

New sparkling art installation at Waimārama School made by students

Hastings Leader

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31 Oct, 2022 03:30 PM



Merena Tahata-Timas (left), Anika Tapiata-Harmer, Horiana Tahau, Georgia Epere with their mosaics in front of the mosaic commemorating 100 years of the Waimārama School. Photo / Warren Buckland

Waimārama School students have created multiple large and small mosaic art installations with the help of three creative tutors who spent months teaching the kids their craft.

As part of the Ministry of Education creatives in schools programme, the school received \$17,000 in funding to provide creative learning experiences with local artists and creatives.

The Creatives in Schools funding was started to enhance the well-being of students and ākonga and develop their knowledge and skills in communication, collaboration, and creative thinking and practice.

Waimārama School's creatives in schools project is titled Ngā Pūrākau Wheriko o Te Kura o Waimārama or The Sparkling Stories of Waimārama School.

The children designed large and small mosaic art panels inspired by a large mosaic art piece on the school library wall.

The original mosaic project was done by Liz Earth with the students of Waimārama School 16 years ago for the school centennial celebrations.

School principal Esther Geerlings said, "this time around, we were incredibly lucky to once again engage with creatives not only incredibly skilled and talented in their craft, but all have special connections to Waimārama school".

Leo Geerlings and Ingrid Geerlings have two grandsons attending the school, and Heidi Chesterman attended as a child.



Large traditional mosaic panels made by school pupils part of a Ministry of Education Creatives in schools programme at Waimārama School. Photo / Warren Buckland

The senior students designed the large panels on the swimming pool fence to display images of sea creatures representing our school kaitiaki groups, whai, tuna, and māroro.

The fourth panel is an octopus representing health and well-being, inspired by Te Wheke, a Māori health model.

If you look closely enough or long enough, you can see pictures within pictures that tell their own stories.

The tile mosaic circles on the fence represent the whitewash bubbles of Tangaroa.

All the juniors, staff and even some parents got to try making a mosaic bubble.

The mosaic art on the pool fence was traditionally done with grout and tile made by the students with help from creative tutors Leo and Ingrid.

The students designed the largest panels and Leo spent hundreds of hours helping the kids bring the designs to life Ingrid painted each senior student's name onto the tiled works.

Within the panels, Leo incorporated small mosaic stars and other pieces that school kids, made during matariki celebrations this year.

With help from creative tutor Heidi, a group of students decorated the big concrete planters with ocean-themed natural mosaic pieces.



Natural mosaic panels made by Waimārama School students with help from creative tutor Heidi Chesterman. Photo / Warren Buckland

Natural mosaic can be made with shells, stalks, leaves, stones and anything you can find in your 'backyard'.

The Waimārama School students used shells, pebbles, stones, broken mirror pieces and glass.

Students watched Heidi in her workshop using her special tools for making mosaic surfboards as part of the process.

Waimārama schools senior students got to take home their individual tile pieces that were also framed in rimu timber by creative tutor Leo.

"The senior students thoroughly enjoyed the design process, seeing their concepts come to life, using the proper cutting tools and learning to glue and grout.

"The junior students loved exploring the unlimited amount of patterns that could be made from the huge range of materials on offer," School principal Esther said.

"We are very thankful for the funding grant from the Ministry of Education for this project; Still, there was a massive amount of love and hard work from our creatives that went into achieving the vision, for which we are genuinely grateful," she said.

More of the process and creative outcomes can be seen on both creatives websites, www.leonardusmosaics.com or www.shingleandshell.com

- **This is a Public Interest Journalism funded role through NZ On Air**

