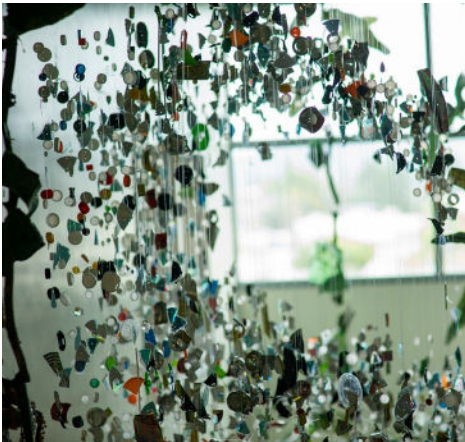




Art Saves The Whale!
Tracy French, Mitch Siefert, Joe Acker
Arts
High Tech Middle North County

Students participated in a multi-grade level design challenge to create a habitat for the High Tech Middle North County whale. The whale was created in 2017 to bring attention to the importance of keeping trash out of our oceans, and was crafted from trash collected during a beach clean up. It hangs in the entryway of the school, but was looking a little run down and lonely. Every middle school student was asked to select one of the three design options- create a reef, create water effects, or create animal friends for the whale. Students were sorted into multi-grade-level teams. They used discarded items to create their project and renew interest in keeping our oceans clean. They followed the steps of the design process to guide their work and overcame the challenges from unconventional materials as well as unfamiliar group members. In the end, every student on campus had a hand in creating our campus' largest art exhibit.



Having a school wide design challenge bonds us as a school and allows students to work outside of their grade levels. Many of the students said working with people they didn't know well was the hardest part of the challenge. It was worth the struggle, because we saw 6th graders taking on leadership roles, eighth graders asking for seventh grade feedback, and a ton of unexpected friendships developing. Next time, we would benefit from a few more get to know you activities to push the collaboration even further.

—Tracy French

Building our cuttlefish was challenging because we were working with different grade levels. In our group to help us blend our different interests we made sure everyone had a clear job to do like cutting cardboard or adding the mod podge. Seeing it hanging close to the whale made the hard work worth it. It was like finding a sandcastle on the beach and adding to it. You are part of the masterpiece.

—Sia D.



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