

POWELL SHOPPER-NEWS

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Powell High art class leaves a long-term message to remind visitors of the environment

Powell High School students Matthew Dischner and Cory Merrick use some muscle to position one of the pieces of an eco totem in place.
Photos by Greg Householder

A lasting legacy

By Greg Householder

The intermittent rain didn't bother them.

Neither did the imprecise measurements that necessitated major metal, cement and ceramic work.

The enthusiasm and "can do" attitude on the part of Powell High School art teacher Jessie Renfro's class was impressive. In a couple of hours, they had overcome every challenge and left their school a lasting legacy with an environmental impact to be seen for years to come.

Art class and the environment, one might ask? Aren't these two totally unrelated disciplines?

Not if the folks at the Knox

gram has anything to say about it. As a matter of fact, they're looking for teachers from any and all disciplines to work on environmental projects. It's not just a "science thing" anymore.

With the help of AmeriCorps volunteers such as Mary Ordos, classes other than science are getting into incorporating environmental topics in their subject matters.

Throughout the semester, Ordos helped the students in Renfro's class with various hands on lessons regarding water protection and the environment. As part of the program, the students were required to do a service project.



Two of the finished products – Jessie Renfro's art class at Powell High School leave a lasting legacy in the planters in front of the school calling attention

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the totems were fired, posts were anchored into planters with concrete. Totems, each consisting of two pieces with a hole in the center, were carefully placed on the posts. Cement was poured into the center of the totem pieces to hold them to the posts. The posts were trimmed – a difficult effort with multiple hand saws – and the pieces were put in place. The center of the totem pieces required trimming of the center which was done with chisels and hammers in the art classroom.

The four totems are located in the three concrete planters in front of the school's main entrance. There is one totem in each of the outside planters and two in the center one.

The Knox County Adopt-A-Watershed program would like to see other nonscience teachers participate. If you are a teacher or school administrator and would like more information, contact Ruth Anne Hanahan at the UT Energy, Environment and Resources Center at 974-9124 or e-mail at rhanahana@utk.edu.

Mackenzie Hernandez and Ashley Blair pour cement into the center of one of the eco totems the Powell High students placed in front of the school.



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