

Barnstable Public Schools

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Barnstable Public Schools Celebrate Success of Grant-Funded 6th Grade Mosaic Tile-Painting Project in Partnership with The Cordial Eye



All sixth grade students in Barnstable Public Schools participated in a grant-funded art project at The Cordial Eye arts collaborative and gallery on Main Street in Hyannis. Each student painted a ceramic tile, which will be assembled together as part of a mosaic. (Courtesy Barnstable Public Schools)

BARNSTABLE — Superintendent Sara Ahern, Barnstable Intermediate School Principal Tyler Arlington and English Curriculum Coordinator Laura Welch are pleased to share that all 312 sixth graders in Barnstable Public Schools were able to participate in a grant-funded art project, bringing them on a field trip to a local art

gallery to contribute to a giant mosaic composed of personally designed, hand-painted tiles.

The art project builds off the district's ongoing participation in the MAXCourage capstone essay program, which for the past seven years has challenged students from diverse backgrounds to express personal narratives in their own unique writer's voice. Along those same lines, this new art project empowered each sixth grader to paint something that reflects their own story or identity on a 4-by-4-inch ceramic tile.

The mosaic art project is being done through a partnership with a local arts collaborative and gallery called The Cordial Eye, led by Co-Executive Directors Mary George and Anastaci Pacella, which provides an authentic community art experience for the students. The project was made possible by a \$5,000 Creative Schools Grant, provided by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, as the result of an application filed by Grade 6 English Language Arts Teacher Michael Andrews.

"We thought that partnering with an arts collaborative would empower every single student to explore their identity, their voice, in a way that allowed them to do so from a place of comfort," Andrews said. "What was so exciting about this project is that it really put students in the driver's seat to control their own narrative."

The grant funding was used to pay for the transportation of small groups of students over the course of four field trip days to The Cordial Eye's new space that it shares with Belonging Books at 438 Main St. in Hyannis. There, each sixth grader was offered guidance from resident artists Kai Barrows and Craig Florence, before getting to work on their own personal masterpiece.

The funding also went toward materials, rental space and the services of the resident teaching artists.

The Cordial Eye artists will now take photographs of all the painted tiles and assemble them into a giant mosaic, printed on a vinyl banner or canvas, which will later be housed at Barnstable Intermediate School in a space yet to be determined. Barnstable Public Schools hopes to have the final product ready by the end of May.

"Each student will be able to take their tile home," Andrews said. "So, it's not just a community project, it's an individual keepsake."

Many of the paintings the students created were simple on the surface, reflecting personal memories or accomplishments.

"What we saw students explore really ran the gamut. We had students highlighting moments from their sports careers and games," Andrews said. "We had students painting flags of home countries, as a nod to immigration stories. We had students using a focus on the abstract, and they said it was more about an emotional response, rather than it being a certain symbol or image."

But many students explained how their artwork was deeply imbued with meaning.

"There was quite a bit of power in letting students explore and then helping them dig and find that explanation of these images of identity," Andrews said. "We saw the power of landscape and nature, as stories of growth. We had some beautiful pieces around things like sunsets and ocean waves, in reference to where we live. When kids dug a little deeper, they said things like, 'Well, you know, the ocean comes in and out, and this shows that there's always a chance for a fresh start.'"

This art project was inclusive of the entire sixth grade class, including special education and multilingual learner classes.

"This was truly a fully inclusive project for all our sixth graders to experience," said English Curriculum Coordinator Laura Welch. "Sometimes, written expression can be a challenge for some students, including those for whom English is a second language, or those with different levels of ability. Our partnership with The Cordial Eye has been an amazing, authentic way for our students to connect with our local grassroots arts community. We're proud of the way that it turned out, allowing students to express their identity in a way that's accessible to everyone."

Welch and Andrews both thanked the entire sixth grade teaching community for embracing this project and supporting the English language arts education team on this endeavor.

