

## Escondido Library Mural Attracts Attention

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A picture may be worth a thousand words, but a giant mural could promote thousands of books for the Escondido Public Library.

An impressive big canvas with eye catching colors filling a blank façade will soon beckon to passersby on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, inviting them to check out all that the Escondido Public library has to offer.

Library Director Dara Bradds heard the City wanted more murals.

Knowing that the building had an exterior blank wall perfect for just such an endeavor that would catch the eye of passersby, Bradds approached the Escondido Library Foundation with her idea. The Foundation decided to support the project.

“This is one thing we can do to expand the influence and presence of the library,” said Jack Anderson, chairman of the Foundation.

Artist Julia Anthony was commissioned for the job. She had previously painted the murals inside the library in the children’s section. They chose her not only because of her impressive resume and proven talent but also to have continuity with her style of art.

Anthony, specializing in mural art, had been a long-time resident of Escondido where she raised her children as a single parent. Born in New Jersey, she was 17 when she started to put herself through the prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the oldest art school in the United States. After moving to Escondido,

she built her reputation as a mural artist, which earned her recognition in several editions of Better Homes and Garden.

A long time aficionado, she belongs to the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program where there are over 3,300 murals. It was started to proactively address the proliferation of graffiti and harness the rogue talent in a productive way.

Anthony’s work showcases her love of animals and nature.

“It is a joy to capture their essence with whatever I am painting. That is how we make a connection,” she said.

She especially wants to reach out to children wanting to raise their awareness of the value of taking care of each other and our animal friends. She does this through her images.

“We are our brother’s keeper,” she said.

Her mural inside the library includes endangered animals.

It goes without saying that Anthony appreciates the benefits that art brings to people.

“Art has healing properties. Art speaks to our soul. It can create this wonderful reaction with us,” she said recalling an instance where she heard that her work helped turn a failing stroke victim around.

Starting June 1, Anthony will prepare the wall by power washing it in cooperation with the public works department, putting on primer and then a base coat. She believes this to be essential to create a lasting and durable work of art. According to plan she will start painting on June 8. It will take her up to four months to complete. The image will depict the history of the library and of Escondido.

She welcomes observers to come and watch her work. She hopes to interact with the community on occasion and share with them her love of art and its value.

“I applaud the Foundation for having such an interest in bringing art to the community,” she said.

Creating a stronger community is the Escondido Library Foundation’s mandate.

They strive to do this through expanded learning and cultural opportunities, by providing access to