



## THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Stories of purpose and lasting impact

# When a picture is worth a thousand smiles

How do you help grow pride of place for Seattle Public School kids?  
Paint school spirit in living color.





# FOR OVER A **DECADE, HUNDREDS OF DELOITTE VOLUNTEERS** HAVE HELPED TO BEAUTIFY AND MAINTAIN SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS **FACING BUDGET CONSTRAINTS AND A LONG TO-DO LIST.**

## THE SITUATION

Deloitte professionals across the US go to work every day to make an impact that matters for our clients and communities. This is a story about making an impact for our communities and those constituents whose pressing pain points include whether there's enough pepperoni to go around on Pizza Day. It's about supporting Seattle public schools—and the teachers and staff, who often go beyond their own day jobs for the families they serve.

Seattle school districts are always looking for helping hands to maintain and beautify their facilities and landscaping, and they recruit community support through the district's Volunteer Enhancement Projects Program. And when the call for volunteers goes out, Deloitte shows up.

Through Program participation, Deloitte professionals have supported efforts that complement the work of the district's Facilities Department.

"Unfortunately, we don't have enough staffing in a lot of departments to really manage and maintain our sites as well as we would like to," says Colleen Weinstein, Volunteer Enhancement Projects program manager. "We do about 200 volunteer projects a year, and about 60% of those are big companies, so Deloitte's contribution has been huge for the school district."





# THE SOLVE

Deloitte professionals have pitched in to help with District groundskeeping and other campus care for more than a decade now—a contribution that, if we're honest, likely doesn't much move the needle for the primary stakeholders, the kids.

What *has* sparked their engagement, excitement, and school pride are the murals.

Every year since 2011 (with a pandemic pause), a team of Deloitte creative professionals has engaged with a Seattle Public School to help develop and deliver a one-of-a-kind piece of public art. Why are there creatives at an organization usually associated with tax, audit, advisory, and consulting services? Because the organization provides a diverse set of services and believes today's challenges require multidisciplinary thinking and action.

Each project starts with a cross-generational collaboration: Administrators provide site location and guidelines (Will the mural depict school history? Its mission? Its mascot? Its community? All of the above?); kids work with their art teachers to provide a concept; and Deloitte creatives consult and then coalesce everything into a final design.

Design approved, Deloitte then contributes both the labor and supplies—paint, brushes, drop cloths, masking tape, ladders, etc.—to make it happen.

As Mark Morse, the Deloitte illustrator at the center of this group effort, reflects: "I'm thankful to be able to use my creativity at Deloitte; even more thankful to be able to put it to work in giving back to the communities where I live. Bringing together a big group of colleagues to help achieve a shared goal has made these mural projects personally fulfilling and significant."

Dozens of volunteers descend on the school en masse, bringing the design to life on one impactful day. One ambitious mural at Seattle's South Shore K-8, spanning 70 feet, features the school mascot—an undulating, multicolored Sea Dragon—mounted students astride, surrounded by other local cultural and regional environmental touchstones. "It was important to me to have a cohesive image, and something meaningful for students and staff and families who visit the school," explains South Shore art teacher and collaborator Weston Horner.

The most recent project—at [Sanislo Elementary](#)—produced two murals: one outside like a billboard, welcoming folks at drop-off and pickup; and one in the gym showing the historical context of the school's namesake Seattle Fire Captain Stephen Sanislo and his contributions to safety, volunteerism, and the local community.

## THE **RIGHT MIX** OF ART SUPPLIES INCLUDES **VOLUNTEERS, TEACHERS, AND KIDS**

# THE IMPACT

In the past 14 years, Deloitte's Seattle office has helped with maintenance work for a dozen local Seattle Public Schools—repairing walkways, removing invasive plants, and improving playgrounds and other parts of the physical environment to help contribute to better play (thus better learning).

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But for the kids, it's arguably the murals that hit best. Purpose-designed to reflect the cultures and personal journeys of the students in each neighborhood, they instill a pride of place and an anchor for identity for generations to come. Hearing their chatter pause as they see the murals come to life between classes, their excitement mounts as they point out details. Their shouts of "Thank you!" as they hustle past are among the more valuable key performance indicators we've found.



SMALL (BRUSH) STROKES, BIG RIPPLES FOR  
GENERATIONS TO COME.

# LET'S CONNECT.

Do these challenges sound familiar?



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