Mariemont City Schools

TERRACE PARK ELEMENTARY UNVEILS STUDENT MURAL
AT ANNUAL ART SHOW
Project to be Featured in Art History of Ohio Project

Terrace Park, OH, May 21, 2009 -- The fourth grade students at Terrace Park Elementary School have teamed up with the Terrace Park Historical Society to create a mixed-media mural that was unveiled at the school's annual Art Show and Open House on May 20.

The mural, or quilt, is made up of individual panels created by the students—each one representing architecture, personalities, organizations, geography, history, or events that characterize the village of Terrace Park. To accompany their artwork, students worked in the language arts classroom to develop written pieces about their elements of Terrace Park's history.

In 2007, the Historical Society received a grant from the Scripps Howard Foundation to be used for an educational endeavor. As a result, when art teachers Shelley Komrska and Melissa Rupe had an idea for a large-scale student work about Terrace Park, they were able to turn to the Historical Society for assistance in exploring the village's history. Inspired by the work of Columbus artist Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson, which richly depicts the neighborhood in which she grew up, the teachers decided to include a research component.

Last October, students took a trip to the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center to view and learn about the large-scale piece by Robinson, entitled *Journeys I & II*. Later that same day, they were taken on a tour of Terrace Park, led by Susan Abernethy Frank and Steve Early of the Historical Society. Highlights included the cannons and gazebo on the village green, the site of Covalt Station, the former Robinson Circus House, and remnants of old structures at Miami Grove along the river.

Each student chose an element of Terrace Park's history to depict, and then conducted research using the Historical Society's web site, the library, and interviews with village residents. Students were asked to tell the visual story of their elements with mixed media: fabric, buttons, beads, twigs, stones, paper, thread, etc. Once all panels were completed, they were attached to a large piece of canvas, based loosely on Terrace Park geography. Parent volunteers, headed by resident Elaine Fening, helped stitch the panels together. Mary Kay Kroeger, 4th grade language arts teacher, oversaw the students' written work, which has been assembled into a book to complement the art work.

This large scale project is part of a larger venture, called the Art History of Ohio Project (AHOP), by the Mariemont City School District. The project, which has received grants from the Ohio Arts Council, the Fine Arts Fund, and some private funding, has two main goals: to provide teachers with a multi-faceted resource to help them meet the state's academic content standards for visual arts and to offer students in grades 1-8 access to art located throughout the state of Ohio. Many of the new standards mandate that students

learn about the art and artists of Ohio. AHOP's classroom materials will present art lessons--such as the one modeled after Ms. Robinson and her work--that feature the best examples of Ohio's art, artifacts, and architecture, and will include a reference book, an instructional classroom game, and a CD-ROM.

Mrs. Komrska directs the project, and contributors include school administrators, art teachers, educational writers, and art historians. With AHOP, Komrska says, "We hope to provide a comprehensive resource for teachers that will provide access to the fantastic abundance of art that tells the story of the history of Ohio."

Photo:
Mariemont City Schools art teacher Shelley Komrska proudly stands with a few of the 4th grade artists who helped create a quilt documenting Terrace Park village history.

Mariemont City Schools art teachers Melissa Rupe and Shelley Komrska carefully unveil the historical quilt created by Terrace Park 4th graders.

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