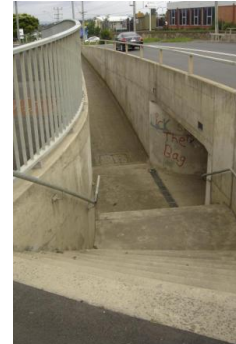




Youngtown Primary Makes a Difference to their Local Community

Grade 3/4 students and their teachers Jo Brady, Nathan Karas, Rose Boxhall and Brock Kerlake embarked on a voyage of discovery in 2005. Nathan Karas describes the process.



We were aiming to make a difference in our local community but didn't know what or how we would do it. Our unit of inquiry was entirely student led and driven. Yes it is scary to set sail on a unit like this. Our team had to continually reflect and re-plan our direction based on the way our students' understanding of the issue changed. It takes effort and a supportive team of students and teachers to make this possible. Luckily we have all of these things at our school.



Teachers and students worked together to discover the problems in the local community. We developed questions to survey a variety of community members. We bundled and used the data to graphically represent the responses. The top four responses were selected and the students voted to decide which problem was most important to them. The result was a decision to address the causes of vandalism in the community.

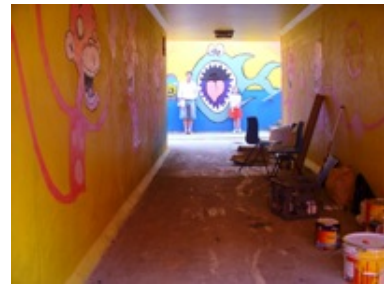


These causes became the focus of our inquiry. Various experts were contacted to help us with this process. We asked local government and police to give us their understandings and data. Special guests such as the Mayor visited and spoke with students.

Students decided on two courses of action. They developed an advertising campaign to be displayed on the back of buses driven around the local community. All students produced a poster that highlighted the causes of vandalism. As a group they decided on the best posters to be used to advertise on the back of local buses. This was their way of educating the public about what they were doing.



Secondly they decided they would like to change the underpass near the school to make it more positive, inviting and supportive to the community. They wanted to create a mural and improve the lighting and drainage of the underpass, in partnership with younger adults within the community. The first major obstacle to overcome was gaining permission for the project. We were successful in developing community support and understanding and in gaining funding.



Each class designed a section for the mural. To prepare the walls and complete the mural, the students were assisted by two young street artists and two local Grade 10 students. The end result was stunning; a wonderful example of students working together to produce something that demonstrated their understanding of the causes of vandalism and which supported the community.



Nathan Karas
Grade 3/4 Teacher
Youngtown Primary School



Read a [review](#) of this MAD Project by Youngtown Primary staff.