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### **ASH sixth-graders honor ancestors with wall mural**

Shamrocks, hieroglyphics, musical instruments and flags are among the new additions to the main hallway at Albany School of Humanities (ASH), where graduating sixth-graders painted a 65-foot mural honoring their heritage.

The mural, part of a cross-curricular learning project encompassing art, social studies and English language arts, will serve as a lasting gift that celebrates the school's rich cultural diversity.

The 75 students were broken up into five groups where members researched their individual heritages to come up with artifacts and symbols representing their backgrounds. Each group then created a small collage of the symbols in art class and painted them on the hallway wall.

“The kids learned a lot about themselves as artists,” said art teacher Renee Davis, who helped develop the project along with social studies teacher Diane Micelli. “It was a great experience for the students to be able to learn about and celebrate their cultural diversity.”

Students chose a range of symbols to include on the wall. Many chose the flags from their countries of origin, but other creative additions included plants, trees, flowers, animals, famous quotes and even a train car to represent the Underground Railroad.

Once painted, each painting was formalized with a cardboard frame, and a red velvet border was added to give the mural a gallery look.

The mural was made possible by a grant from the Charles Touhey Foundation, which provided funding for the research books as well as food and beverages for the gala.

“The students enjoyed getting out of the classroom and having the opportunity to paint in the hallway,” said Ms. Davis. “But what they really liked was that they got to leave their mark for future students to see.”



ASH students Anna Stoneman and Jamil Hood work on a portion of the 65-foot mural the sixth-grade students painted to honor their diverse backgrounds.