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Volunteers create 9 murals on Wilmington Middle School campus



A mural that was previously finished on July 19th, 2023 as part of the beautification project at Wilmington Middle School. (Photo by Gil Castro-Petres, Contributing Photographer)

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Paintbrush-wielding volunteers descended on to Wilmington Middle School this weekend to create nine inspirational murals ahead of the new academic year.

The Wilmington campus is part of the Los Angeles Unified School District, which begins the new academic year on Aug. 14.

The effort was part of an ongoing Sharefest Community project to beautify various campuses of all grade levels, which also coincides with the nonprofit's larger mission.

Sharefest Community Development is a nonprofit organization focused on helping underserved youth in Southern California continuation high schools. It provides educational support, mentoring and job opportunities.

The Wilmington Middle School beautification project, which took place Saturday, July 29, was carried out in partnership with Marathon Petroleum Corporation. Marathon is headquartered in Findlay, Ohio, and operates a refinery on Pacific Coast Highway in Wilmington.

Some of the murals depict Dodgers pitching great Fernando Valenzuela, UCLA Coach John Wooden and Jackie Robinson, who was renowned for breaking professional baseball's race barrier, becoming the first Black player in the MLB when he debuted for the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947.

The project is "making a huge difference by creating an inviting environment that the students can be proud of," said Wilmington Middle School principal Jorge Olmos. "And the role models on these walls epitomize the core values that we want our students to have."

Chad Mayer, executive director of Sharefest, said the support from corporate sponsors helps spread the work to transform schools and assist students.

"At Sharefest," he said in a written statement, "we firmly believe that education should know no bounds and that every student deserves a chance to shine."

Both groups provided volunteers for the day's mural project.

"Marathon is proud to be a member of the Wilmington community," said CP Patsatzis, vice president of refining for Marathon Petroleum, "proud that we have so many Wilmington residents as employees and proud to contribute to the

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Donna Littlejohn received a bachelor's degree (double major) in journalism and political science from California State University, Long Beach, and began her career in daily journalism with the San Pedro News-Pilot, transferring to The Daily Breeze staff in 1998 after the San Pedro publication closed.

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