

School of Education

2007

ED4123
Student Art
Exhibition
and
Public Art
Presentations



Toddler Totem Trails

2007-08

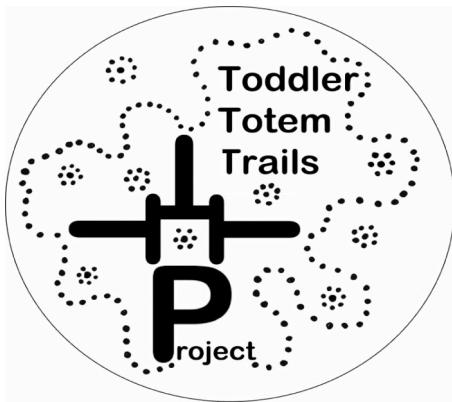
The TTT (Toddler Totem Trails) project is the second major Community Art activity for JCU SOE for 2007/08. Following a successful proposal by Dr. Ashton and securing of community partnerships, the multiple clay plaque making days in 3 local parks began in March 07. At these family fun days JCU students venture with art materials into the community, inviting residents who have young children to attend. Each of the five events to date in the parks has provided free sausage sizzles and drinks by Mundingburra Rotary Club, discounted entertainment by Melville's Farm and access to free ceramics media and tuition for the plaque making process. JCU art and community service students attend and scaffold the plaque making experience.

The clay plaques on timber totems were partly inspired by the Geelong Baywalk Bollards which display over 100 historical 2.5m high community characters along the foreshore. Our completed TTT will celebrate 400 local children from Vincent, Heatley and Gulliver, displaying their names, birth dates and hand/foot print if desired, on their fired and decorated plaques. They will each be attached to recycled timber house stumps procured from local companies who raise and relocate traditional Queenslanders.

The interactive experience with community and in particular with local Indigenous families is very rewarding for pre-service teachers. While the original grant was to focus on children under 6yrs of age, many have attended TTT with extended family members and teenage siblings. As well as being guided through the plaque-making process, the children receive a special TTT badge, experience one on one time with cuddly, furry baby animals, enjoy the jumping castle, pony rides or chairoplane ride. To accommodate the older children, JCU moved to invite Heatley Secondary College yr 9 and 10 art students to paint suitable designs on smaller concrete bollards, kindly donated to the TTT Project by TCC Parks and Gardens. By installing the high schoolers' colourful painted works near the toddlers' plaques, we hope to create a sense of guardianship and protection - a strong anti-vandalism strategy.

All firing and final decorating of the 400 clay plaques occurs at JCU. School of Education students and community service volunteers have assisted with transporting the soft clay pieces back to uni, storing them, curving, drying and firing them before carefully added colour and bling as selected by the child and their family. Preparation of the hefty timber bollards has been taken on through the Life be In It Community Carpentry Team with leader Pat Meek and his trainees. Townsville Towing has generously transported the rough stumps (each approx 200kg) supplied by Northern House Raising. Some of the logs are 150 -200 yrs old!! Once sanded and freshly painted, Townsville Towing, Life Be In It Community Carpentry, JCU and Mundingburra Rotarians all collaborate to install the totems at TCC approved sites in the nominated parks. By October 20th, eight newly transformed bollards were installed in Cambridge Park with 50 Vincent children's plaques attached. Eleven funky concrete totems were installed nearby. The response by locals has been amazing with no damage reported in the critical first few weeks. By mid 2008 all 400 plaques will be displayed in their outdoor gallery spaces, encouraging families to walk regularly and visit their child's unique named art.

JCU would like to thank all community partners, sponsors (including Communities for Children Townsville West) and local business groups (including Bendigo Bank) and the many enthusiastic individuals and community members who have contributed to this ongoing this project making it a worthwhile reality.



The 3 Tees in the TTT logo stand for Toddler Totem Trails. They also represent the 3 suburbs involved. The Tees are arranged in the shape of community walking paths with the P for Project also symbolising the parkland meeting places where the bollards with plaques will be installed. The dots mark more individual trails as families walk from home to the parks and back.



A 2007 Project Celebrating Community



Why Ceramic Plaques on Totem Poles?



Totems provide vertical display surfaces which reduce exposure of art work to direct sun and moisture. More recently totem poles have been referred to as Bollards to differentiate them from traditional cultural works. Bollards can be concrete, metal or recycled timbers (even jetty pylons) and have been successfully incorporated into many contemporary public art projects world wide.

Ceramics is one of the most child-and safe and environmentally friendly art media. It survives for centuries as a record of human cultures worldwide. An impression in soft clay, once fired to become ceramic, is a direct record of shapes AND textures or replica of child's hand or foot print.

When the plaque is being designed, decorative beads/stones/shells/gems/ trinkets/mirror pieces/keys/stamps/ hand & foot prints etc, decided by the family can be incorporated to add colour and individual themes



Bollards transform the flatter clay art plaques into a 3D form viewable from all sides for the public. As an exercise stimulant they invite meandering beyond a set pathway and conversation about the symbols displayed. Replacing or adding ceramic plaques is an easy process which the community could continue with minimal ongoing support from outside groups.

