



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Encinitas To Unveil Student-Designed Art Mosaic Panels In El Portal Undercrossing

The highly anticipated art installation throughout El Portal pedestrian undercrossing is complete, showcasing creative designs conceptualized by students at Paul Ecke Central Elementary.

ENCINITAS – The El Portal pedestrian rail undercrossing in Leucadia is ready to unveil a fresh new look. In collaboration with students from Paul Ecke Central Elementary (PEC) and San Dieguito Academy (SDA), Campana Studios and SDA art teacher, Jerm Wright, worked to hand-craft mosaic art panels for the underpass. The theme of the artwork is centered around different pieces of Encinitas history and includes 17 panels, a 6-inch tile ribbon and two cairns.

We invite you to attend the artwork unveiling on Saturday, August 10, at 12:15 p.m. The El Portal underpass is located at the intersection of El Portal Street, Vulcan Avenue, and North Coast Highway 101 in Encinitas, California. A variety of community and school leaders will be in attendance, as well as students who assisted with the project.

“There is no better public art than that which involves young students; the works that will adorn the walls of the El Portal undercrossing are particularly special in that way,” said Encinitas mayor, Tony Kranz. “Artist and teacher Jerm Wright orchestrated the collaborative efforts of students at Paul Ecke Central School and San Dieguito Academy to create mosaic panels that incorporate color and our city’s history throughout. Congratulations to all who helped bring this art to life!”

The El Portal undercrossing was created to provide a safe walking path under a railroad track. Completed in 2022, the undercrossing has been a critical safety addition to the community, especially students from PEC. Each school day, an estimated 120 students use the pathway to walk to and from the elementary school.

Due to their frequent use of the underpass, it was only fitting that PEC students assisted in concept development for the artwork. A student leadership team at PEC was created to lead out design creation for the project. These students went classroom to classroom collecting ideas and feedback from their peers, before completing final design mockups. Their artwork served as a detailed blueprint for Jerm Wright and SDA art students when creating the mosaic panels. Additionally, the artwork includes the thumbprints of every student who attended PEC last year. Students also collected a variety of “found objects” that were then used as pieces of the mosaic and tile panels.

“From the beginning of this project, Paul Ecke Central has been thrilled to participate in the ideation,

creation, and addition of elements to the mosaic and tile art in the El Portal Underpass,” said Wes Sechrest, principal at Paul Ecke Elementary. “Our students hold Encinitas history in high regard, and this project will stand as a lasting legacy for both students and their families to enjoy for years to come.”

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About Encinitas Union School District

The Encinitas Union School District’s (EUSD) vision is to ignite the limitless potential of all learners, and works to cultivate the values of joy, belonging, integrity, service and innovation. The district serves the city of Encinitas and the Rancho La Costa area of South Carlsbad in North San Diego County. Approximately 4,500 students in Kindergarten through 6th grade are enrolled in the District’s nine schools. All EUSD schools have been recognized as California Distinguished Schools and serve a diverse and varied community.

More About Encinitas City

Located along six miles of Pacific Ocean coastline in northern San Diego County, Encinitas has an approximate population of 62,000 and is characterized by coastal beaches, flat-topped coastal areas, steep mesa bluffs and rolling hills. The city was incorporated in 1986, drawing together the communities of New Encinitas, Old Encinitas, Cardiff-by-the-Sea, Olivenhain and Leucadia. For more information about the City of Encinitas, visit encinitasca.gov.