

Edgewood Mural Completed

Summer Art Project Part of Youth Employment Program

BY KELLEY DUPUIS

It started this summer with a whitewashed wall behind the Safeway store across the street from the Rhode Island Avenue Metro station in Northeast DC.

And now it's finished: A colorful mural, 300 feet long and 20 feet high, blazes forth from what was once

just a dirty, blank wall alongside a supermarket. The Edgewood Mural Project, unveiled in August, started out as a summer youth employment program and flowered into a burst of creativity clearly visible from the platform of the Metro station across the street.

The mural was executed by a group of young artists and students under the guidance of professional artists from around the United States.

It festoons the wall adjacent to the Safeway store at 12th

Street and Rhode Island Avenue.

"The program is about unity and community," said Deidre Ehlen of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (DCCA). "The kids met once a week for about eight weeks to decide what the mural would look like. They hit the street, went from business to business and talked to people about what their community meant to them."

The DCCA funded the project to the tune of about \$100,000, Ehlen said. The commission worked with various local nonprofits to fund the mural project for youngsters interested in working in the arts and in the DC arts scene. The young artists were paid for their work.

The commission hired Albus Cavus, a non-



300 feet long and 20 feet high, this mural at the corner of 12th Street NE and Rhode Island Avenue was the summer project of about 50 students under a city youth employment program.

profit organization which specializes in creating and developing public art, to coordinate the project. The official unveiling of the mural was Aug. 22. The commission has funded other murals around the city, but the Edgewood mural project was unique, said Albus Cavus spokesman Peter Krsko, noting that it involved, in addition to the actual composition of the mural, a curriculum lesson plan for students to go through a program of public mural creation.

A textbook was distributed to students who worked on the project, with an eye to encouraging them to create murals in other cities as well. The concept of creating art in public spaces is Albus Cavus' main focus.

Young artists who worked on the project ranged in age from 16 to 21. Some were art students and



some had other backgrounds, but all employed the same media – essentially those used by graffiti-taggers: acrylics and aerosol spray-painting. Only in this case, the techniques of graffiti were being used in a coordinated effort to dress up the community in a small way. In fact, that was part of the original intent, said Ehlen.

“The point is to take walls that have been illegally tagged and replace the tagging with murals,” she said. ★

Spend \$3 on POWERBALL® tickets and get a FREE Breakfast Bite® or Big Bite® Hot Dog (99¢ value).

Valid October 4 through October 31, 2009



No limit per person or per day. POWERBALL® tickets must be purchased October 4 – October 31, 2009. The free Big Bite® and Breakfast Bite® must be redeemed at time of Powerball purchase. Promotion only valid at participating Washington, D.C. 7-Eleven locations that sell D.C. Lottery products.

Capital Carpet & Furniture, Inc.

Big Sale in Small Store 25% to 75% off on all Area Rugs

- Supply & Install wall to wall carpet - 3 rooms free pad, free installation (up to 40Sq.Yd/360Sq.Ft.)
- **Only \$599**
- Supply and install wall to wall hardwood floor
- **Only \$4.99/Sq. Ft**
- We also supply and install granite/counter top



1905 & 1917 14th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
Tel 202-234-8882
Fax 202-588-9505