

Commission became more of a mission

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By Morgan Jarema
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Eugenia Marve, an art teacher at Riverside Middle School, hopes people see certain messages in her mural.

The 5-foot-5 piece of art that she and about 20 students created this summer hangs in the entrance of her school, at 265 Eleanor St. NE. She hopes it affects viewers in two ways.

With tiles depicting themes on faith, the environment, multi-culturalism and peace, the mural is "a symbol of kindness and respect for the gift of life," the artist says.

Her other message is more down to earth.

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The artwork came to Riverside Middle in quite a round-about way.

Earlier this year, Grand Rapids Community College commissioned Marve to do the mural for a local health-care clinic during the college's summer student art program.

After plans to use the mural at the clinic fell through, she decided to donate it to her school.

Her middle school helpers worked six-hour days for two weeks on the Riverside playground to complete their part of the project. They painted tiles, applied glaze top coats and helped with the firing process.

Marve and the children are proud of it. "I wanted the mural to be something that everyone could relate to," she said. "I think it represents the fact that the health of the planet, and of people and how they treat one another, is everyone's responsibility."



PRESS PHOTO/MORGAN JAREMA

Riverside Middle School art teacher Eugenia Marve created the mural with the help of about 20 students, including Fabian Hatchett, 13, right, and Renee Reid, 12, left.