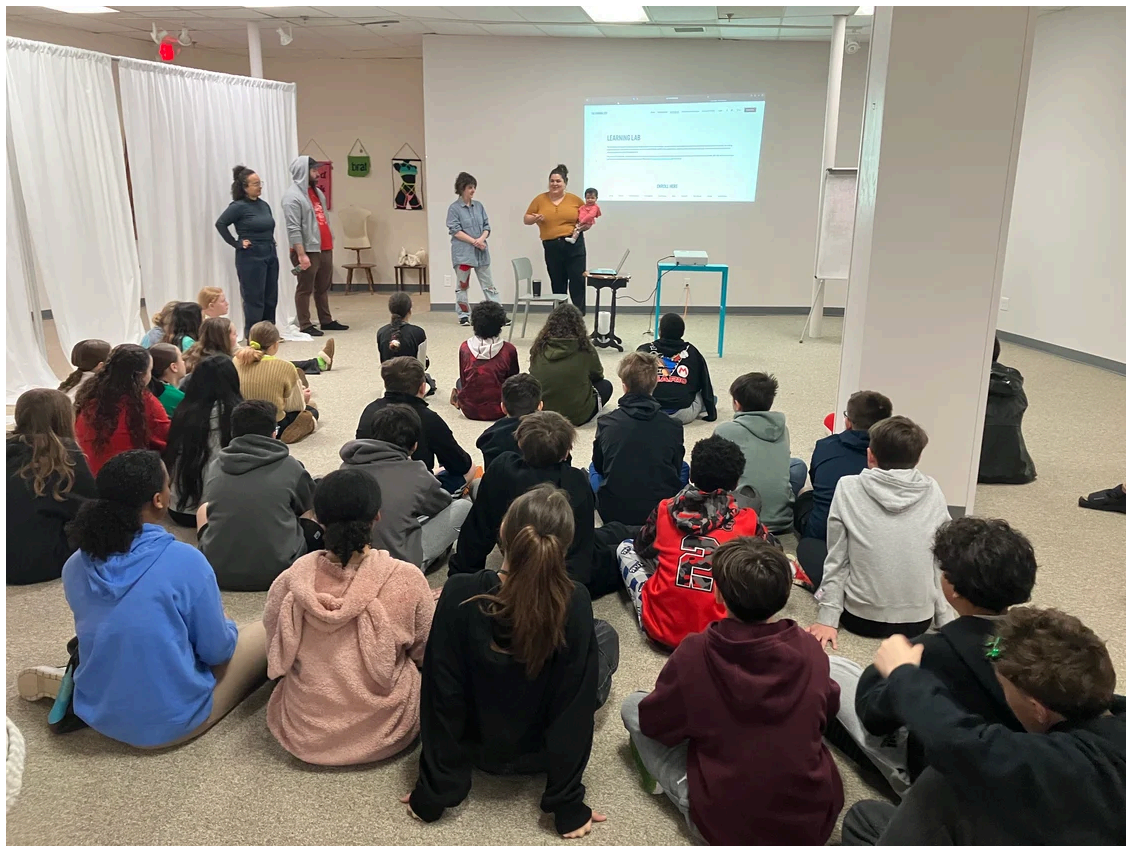
Superintendent Sara Ahern and Barnstable Intermediate School Principal Tyler Arlington congratulated the student artists and thanked Andrews, Welch and the school's partners at The Cordial Eye for helping to make this all possible.

"I've been very impressed by all the artwork I've seen that's come out of this grant-funded program," Arlington said. "The creative efforts of our students have been amazing. This is something that our sixth graders will remember for years to come, and we thank everyone that helped make this possible, including all of our sixth grade teachers."

"It's been wonderful to see our sixth graders be able to experience a project like this, thanks in part to the crucial grant funding provided by the Massachusetts Cultural Council," Ahern said. "I'd like to thank Mr. Andrews for putting together a successful grant application and Ms. Welch for all of her work to make this a reality for our sixth graders. Kudos to all of our students for their artworks. We look forward to seeing the final product on display later this year at the Barnstable Intermediate School."

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Eden
Lupton

Team
Covells
Mr. Andrews



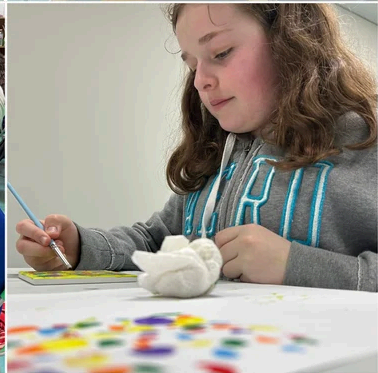














A message from Barnstable Public Schools

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