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Imagination takes hold of AMY Northwest students

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By Bernard J. Scally

It is inspiration that helps transform a crack seen in a 500-year-old temple wall to a canvas painting of spider web colors of black and yellow. Students from AMY Northwest Middle School (AMY-NW) toured part of the Asian art galleries of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) during their After School Art Club on Apr. 24.

Students drew from within their own creativity to create some interesting and colorful art.

The PMA strives to build and maintain partnerships with community organizations, schools, and social service agencies, offering programs and educational opportunities that connect diverse communities with the Museum's rich collections and resources. Using the arts to support and strengthen community-based initiatives in youth development and arts education, the Museum reaches out to communities around the region to enhance and expand its mission of making art accessible to everyone.

The Delphi Project Foundation, funded by Reliance Standard Life Insurance Company, a subsidiary of Delphi Financial Group, Inc., supports innovative arts education programs to enhance the education for Philadelphia public school students and increase accessibility to the arts.

The Delphi After School Art Club is a weekly comprehensive arts education program held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Each year, up to 240 middle school level students in the School District of Philadelphia participate in the program. The art museum club at AMY-NW consists of about 40 students on a regular basis. Students range from 6th through 8th grade. They go to the PMA every Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The students tour the Museum's galleries and create their own works of art inspired by the Museum's collection. In addition to weekly studio art classes and gallery tours, the program includes a student art exhibition, a cultural performance, conservation demonstrations, and a collaborative community art project. The Delphi Art Club focuses on both the creative and academic aspects of visual arts, and most importantly, provides students with a safe and inspiring place to gather after school.

"We work on a variety of different art projects throughout the year. Earlier this year we made clay vessels, illuminated metal art inspired by the medieval artwork in the museum, abstract paintings inspired by Sol Lewitt's garden, and currently we are finishing up a community mural project," said Lydia Lim, AMY Northwest art teacher

On Apr. 24, students separated into two classrooms and led by teachers Doris Nogueira-Rogers and Diane Pieri respectively. Nogueira-Rogers led her AMY-NW students to the Asian galleries then returns for painting. While Pieri worked with the other half on their mural project.

Each AMY-NW student will be contributing a radial design that was inspired by the different collections in the museum. During the class, other teachers would pop into Pieri's classroom to peek at the students' designs. Many were

impressed by what they found. The mural is going to go up at the Harrowgate PAL Center on 851 East Tioga Street. A mural dedication ceremony will be held on May 22. On May 9, PMA will be treating the students to the Pennsylvania Ballet's dress rehearsal of the "Carnival of Animals."

"So far it's been a wonderful program for the students. They are really enthusiastic about it and they are disappointed whenever we miss a session because of early dismissal days or report card conferences," said Lim.

A closing reception for the After School Art Club is scheduled for June 5 at Crossroads Café.

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