

News Release

Tenaflly Public Schools
Contact: Christine Corliss
Publicity Coordinator
E-Mail: ccorliss@tenafly.k12.nj.us
Phone: 201-816-4554

Axia Taverna Teams with Tenaflly High School to Create a Unique Work of Art

Restaurant to host fundraiser on May 26 to benefit Project Graduation and showcase artwork

For Immediate Release

Tenaflly, NJ – May 20, 2021 – When COVID-19 guidelines prompted restaurant owner Alex Parlamis to get creative with seating at his Tenaflly restaurant Axia Taverna, he, like many restaurant owners, moved to the great outdoors, setting up tents on the driveway for diners to sit outside and enjoy their meal. However, parking lots are not known for their aesthetics, and the life-time Tenaflly resident and Tenaflly High School alumnus had an idea. Why not work with the high school to help the students who have been struggling throughout the pandemic and improve the view for his outside diners? Parlamis posed the idea to Tenaflly High School Principal Jim Morrison and the project was set in motion.

“The idea originally was conceived to create a more exciting outdoor at AXIA, dining on a striped parking lot is not at all exciting,” said Parlamis. “With so many of my customers being parents of THS Students, and after this difficult year the graduating class of 2021 has experienced, I thought that the mural could be a huge fundraiser for the THS class of 2021 as well as an amazing upgrade to our outdoor amenities!” High School art teachers Andy Graziano, Lisa Allen, and Emily Evanowski agreed to coordinate the unique project, pulling in student volunteers from their art classes and the high school’s Art Club. Art teacher Andy Graziano designed the mural, and teachers and students began to paint the new masterpiece on May 10th, outlining the design in chalk before beginning the daunting painting process. “I had painted six other large scale murals in the past, so I knew what was involved,” added Graziano. “When I visited Axia earlier in the day, I did not see where we would put a mural. It wasn’t until my first meeting with Alex that I realized the mural would be on the parking lot.”

The mural, painted by nearly two dozen students over the course of several weeks, features an abstract leaf and line design in hues of green, yellow, orange, and blue. Armed with sprayers, rollers, and large brushes, the students began by filling in the largest areas of yellow and green, covering nearly the entire parking area.

The project was also the first time in more than a year that Allen’s art club met as an in person group.

“This was a voluntary project for my Art Club, and ten students from the club enthusiastically participated,” said Allen. “Even though most of these students were still learning virtually, their parents allowed them to help with this in-person group project because it was a safe, outdoor setting.”

The mural is now complete and Parlamis is excited for customers - existing and new - to see it. “We plan to host some upcoming fundraising events for the parents of graduating seniors, and if we can host the events in collaboration with a unique project like this, we can certainly continue the fundraising right up to prom and graduation day!”

The first fundraising event is scheduled for May 26th from 6:00 – 10:00pm. The event, which will feature a live band, is open to the public. Tickets are \$80 per person, \$150 per couple, and a portion of the proceeds will benefit Project Graduation.

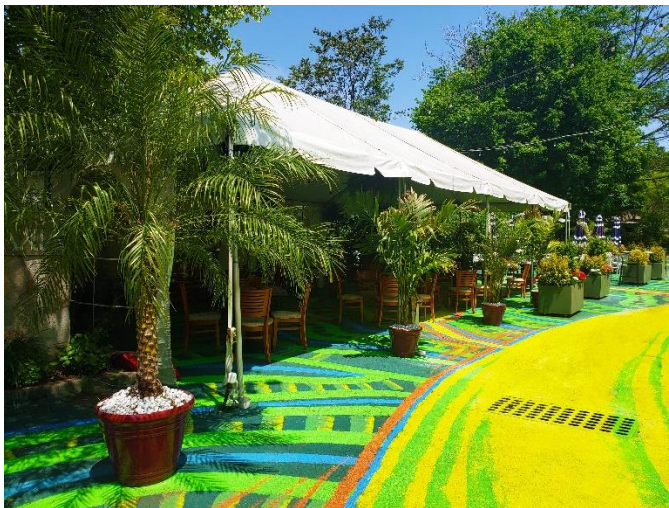
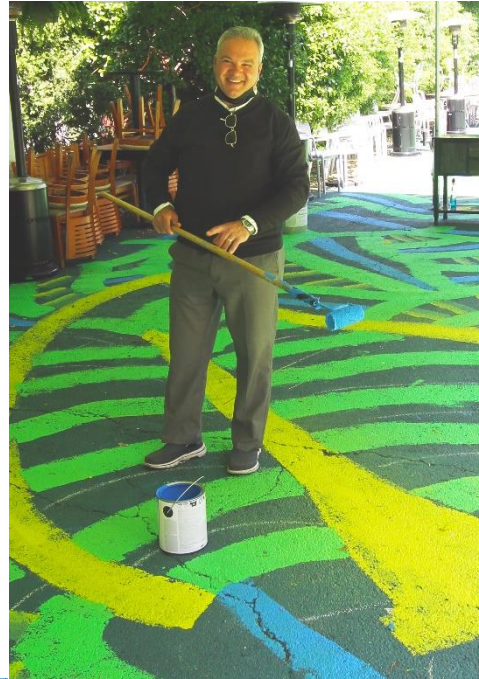
For more information on Tenafly High School, visit www.tenaflyschools.org.

For information on the Axia Taverna, visit <https://www.axiataverna.com>.

###

Alex Palarmis, owner of Axia Taverna in Tenafly, NJ and Tenafly High School alumnus, picks up a roller to join the painting project on the driveway of his family-owned restaurant. The painting was a joint venture between the restaurant and Tenafly High School to support Project Graduation.

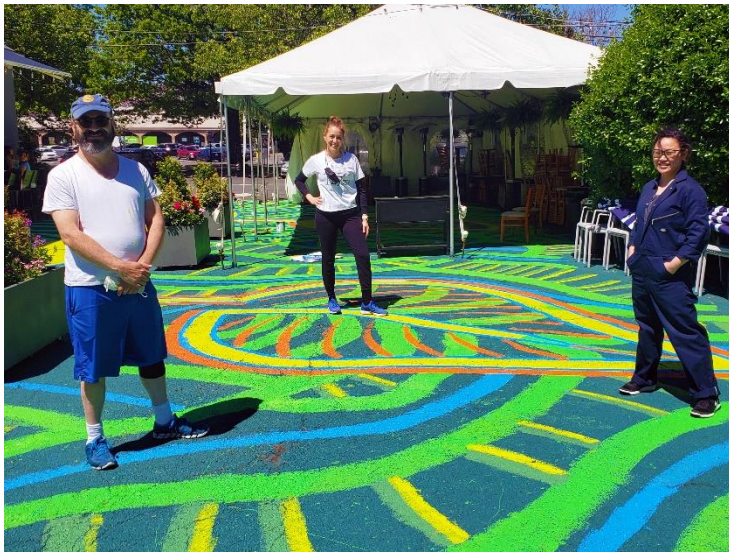
Photo Credit: Andrew Graziano



The finished project at Axia Taverna in Tenafly, NJ. The painting project was a joint venture between the restaurant and Tenafly High School to support Project Graduation.



Nearly two dozen Tenafly High School art and art club students volunteered for the unique painting project at Axia Taverna in Tenafly, NJ. The painting project was a joint venture between the restaurant and Tenafly High School to support Project Graduation.



Tenafly High School art teachers Andy Graziano, Lisa Allen, and Emily Evanowski pose on the nearly-completed mural at Axia Taverna in Tenafly, NJ. A joint venture between the restaurant and Tenafly High School to support Project Graduation, the mural was designed by Graziano and painted by the high school's art and art club student volunteers.