

Class sneaks peek of balloon event mural

MURAL

BY CAROL ROEHM

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DANVILLE – A mural that will be featured as a coloring activity in the Kid Zone during Balloons Over Vermilion next month received the stamp of approval Tuesday from Jessica Alyea’s third-grade class at Northeast Elementary Magnet School.

Alyea’s class has served as Balloons Over Vermilion’s 2017 student host ambassadors throughout the school year, so it was only fitting that the 6-foot by 4-foot vinyl mural was unveiled for the first time in their classroom.

The mural depicting a map of Danville and titled “Where Will We Land Today?” was illustrated by Northeast teacher and local artist Eileen Dunavan and then printed onto vinyl by Alyea’s husband Aaron, who is a graphic designer at Trigard.

The mural will allow visitors to Balloons Over Vermilion make their mark during the event July 14-15. After the event, the mural will return to Northeast as a keepsake of Balloons Over Vermilion.

Cassie Keister, Balloons Over Vermilion marketing chair, said she had noticed a similar activity with a banner at the Taste of Champaign and thought it would be fun to incorporate the balloon-and-Danville-themed mural as a free activity in the Kid Zone.

Aaron Alyea said he remembered an old map-style print illustration that featured balloons flying over Danville, scenic sites and local businesses in Vermilion County from years ago, so he enlisted the help of Dunavan and together they brainstormed with his wife’s third-grade class their idea of locations in the community and streets over which a hot-air balloon might fly or land.

Dunavan drew the illustration for the mural incorporating the children’s suggestions that included their school, Vermilion County Airport, a farm, Kennekuk County and Kickapoo State parks, Douglas Park, Danville Area Community College,

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Danville Stadium and Ellsworth Park. Aaron Alyea added his wife’s students’ balloon designs that they created earlier in the spring around the perimeter of the mural.

The Darby family and Trigard Monuments donated the materials and printing of the mural that debuted on the last full day of school for Jessica Alyea’s students.

“We’ve really enjoyed it,” Alyea said of her class being a part of the Balloons Over Vermilion yearlong plans. “We were able to do activities we wouldn’t normally do.

“I think some truly liked designing the balloons,” she said.

Third-grader Macy Musgrave agreed. "I liked designing the balloons because they're going to be on everything."

Fellow classmate Ana Johnson said she liked last month's pilot school the best when Danville balloon pilot Donna Carlton-Vish brought a retired hot-air balloon to the school.

"We broke the record for how many people were inside the envelope," Ana said, referring to the fabric part of the balloon that holds the air.



JESSICA ALYEA'S THIRD-GRADE CLASS at Northeast Elementary Magnet School were treated to a sneak peek of a mural that will be in the Kid Zone at Balloons Over Vermilion. Aaron Alyea, a graphic designer at Trigard, and Eileen Dunavan, a local artist and Northeast teacher, collaborated with the students on the mural.

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