

From Mendocino Coast Audubon

From: Warren and Ginny Wade [<mailto:wwade@mcn.org>]

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Subject: Children's Art Poster Project

In 2007 MCAS had 21 classes participate (we estimate that over 450 children were involved) in our SOS Children's Art Project. We started in late April (we had just gotten the grant) and on June 20th we opened an art show in a local gallery in Mendocino with 314 pieces of absolutely wonderful children's art. All the children who participated received an invitation to the opening. We were amazed by the number of teachers who became involved as it was during the time of Star Testing in the schools and the end of the school year which is always busy except perhaps for the last week or so. We then laminated selected children's art for posting on our beaches.

Here is an outline of the steps we took.

Letters to Superintendents in Fort Bragg, Mendocino, and Point Arena describing the project and asking for permission to contact principals.

Then a similar letter to Principals who all gave permission.

Letter to teachers outlining the project and inviting them to participate.

Packets were then delivered to the teachers and contained the following;

- Story of Pink Lady and Friends by Becky Bowen

- General information sheet on protecting shore birds by Toby Tobkin

- Pictures of common shore birds - photos by Ron Levalley

- "National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America" (we had been given 18 copies) and the other classes got David Fix's book, "Birds of Northern California"

- Student Art Paper (9"x12" as they made good size posters) - enough for each child in the class plus 3 or 4 extras. The paper was quite reasonable in price. We went with actual art paper as an artist/former school teacher friend found that the quality of the paper made a difference in the quality of the children's art.

- Brochures from State Parks on Snowy Plovers

We offered to send people into the classroom to present the project and to talk about shorebird protection. In addition, we said that there would be a cash award given. Since we had a wide range of ages represented in the art (Preschool to 5th Grade), we decided to

give each class an "award certificate" and the cash awards went to each school that participated. I would highly recommend not trying to pick one child's art for a prize. We were clear that the art work became the property of MCAS so that we would have the right to reproduce the art for the future - the posters and now the book.

Our success was due to personal contact with the teachers and to the packet we gave the teachers for their classes. The "curriculum" was outstanding as the story of Pink Lady really captured both the teacher's and the children's imagination.

The art show was fantastic thanks to Becky Bowen and the art gallery coordinator, Janet Self. We had over 800 people visit the show at Odd Fellows Hall in Mendocino.

The posters made from the children art are wonderful. I made the posters from the children's art with text in both English and Spanish. This year I printed the posters on 11x14 inch photo paper so the colors were brilliant. We have had good success in laminating them in heavy pouches (7 mil) - they hold up beautifully under North Coast beach conditions.

If you would like a sample packet that was given to the teachers, I would be happy to send you one. Just let me know. Also if you haven't seen the posters I will be happy to email copies to you.

Good luck on your project.

Ginny Wade