

THE GARDEN ISLAND

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Mural makers



Dennis Fujimoto / The Garden Island

'Ele'ele School students get a respite from the humid conditions Thursday as they get a water break from painting two Fred Tangalin murals at the Hanapepe post office.

Artist, students 'going for it'

Dennis Fujimoto

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HANAPEPE - The steady stream of postal patrons at the Hanapepe post office wanted to know what was going on.

Carol Ikeda, one of three 'Ele'ele School fourth-grade teachers, obliged by fielding the inquiries from the curious patrons who were greeted by the sight of about a dozen fourth-graders working along two walls yesterday.

Ikeda said there are 72 fourth-graders at 'Ele'ele, and the arrangement is to have a dozen visit the developing mural on Tuesdays and Thursdays through the month of May.

The classes, under the guidance of Ikeda, Bernard Riola, and Kyle Martin, rotate through the days as they work under the supervision and guidance of artist Fred Tangalin, affectionately known to the students as "Uncle Freddy."

Ikeda said that under the current schedule, the two murals should be finished by the end of the month with a big celebration scheduled for June 6 when parents and the community will join the students for the unveiling.

"Mark Jeffers approached me during one of the craft



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'Ele'ele School fourth-graders cannot resist a chance in front of the camera as they join artist Fred Tangalin for an overall view of the developing mural at the Hanapepe Post Office Thursday.

fairs during the holidays and asked if I would work with the students to do the mural," Tangalin said between the constant work of monitoring students, mixing paint, and applying some brush strokes.

"He was impressed with my enthusiasm and confidence,"

Tangalin laughed. "But, to tell you the truth, after I consented, I was intimidated by having to work with the students. I had no idea of how to start this."

After some deliberation, Tangalin said he resigned himself to his spirit, "Half of painting is confidence. The other half is

just 'going for it.'"

Pedro Galiza, the U.S. Postal clerk at the Hanapepe post office said work started on Saturday when Tangalin started sketching out the two murals. The first students arrived on Tuesday, and by Thursday, the basic color layers had already been applied.

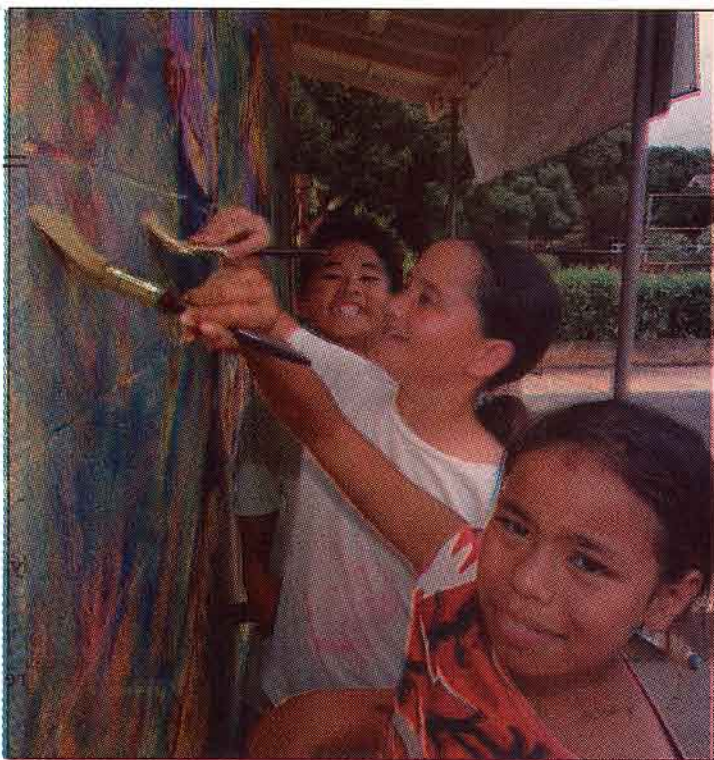
"You start with the lighter colors, and as each layer gets put on, the colors get more striking," Tangalin explained, while patiently mixing batches of paint for the students who work for about an hour each time they visit the site.

"Stroke with mana," Tangalin tells the students. "Let the spirit within you guide your stroke. This is the difference between drawing and painting."

The encouragement continues throughout the session punctuated with numerous breaks that are filled with questions: Do you love Hanapepe? Do you want people to feel happy, or sad when they come to Hanapepe? Why do you like Hanapepe?

"It's all one thought," Tangalin said. "It's many hands, but one thought. We're all on the same page."

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Dennis Fujimoto / The Garden Island

'Ele'ele School fourth graders work their magic on a Fred Tangalin mural at the Hanapepe post office Thursday.

Murals

Continued from A1

The two images selected by Tangalin are a depiction of Hanapepe Valley as seen from the popular visitor viewing point, and a group of taro farmers working in a field in Hanapepe Valley.

Tangalin felt that those two images depicted his strongest feelings about the island. "That's Kaua'i," he said. "The workers I saw before the hurricane, and when I stopped and called to them, they simply hunkered down and worked harder."

Anna Ramondi, a volunteer

who described herself as "just another adult that needs to be here," said that murals and art on post offices are a big thing, especially the bigger ones that feature mosaics and other large art pieces. But, Ramondi said, the Hanapepe project is the first post office she knows of in Hawai'i that will feature artwork.

"It's going to be fantastic when it's done," Tangalin said. "I was thinking of putting a koa frame around each one of the pieces, but maybe we'll just paint it on. It's going to be one of the jewels of Hanapepe."

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