

# Peralta Students Make Good... Public Art

by Laura Counts, Peralta Parent Teacher Group

Driving along Telegraph Avenue, you may have noticed the whimsical self-portraits that began appearing on transit boxes last spring—a sign that Peralta Elementary’s art program had spilled beyond its mural-covered walls.

Even with the budget crisis that has forced California schools to cut programs to the bone, the arts are thriving at Peralta. The K-5 school at 460-63rd Street is in its third year of an ambitious Arts Stewardship Program, made possible by a patchwork of public and private funding.

“The idea of stewardship is to give kids a voice in building a world they want to grow up in,” says Peralta artist-in-residence Ellen Oppenheimer, a noted textile artist.



tion, recycling, and disposal. They built sculptures, and told paper’s tale in a video.

This year, students are making their own paper from Peralta’s scraps, and even sewing it into books. Next up are plastic bottles: where they come from, and where they go. They’ll collect bottles and use them to build a greenhouse—while learning about plastic’s longevity in landfills (and the Pacific Ocean).

Another way students are becoming community stewards is through regular visits to the North Oakland Senior Center. Here, they connect with elders by working together on crafts, often with recycled materials. The simple projects are a direct bridge between the generations.

The Telegraph transit-box portraits are part of the stewardship program’s public art component, linking the school to the neighborhood. Watch for more recycled vinyl transit-box art, focusing on the water cycle this time, scattered around Rockridge soon. New banners will also go up on Alcatraz Avenue.

All of this is the result of years of work by Oppenheimer, Noval, and Principal Rosette Costello—along with classroom teachers—to integrate the arts into the curriculum, top to bottom. They have won for Peralta designation as an Arts Learning Anchor School from the Alameda County Office of Education, as well as funding from the Altamont Education Advisory Board, Bechtel, the California Arts Council, and the City of Oakland.

Learn more about Peralta at [www.peraltaschool.org](http://www.peraltaschool.org).

PHOTO SUPPLIED BY LAURA COUNTS



Me. I’ve been an Allstate Agent for 10 years. And riding bikes for 17. That means I can talk all day about insurance features and discounted rates, but I’d just as soon talk about a new route you’ve found. Let’s talk today.

**Susan Bernosky, LUTCF**  
**(510) 450 9050**

5940 College Ave, #A  
Oakland  
[susanbernosky@allstate.com](mailto:susanbernosky@allstate.com)



The Cupped Hands logo is a registered service mark of Allstate Insurance Company. Life insurance and annuities issued by Allstate Life Insurance Company, Northbrook, IL and Lincoln Benefit Life Company, Lincoln, NE. In New York, Allstate Life Insurance Company of New York, Hauppauge, NY. Property-casualty insurance products issued by Allstate Fire and Casualty Insurance Company, Allstate Indemnity Company, Allstate Insurance Company, Allstate Property and Casualty Insurance Company; Northbrook, IL. © 2007 Allstate Insurance Company

“The problems they are facing are really terrifying. We want them to feel like they have power to make beneficial changes.”

In one project, Oppenheimer and digital artist-in-residence Trena Noval led students on an investigation of paper, collecting all the waste paper the school used in a month. They weighed and measured, researched and graphed, delving into paper produc-

**elizabeth**   
The art of hair, skin  
and nail design

\* 5431 College Ave  
Oakland Ca 94618

\* 510. 652. 5431

\* [www.elizabethh.net](http://www.elizabethh.net)

**EXPERIENCE MATTERS**

**OASIS REALTY**

*Residential Real Estate*



**CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS\***

**Preston Grant**

REALTOR  
LIC R01375357

Direct 510.220.7908  
[preston\\_grant@sbcglobal.net](mailto:preston_grant@sbcglobal.net)