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NORTHEAST ELEMENTARY MAGNET SCHOOL third-graders Asia Farr, left, and Samira Hoskins put the finishing touches on their hot-air balloon designs that will be incorporated into a poster to promote the Balloons over Vermilion event in July. For more photos, visit www.commercial-news.com

Colorful creations

Students' art to promote balloon fest

BY CAROL ROEHM
CROEHM@DANCOMNEWS.COM

DANVILLE - Jessica Alyea's third-grade class at Northeast Elementary Magnet School showed off its talent Tuesday afternoon.

The 23 students, who are serving as the host class for Balloons Over Vermilion 2017, were encouraged late last week to imagine they were hot-air balloon pilots and to create their own balloon designs that will

be used to promote the event on July 14-15 at the Vermilion Regional Airport.

The talented children didn't disappoint. When event co-chair Pat O'Shaughnessy and event marketing chair Cassie Keister visited the classroom Tuesday, they were pleasantly surprised by the children's colorful creations featuring penguins, pizza and even a unicorn.

"They had the weekend to think about it, and then we came back (Monday) and gave them Sharpies to color their balloons," O'Shaughnessy said. "All the designs will be incorporated into a poster."

"They just jumped right in," Keister said. "Some had two, three ideas for balloon designs. Some had already practiced drawing it"

The youngsters also were asked to name their balloon and write a couple of sentences about how they dreamed up their lofty creation.

Asia Farr called her balloon design "Peace and Love," which prominently featured a large peace symbol and creatively spelled out the word LOVE interspersed with the symbol.

"I was thinking about it, and my mom helped me come up with the idea," she said.

Nearby, her classmate Torrell Miles said the inspiration for his design came from the kitchen. At first glance, Torrell's balloon design looked like a tomato slice, but up close the design was comprised of slices of pizza on a red background.

"I was in the kitchen, and I thought of a flying pizza," he explained.

Brooklyn Warfield's balloon design, dubbed "Unique Unicorn," was exactly as the name implied. Her unicorn sported a rainbow-colored mane and a cotton candy pink

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JESSICA ALYEA, third-grade teacher at Northeast Elementary Magnet School, admires Brooklyn Warfield's hot-air balloon design, left, as Ana Johnson, right, puts the finishing touches on her balloon design that will be incorporated into a poster to promote the Balloons over Vermillion event in July.

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striped horn. Brooklyn said she considered "a bunny, a cat and a dog" as possible design choices, but decided on the mythical animal "because I never had drawn a unicorn before."

"I thought of a unicorn and drew it from my head," she said. "I practiced drawing eyes all weekend."

Fellow classmate Carson Lane also changed his mind as he researched possible subjects for his balloon design.

"I was going to do a crystal, but then I saw a picture of a diamond and thought it was cool," he said.

Alyea said most of her students created one balloon design, but a few children ended up designing two.

"We sent information home with them so they could talk it (design) out with their par-

ents," she said. "They came prepared with several ideas."

O'Shaughnessy said he was pleased with the children's creative artwork.

"Their ideas were great," he said. "Most knew what they were going to do after thinking about it over the weekend. They've come along since yesterday."

"They're out of my league," O'Shaughnessy commented about the children's creativity. "I can't draw stick figures."

All of the children's balloon designs will be combined into a collage by Jeff Summers of Media One Visual Arts and will be used for a poster to promote the festival of 30 hot-air balloons.

The young artists will be called into action again soon.

"We hope they will help design the mural that will be at the Kid Zone (during the event), where there will be inflatables and tethered balloons," Keister said.