

# The Scarsdale Inquirer

Founded in 1901

VOLUME 92, NUMBER 4

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2014

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION



SCARSDALE INQUIRER/JIM MACLEAN

Cliff Mendelson, above, works with children. Bottom right, Anna Feldstein with her finished tile.

## ‘Day in Clay’ creates a lasting work of art

By SLOANE PICK

On Monday, Jan. 13, Fox Meadow art teacher Sara Faranda spread newspapers across the tables to protect them from the creative efforts of the incoming third-graders. She placed bins filled with tools at the center of every counter. But on that particular afternoon, Faranda was not alone with her class. The Fox Meadow PTA had arranged for Cliff

Mendelson, founder and artist-in-residence of Day In Clay, to help the students explore ceramic techniques and create a lasting work of art for the school.

As soon as the kids walked into Faranda’s art room, they could not help but “oh” and “ah” over the tiles set out to serve as models for the activity. They quickly sat down, eager to get to work and learn.

*Continued on next page*





SCARSDALE INQUIRER/JIM MACLEAN

Harrison Riback, Charlie Stemerman and Natalie Hu work on their clay tiles.

## ‘Day in Clay’ creates a lasting work of art

*Continued from previous page*

About 100 6-by-6 tiles designed by the children will form a mural titled “The Unity of Diversity in Nature.” It will be installed on a wall by the main staircase at the school.

“All the tiles are based on plants, trees and flowers,” Faranda explained. The children chose drawings of flowers, leaves and trees they wanted to put onto their tiles. The organic theme is appropriate for the third-graders, according to principal Duncan Wilson. Not only does it fit into the classroom curriculum, but the third-graders are the most enthusiastic gardeners in the school’s organic garden.

The program teaches the “im-

portance of the global diversity of plant life and its diversity in cross-cultural imagery and variety, beauty and utility across cultures,” said Mendelson. The tiles made by the children will depict plants from all over the world.

“Part of what they would learn would be how to take a two-dimensional image and make it three-dimensional,” Mendelson said. “As a ceramic artist, I give them the whole range of the process, starting with basically a slab of clay, to building these up into three-dimensional tiles.”

The children were enthusiastic. “I liked how we learned how to build and subtract on a clay tile,” said Henry Nova.

“I loved working with a real ceramic artist. I had so much fun!” said Mykaela Madoff.

Sam Wetzstein “liked how he taught us to make our plant design realistic.”

Mendelson said the students will “get to benefit from seeing their work on the wall” for many years to come.

Wilson believes this project is not only a great experience for the kids but it is also “a wonderful activity for the community.” Having Mendelson in the classroom allows the children “to see the work of real working artists” as well as to learn techniques.

The mural installation is planned for the spring.