

Mural brightens skills centre

By Emily Dowswell

A BLANK wall at Valley Industries' Skills for Life Centre is now a sea of colour after Chatham High students created a large mural which takes pride of place at the innovative facility.

Three year eight visual arts classes joined together to paint three murals which took their spots on the wall this week.

The idea was hatched by Valley Industries support worker, Sue Paton who approached Chatham High to lend their students creativity.

Valley Industries supplied the materials and the students their artistic talent.

Unit manager Wendy Grant said the murals have a calming effect in the room and have already been enjoyed by the clients.

"We absolutely love it!" she said.

Visual arts teacher Rebecca Humphreys said the mural was a collaborative project which taught the students to work well as a team.

She explained the classes first looked at works by Australian artists Jo Anne Hook and Ken Done which helped them pick their favourite style.

They chose a design and worked on their own smaller artworks so students could be assigned to different roles, depending on their artistic strengths.

They worked on the large mural in different sections at the school before transporting it to the facility.

The finished product depicts a colourful and intricate underwater scene featuring Australian

marine wildlife.

"The students found it a challenge and had to learn to trust in each other," Rebecca said.

CEO of Valley Industries, Trent Jennison was pleased with the joint partnership between the school and the final product hanging on the wall.

"It's fantastic to have Valley Industries and the community working together to provide an amazing result.

"We hope to involve the community more in what we do at Valley Industries."

Year eight student, Natasha Nichols said the mural project was difficult at the beginning but when they got started, painting soon became easier.

"It feels good to know one of our paintings is on the wall," she said.

Student Sam Mather also enjoyed the process which he said brought the class closer together.

"It was challenging but at the same time fun. It was really exciting painting with my mates," he said.

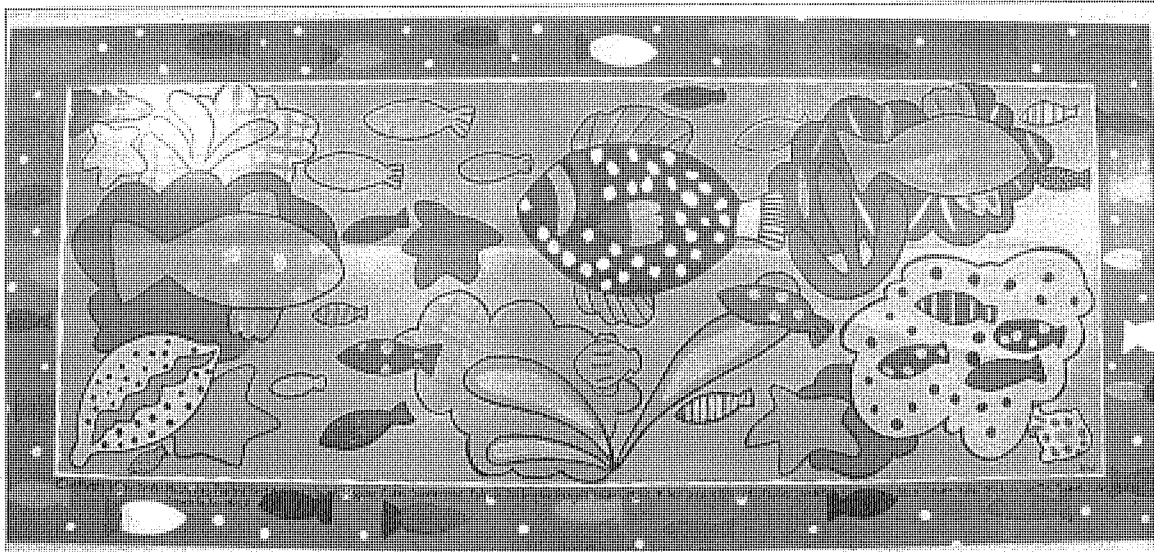
Sam said before the mural project he didn't know what Valley Industries was, but now knows what the centre is all about.

Valley Industries is delighted with the mural and plan to approach the local indigenous community in the hope another mural can be added to the wall.

Parents of the clients saw the new addition at the recent Valley Skills Spectacular event held at the centre and were thrilled to see Chatham High's masterpiece brightening the space.



A certificate of appreciation is accepted by Chatham High students Brodie Sinclair, Maddison Hammond and Aiden Morris, pictured with Trent Jennison of Valley Industries and Chatham High principal Willem Holvast. Those involved with the mural project are pictured below left and one of the three murals is pictured in detail below.



Researching your family tree

WOULD you like to research your family tree, but don't know where to start?

A family history fair in Taree this weekend will provide all the help first-timers need – and plenty for experienced researchers as well.

Taree Family History Inc will hold its first-ever family history fair, titled 'Blood, Sweat and Tears' at Club Taree function rooms on Sunday between 10am and 4pm.

The theme recognises the group's two most recent publications, 'Tears Often Shed', which chronicle the high rate of infant and child mortality which impacted heavily on the Manning's pioneering families.

Both volumes of the book will be launched during the fair, adding to the impressive list of publications already produced by members during the group's short one-year existence. All will be available for purchase at the fair, either in printed or CD

