

## **A story in tile**

***Neskowin Valley School unveils student mural for the public***

***Kira Rubenthaler***  
Features Reporter

Judith Schlicting likes her art students to focus on what's unique about where they live.

So when the Neskowin Valley School art and drama teacher led the school-wide creation of a public mural, the project focused on tidepools.

"That's what this mural is about," Schlicting said, "celebrating where we are."

Now friends and family, as well as anyone headed to the beach at Cape Kiwanda, can enjoy the students' work.

With the help of grants from the Tillamook County Pioneer Museum and the Oregon Cultural Trust and support from the Nestucca Ridge Development Company, the mural - a tile mosaic - was installed in the Tillamook County Parking Lot at the top of the dory ramp at Cape Kiwanda.

It's a great location for the mural, Schlicting said, because visitors can see the art on their way down to the beach, where they might encounter many of the same animals in the tidepools.

And, with the mosaic formed in grout that should withstand harsh weather, Schlicting likes how students can bring their family to see their work now and for years to come.

"It kind of connects them with their past," Schlicting said. "I like that they can see something they've left behind."

And the depiction of a girl and her black Labrador retriever investigating the tidepools tells a story, Schlicting added.

"It's a story created by everyone at school," she said. "This is a pretty permanent story. And it's not just one person who wrote that story."

The project started in February, with students learning about tidepools and drawing pictures of the animals they saw after a trip to the beach.

Second-grader Cole Strober enjoyed watching the hermit crabs and seeing a sponge for the first time.



**AT THE EDGE OF THE SEA** — Students at Neskowin Valley School created this mural (a section seen here), on display at the Tillamook County Parking Lot above the dory ramp at Cape Kiwanda.

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News Guard photo by Kira Rubenthaler

"Once we saw stuff, we kind of figured out what we wanted to make," Strober said.

After the students had assembled their best drawings, they pasted them together into a rough sketch for the mural. Then they rolled out clay, put the drawing on top and traced the images into the clay.

"Then we started cutting and shaping," Schlicting said.

Once the clay was sculpted, they fired it, the older students applied glaze and Schlicting's husband assembled the piece.

Students are proud of their work. "I like it, like it, like it," one boy declared after the mural was unveiled Sept. 12.

Fifth-grader Gus Strober agreed.

"It's just neat to see your own work and your school's work come out for everyone to see," he said.