakes using the syrup they make.
- Members of A-R's Leadership Team will present programs on the financial and academic goals of the District.

WIN WIN WIN

In addition to creating a lasting public art project and an intergenerational bond, the project also improved the well-being of the participants. Based upon an exit survey, most of the seniors noted that they had made new friends, experienced an improvement in mood, felt more connected to the community, and realized their creative potential.

PROJECT FUNDED BY APOLLO-RIDGE EDUCATION FOUNDATION AND ARTSPATH

"Our participants were unsure of doing the project at first, but ended with a lot of pride in what they created."

— Carole Harland, Asst Mgr



"(I appreciated) interaction with Apollo-Ridge School—their interest in our Senior Citizens Center and their plans for future programs with us."

— Diane Baer

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ArtsPath Residency with Muralist Bernie Wilke

High School students create mural backdrop for mosaic medallion and dabble in stop-motion film making.



A portion of the mural residency introduced the students to stop-motion film making. Using an app, clay, and their imaginations, the students' short films covered topics like the dangers of vaping, playing video games, and a scene from George Orwell's Animal Farm.



High School art students painting the mural backdrop for the for the mosaic being created by the participants at the Apollo Senior Center includes images of a '57 Chevy, an elderly couple walking the trail, and the green "singing" bridge replaced by the Leonard Miller memorial bridge. Installation is planned for early October on We Miss Back When's building in Apollo.

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