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Teens work on quadricentennial mural at New City Library

By [Akiko Matsuda](#) • The Journal News • March 15, 2009

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NEW CITY - Jovin

Panthapattu carefully shaped clay with his fingers to form the leg muscles of a Native American man.

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The 17-year-old was one of 20 teens who participated yesterday in a mural project commemorating the Hudson Valley quadricentennial at the New City Library.

Various events are scheduled for this year to mark Henry Hudson's historic voyage up the Hudson River and Samuel de Champlain's



Adriana DiGiovanni, 14, a student at Clarkstown North High School, works on her tile yesterday as she and other students from five Rockland County high schools created a clay tile mural to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the exploration of the Hudson River at the New City Library. The mural, which will be displayed at the library, will highlight the river's ecosystem. The project is funded by a grant from the Arts Council of Rockland.

Natalie Morbeth, 18, a student at Spring Valley High School, works on her tile. (Photos by Seth Harrison/The Journal News)

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discovery of the lake that bears his name, as well as the 200th anniversary of Robert Fulton's steamboat journey on the Hudson.

The two-day project at the library, which started Friday, aims to create a mural out of handmade clay tiles. Each tile depicts essentials of the Hudson Valley, such as animals, plants, ships and bridges.

The program was financed by the \$2,500 grant from the Arts Council of Rockland as well as the New York State Council on the Arts, said Sally Pellegrini, New City Library's local history librarian, who administered the project.

Pellegrini said she wanted to come up with a 400th anniversary project that would last many years.

"You have a concert. You have a lecture that goes away," Pellegrini said. "I thought this would be something more permanent."

Cliff Mendelson, a Tomkins Cove ceramist, coordinated the program. He taught students each step of making an artistic tile with three-dimensional images.

Each participant chose one image related to the Hudson Valley out of numerous options prepared by Pellegrini and Mendelson.

Students then drew the design on a sheet of paper and transferred it onto 6-by-6-inch square of soft clay.

Using various shaping tools, teens then carved their images.

Mendelson told teens to mount coils of clay on top of their images to make them "pop up."

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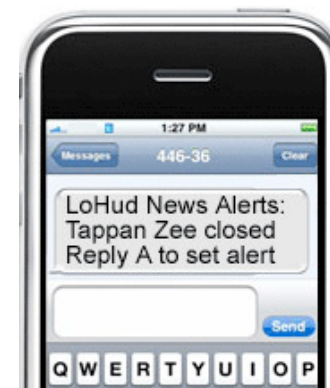
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Natale Morbeth, a senior at Spring Valley High School, who was shaping a sturgeon on her tile, said she decided to participate in the program as one of her high-school memories.

"I really like art," Morbeth said. "It's one of those things you do when you are stressed."

Mendelson said that after the students finish putting on colors, he would dry them about a week before firing them in the kiln.

The installation of the mural, titled "The Hudson-Fulton Quadricentennial Mural," will be celebrated sometime in the summer at the New City Library, Pellegrini said.

Panthapattu, a Clarkstown North High School senior, was excited about the idea.

"My children and my grandchildren can come to see what I did when I was a teenager," Panthapattu said.

"They'll get motivated, too."

- View more photos from this event at lohud.com.

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