



now photo: Leah S. Beddow
Queen Elizabeth art students, with teacher Marc Pelech (back left) prepare to paint murals.

ACHIEVEMENT

QE gets to the art of the matter

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When you walk into Marc Pelech's room at the end of a long portable at Queen Elizabeth secondary in Whalley, the first thing you see is the more than 60 awards that his students have received in only four years.

On the other wall are examples of the amazing work his students have created because of his program and the dedication and commitment he brings to them.

Pelech created the Queen Elizabeth Art Partnership program four years ago. The program was designed to address the needs of inner-city school art programs faced with physical and social challenges (i.e.) declining budgets, inadequate equipment or poverty.

Through ongoing partnerships with many local corporations and sponsors, the partnership has furnished the school district with an impressive inventory of 150 exhibition frames with museum matting, 20 art easels, a Nikon F-601 camera, a Yamaha mini-component system, air brush system and an ongoing supply of quality art work.

"I find it kind of ironic that this is probably the largest financially based program in the district that is possibly in one of the most economically disadvantaged areas of Surrey," Pelech said. "With this program I tried to develop an effective school community visual program that stresses partnerships with government and

amazing what we've been able to achieve in such a short time frame."

The list of achievements by Pelech and the approximately 36 students that have gone through the program is long and distinctive.

Q.E. has initiated provincial level exhibitions in partnership with the B.C. government

on such topics as multiculturalism, drug abuse, traffic safety and violence.

In addition, Surrey has been culturally enhanced through the installation of 22 permanent civic murals — the most carried out by any art group.

When reflecting on the program, Pelech's eyes light

up. He said it's hard to imagine topping all that they've achieved, but they're sure going to give it a try.

"My drive and desire is to always come up with new and innovative ways to make this program grow and be a cornerstone for similar projects that may be set up in other schools," Pelech said.

