

# D211 POST: HOFFMAN ESTATES HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PAINT PORTRAITS FOR MEMORY PROJECT



*Hoffman Estates High School Art Teacher Britney Thomas shows Sophomore Jakub Motwicki a technique to blend colors for a realistic skin tone on a portrait he is creating for The Memory Project.*

For five years, art students at Hoffman Estates High School have participated in a unique art project. Each year the students take part in The Memory Project which invites art teachers and students to help cultivate global kindness by creating portraits for children around the world who have faced substantial challenges.

Art Department Chair Juan Medina believes the project is a good way to help his students see beyond their own lives.

“I thought this would be a great opportunity to allow our students to look outside of themselves,” Medina said. “The teenage experience is one that’s full of angst and can be a very self-centered. The Memory Project gives our students an opportunity to create something beautiful for someone they don’t know. It gets them to think globally and philanthropically”



*Hoffman Estates High School Junior Ashley Cresson fills in the color of the veil on a portrait she is completing for The Memory Project.*

Fellow Art Teacher Britney Thomas said that the Memory Project gives the students a tactile interaction with something that matters to the world community.

“This is impacting students and children in other countries who are suffering in ways that our students couldn’t imagine. Maybe they have to walk 10 miles to get water or they don’t know where their next meal is coming from. I think if our students can help these children, it helps both the student painting and the child receiving the gift to attain a sense of worth.”

Junior Ashley Cresson, bringing out positive aspects of the subject she paints is a way to help the students.

“Some of the subjects don’t look as happy or confident as others,” she said. “I like to bring out their brightness. I think this will help them realize that others are thinking of them and will help them a little.”



*Hoffman Estates High School Senior Oliver Pantoja fills in the eyes of a portrait he is painting as part of The Memory Project.*

Medina and Thomas both said that the project was initially met with concern by the students based on their own abilities.

“The first reaction from our students is ‘we can’t do this, it’s beyond our skill set,’” Medina said. “They feel that it’s intimidating to give something of themselves for people to enjoy. I tell them that this is something that they should take with severity, but paint with bravado.”

The students will complete the portraits in early May. Upon completion the portraits will be sent, through the Memory Project to an all girls school in Afghanistan. At Hoffman, the students will await the a video that shows the children receiving their portraits. Medina and Thomas said when the students see the video, they are all full of smiles and tears.



*Hoffman Estates High School junior Cammie Fossum touches up a section of a portrait she has been painting as part of the Memory Project.*