



Students beautify Montauk recycling center

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Photo credit: Gordon M. Grant | Gianna Gregorio, center, and Myra Arshad, right, both 8th graders, watch as Mike Mahoney from the Concerned Citizens of Montauk, help install artwork by students from the Montauk Public School at the Montauk Recycling Center in Montauk. (Oct. 8, 2013)

The Montauk recycling center's gray concrete and bare steel have provided an unattractive, but useful setting for people dropping off their recyclables.

Now, they will see nine colorful seascapes -- courtesy of some students at the Montauk Public School.

"There are seascapes and beach scenes . . . it came out really nice," said Mike Mahoney, vice president of the Concerned Citizens of Montauk, which came up with the idea for the project last year.

The Montauk school goes up to eighth grade, and art teacher Paul Salzman went to his seventh-graders last year and asked them to create the drawings for the decorating project, with the winners getting to re-create them on 4-by-8-foot sheets of plywood this year.

He got 30 drawings from the students, and the citizens group picked the ones it liked, without knowing who did the artwork.

The students started coming in on their own time to re-create their original designs on the bigger plywood sheets last year, and finished up this year.

"Every morning two or three of them would come in to work for an hour, and one or two hours in the afternoon, starting in May," Salzman said.

They worked freehand, and the students used the second effort to eliminate some things they didn't like, or to add something else when the work was expanded to a larger scale. Because the Montauk group liked lighthouses -- the Montauk lighthouse was ordered built by George Washington and is a symbol of the community -- three of the panels have a lighthouse on them.

The artwork, expected to last years, has been treated with polyurethane to protect it from salt air, and Salzman expects he will have to go back once a year to maintain it.

Meanwhile, his students have started talking to other students in East Hampton and Amagansett, seeing if they would be interested in creating similar decorations for the town's recycling center on Springs-Fireplace Road in East Hampton