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Park Forest Elementary mural keeps Mack Brady's memory alive

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Katie Cepullio, left, Sarah Holleman, middle, and Parker Kingshipp, right, are fifth grade students who helped make the mural. Fifth graders at Park Forest Elementary School in Matt Cosgrove's class worked with artist Terry Johnson to make a water color and ceramic mural in the school's atrium. February 1, 2013

Nabil K. Mark — CDT photo [Buy Photo](#)

By Britney Milazzo — bmilazzo@centredaily.com

One ceramic butterfly stands apart from the rest of the art in a ceramic mural along a second-floor wall of Park Forest Elementary School as a tribute to Mack Brady, who passed away Dec. 31.

[With Mack's name and soccer number painted on the wings of the green butterfly, Park Forest Elementary art teacher Matt Cosgrove said it's a way to keep the third-grader's memory alive.](#)

The mural joins four others adorning the walls of the school and is a way to bring students, teachers and local artists together.

Cosgrove said this mural is an environmental presentation of what the school is all about.

"It's about things in flight — birds, insects — and them transforming or transitioning from one thing into another like our school and students are doing as they're growing up," Cosgrove said.

About 40 fifth-graders were a part of the painting process with local artist Terry Johnson, of Galaxy the Arts in Education Program, and school art teachers Cosgrove and Melanie Fink.

The idea of the mural came in October and, by the beginning of December, the school teamed up with Johnson, who met with both faculty and students involved, and worked collaboratively for about two weeks on planning, drawing, cutting and painting the ceramic tiles together.

On Jan. 13, the mural was unveiled.

"I'm extremely proud of these students. They were invested in this 100 percent," Cosgrove said. "We were just the facilitators in this project and the students made it happen."

Cosgrove said to complete the project, students were taken out of class for about three hours at a time.

"It was really time consuming, and the students showed their time management and maturity by being able to complete this and their schoolwork," Cosgrove said.

And, fifth-grader Keenan Dean said, it was worth it.

"You learned a lot about different kinds of art and were able to work with your friends," Keenan, 11, said. "The fun parts were making (ceramic) molds and slabs, and preparing to get the stuff ready. This wall was boring and now this mural brings it to life."

Johnson said the project was sponsored by the Arts in Education Partnership of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts — a state agency — and was funded through an annual legislative appropriation, and administered locally by Galaxy. The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

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