

**BY THE SEA,
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By
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Duncan Ambassador

Recently I was contacted by a mosaic artist, Melinda Moore. She knew that I was a Duncan Ambassador and interested in seeing her project using Duncan products. I have never seen such a large undertaking by an elementary school as this mosaic mural "Under the Sea".



Melinda Moore and mosaic mural "Under the Sea"

Melinda Moore, the famous mosaic artist of Hermosa Beach, California was approached by the Park Western Elementary School in San Pedro, California to do this scene on the two sides of one of their buildings on the grounds of the school. Every child was involved and it took three months to complete.

The Park Western Place School applied and received a substantial amount of money from the Los Angeles Neighborhood Matching Fund Grant to procure supplies and pay the artist.

Melinda then got busy researching all the creatures of the sea so that she could help the children understand their purpose in the ocean. She then chose each grade to do one type of fish. She would bring samples, when available, of the fish and drawings for the children to trace onto their piece of clay. She would tell them what they ate, where in the ocean they live and some other stories that shows that fish really do have personalities.

Her kelp project for the 1st graders was very exciting. She went to the ocean and brought real kelp to the classroom. Can you imagine how heavy and smelly that was? They touched it and then used it to press their clay onto it so that there was a real texture on their clay blades. They also discussed colors of the blades and pneumatocysts. They are the round looking pods that are filled with a gas which causes the kelp to float.

After letting the hundreds of pieces of fish and fauna dry, they fired them at cone 04. Then the fun began, They used Duncan glazes and Concepts to make their fish and fauna look real. They combined crystal glazes with matt and glossy glazes, They were fired at cone 06. When a "school of anchovies" were painted and fired, the parents placed a Mother of Pearl on the body of the fish and fired again at cone 018.

In the mural you will see the coloration change as you go deeper into the sea. At the top of the mural, nearest the surface, she has used some pieces of mirror to pick up the reflection of the sun.

When the pieces were finished it was time for the volunteer parents to break up the vast amounts of tiles and 1000 lbs of natural slate to use for the background of the walls. They used a bonding mortar to attach each piece on the wall. After drying for 24 hours they applied sanded grouting to complete the scene. The final stage is adding a stone and grout sealer to protect the mural from the sun and elements. It will be a wonderful site for future students to touch and see.

Melinda Moore is a outstanding creative artist. Her angel for the Community of Angels in Los Angeles was chosen to be on the 2002 calendar and book of that name. She has produced many exciting art

projects of children through The L.A. Torrance and Palos Verdes, California schools exposing over 30,000 children. She is self taught, enjoys researching and using natural substances to produce her ideas AND she loves children.

What a good experience for touching the sole of a child.

Addendum.

Her next project through this grant will be a winding and undulating concrete bench in front of the library on the school grounds which will depict story books. Each child in the school will be making objects out of clay to embed in the bench that depict the story that is featured. A cover of the book will be silk screened on clay plate at the top of the bench. This will look very much like the Benches of Gaudi in Barcelona, Spain.

