

UPSM's Zoology and Marine Biology Classrooms Get Immersive Make-Overs



Even though our students are learning virtually this semester, a group of University Prep Art & Design high school students are personally collaborating on a project with their teacher, Taylor Childs. Of course, this opportunity allows them to express their creativity and passion for art, too. What makes this collaboration extra special is that their work will be enjoyed by students who attend University Prep Science and Math High School for years going forward.

Thanks to the generosity of the Walter Family Foundation, UPAD High School's two Zoology and Belle Isle Aquatics pathway classrooms have been transformed into themed learning spaces that will immerse students into the worlds of zoology and aquatics.

One challenge they faced was how to incorporate the two program themes - Zoology and Aquatics - on two large support beams that are located in the middle of each classroom. The students turned this challenge into an opportunity, creating a vision of the support beams as trees so they would naturally blend with the other images in the room. This idea was presented to UPAD alum and teacher Taylor Childs, who enthusiastically accepted the challenge.

Taylor Childs, a native Detroiter shared, "The Detroit Zoology Society and the Belle Isle Aquarium are iconic in Detroit. U Prep is fortunate to have a partnership with these storied institutions so we can provide our students with an opportunity to learn about careers in those areas of study.



Artists make spaces beautiful. For this project, I have assembled a team of very talented student artists who will transform the vision for the support beams into art that blends with the other images in the room.

UPAD student Jasmin appreciated the opportunity to get out of her usual pandemic routine and use her creativity. She shared, “With COVID happening and the limits of the things we are allowed to do, I wanted to get out and use my creativity and artistic mind with this mural. I love art because I can express myself and art has made a huge impact in my life. I love U Prep because it gives me a lot of art opportunities that I normally would not get. I love that I am surrounded by artists who help me strive to do my best work.”

Another artist on the project, Kaylee, a scholar at UPAD High School, told us, “I wanted to do this because I wanted to get out of the house and use my artistic expression. Also, my brother went to UPSM and I thought it would be cool to do a mural where he used to go to school. I love art because there are no wrong answers. It is the best way to express myself and tell people how I feel. UPrep is great because the community and teachers are really cool and friendly. It's great having the teacher and student relationship along with the friendly relationships. I have met so many great people here!”

