

## History, Totems , Loss and Love

The project at Pathways-Edgewood, a high school work entry program, began as an artistic preparation for a unit in U.S. History covering pre-colonial times on the North American continent. Tara Holl, an artist working with fused glass and mosaic, planned a series of workshops based on the concept of totems in ancient Native American and Asian cultures. She was carrying out a four-week residency at Edgewood through a grant from the Arts and Humanities Council of Mont-

gomery County. In the workshops, students were to design and create their own totems that would be authentic to what they had researched about the purpose and meaning of totems in native cultures. The students would use the fused glass technique that Tara taught them.

The students did indeed create stunning works of art, but the workshops became far more than an enhancement of history class. Through the study of totems, which often hold personal as well as communal meaning, Tara encouraged the students to consider what was significant to them.

What came out in group discussions was the importance of family and relationships of trust and respect. Several of the students created totems that honored someone who was very dear to them. All of the students grew in understanding the reasons for creating totems: to acknowledge values or qualities that are essential to human beings, such as family, honor, continuity, healing and hope. Their totems profoundly expressed this deepening self-awareness. In March, an Art Show was held at Edgewood to display the student work. The title of the show was "Loss & Love".



**Thank you to these organizations and artists who supported the arts in education at Pathways in 2006-2007:**

**The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County**

**Tara Holl** – fused glass • history

**Stacey Claytor** – dance • international studies

**The Maryland State Arts Council**

**David Cunningham, Arianna Ross** – mural arts, storytelling • Black history

**Carol Peck** – poetry • language arts

**The Washington Post**

**Gayle Danley** – slam poetry • language arts

## Discovering Heritage, Illustrating Hope

Storyteller Arianna Ross began her one-week residency at The Pathways School-Hyattsville by encouraging the students, ages 10 – 12, to tell stories from their own lives. Then, she guided them to think about how their personal experiences could be part of a larger historical story, focusing on the story of African Americans. The project was part of Pathways-Hyattsville's celebration of Black History month. Her work with the students fostered their abilities to express themselves and motivated them to learn about historical

events by making connections with their own lives.

The project did not stop there. In February, mural artist David Cunningham arrived at Pathways-Hyattsville



to help the students illustrate their stories. Building on Arianna's work, he helped them use art techniques to create individual portraits. These portraits represented what they had discovered about themselves and about events in American history that they decided held significance for them. The portraits became part of a mural celebrating heritage and hope for the future.

The Pathways School-Hyattsville concluded the project with a program titled "African American Leaders of Tomorrow". It featured story-telling presentations and a display of the mural, as well as music, poetry and dance.

## I Don't Believe in Impossible

*I don't believe good destroys evil,  
Because the bad guy always comes back.  
I don't believe we only live once,  
Because we leave pieces of us behind.  
I don't believe in impossible,  
Because impossible is possible.  
I don't believe in the end,  
Because every road ends with a beginning.*

Brian Fowler  
Pathways-DuVal Re-Entry

Poet Carol Peck completed a six-day residency at The Pathways School-DuVal Re-Entry through an Arts in Education grant from the Maryland State Arts Council. Pathways-DuVal is a program for ages 13-19 located within a public high school. In her poetry class, Carol worked with the concept of metaphor as a powerful tool for poetic self-expression. In their poems, the students experimented with comparisons using a variety of frameworks to structure their poems, including their beliefs and values. Each student created a portfolio of their work. At the conclusion of the class the poems were collected and published.

## Creativity in Stone

Pathways art teacher Michael Winger took students from The Pathways School-Edgewood to a nearby regional park and showed them that it is possible to make imaginative works of art from stones. The students had to pay careful attention to their surroundings in the park and choose stones that were both interesting and could be balanced with others. Then came the creative work of placing the stones on top of one another to make a sculpture. The process required persistence and patience.



Students and Michael Winger with their completed stone cairn at the park.



Students at work during the visit to the stone-carver's studio.

Later, the art class observed and worked with stones in another mode during a visit to the studio of internationally recognized sculptor and stone-carver Sy Gressor. The students spoke at length with the 81-year-old artist, who showed them some of his work and let them try his tools. With concentration and care, the young artists chipped away slivers of stone.

Both the patience necessary to build with stone and the focus needed to carve it are qualities that will benefit these students as they prepare to enter the world of work.