

Community Art Project in Anderson

by Kris Capps
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An Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement grant from the Association of Alaska School Boards is helping kids and community come together in Anderson, a small community, six miles off the George Parks Highway.

With the solid leadership of Anderson School teacher Sandra Trumbower, a community art project is taking shape – a glass mosaic in the design of the new Alaska quarter – chosen specifically because it resembles their school mascot: the grizzly bear. The mosaic will be displayed in the foyer of Anderson School.

Art brings people together and in this small town, where a Denali Borough School District school is the center of the community, a project like this holds special significance.

Working closely together is Sandra Trumbower, local artist Sage Fabrizio, other community members, another teacher and students. A local stained glass expert from the Denali area has also offered expertise and advice and will help pull the project together.

By participating in this project, adults let students know they are excited and supportive.

At this point, we have collected colored glass – blues, whites, greens and some browns. Although the design is selected, much choice remains in how the design will come together with color. We began hands-on work on our glass mosaic project in Anderson School and it was a very exciting day. Eleven people showed up for the first day - students, local artists, community partners, teachers, community and me! ALL the glass was donated by community after we put out the word. We spent the day sorting colors, and cutting glass.

Initially the plan was to create a tile mosaic, but the medium switched to glass after discussion among participants. The Anderson School custodian has also arranged to place a spotlight on the soon-to-be 32-inch-diameter mosaic.

It is hoped that the line, already blurred between school and community, will fade even further. What better place for youth to spend spare time than beautifying their school.

This is a project that will remain for years to come. With that as the intention, serious effort and pre-planning is required and high standards are set. Students and adults working together will learn teamwork, sharing and cooperation.

The final result will be legacy in which they can take pride.

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