

Donations to HEF Fund Artist in Residence and Inspirational Mural at Harrison Avenue Elementary School

A recent grant from the Harrison Educational Foundation is supporting a visiting artist program at the Harrison Avenue School. 200 students in the third and fourth grades are working with a professional artist to produce two murals for permanent display in the school's main staircase. Two years ago the entire fifth grade produced a patriotic mural which is displayed in a central hallway. Last year students produced a mural that supplemented first graders' learning about families and their role in the community and fourth graders' studying immigration and national culture. This year's murals will have themes connected to growing and reaching for dreams and goals, with visual elements connected to the growth cycle of plants and butterflies.

To create the murals students work together on references, composition, drawing and color palette. Students' original drawings are enlarged and used for mural design with the help of the artist in residence. Christine Vitarello, Harrison Avenue's Art Teacher and the sponsor of this HEF grant, believes that in addition to helping students make connections with their science curriculum, this program helps students learn about the role of fine arts in society and culture, about problem solving skills and persistence in art careers, and about fine art production.

Ms. Vitarello notes, "The Harrison Educational Foundation's grants have given students at The Harrison Avenue Elementary School the amazing opportunity to interact with a professional artist. Through artist/student interaction, students have created artwork with guidance, while developing an authentic connection between artwork and their lives today. Students in first and fourth grade eagerly look forward to each session with the artist, and anticipate their personal mark as an important and valued part of our group mural. The Foundation's support makes our school a brighter and more beautiful place to learn."

The second mural completed in 2007/08 had a community theme:



Students in the process of painting with artist in residence, Tova Synder:

