

Rising to the top where the sun beats down

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- By: Anthony Mirones

NORTH FAIRMOUNT, Ohio-- - A team of 11 students and two teachers scaled the side of 1515 Carll St. in North Fairmount during a heat emergency, in the name of art.

"So far so good," Art Works staff teacher Jenny Ustick sighed. "We have to take it a little more slowly than we usually do, just because it's so hot."

They tried to conserve their energy while climbing up and down four flights of scaffolding and carrying supplies. When art student Aaron Davey reached the top, he was showered not by rain, but blistering rays of heat from direct sunlight.

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"If I didn't love art so much I don't think I could take it," whispered Davey as if trying not to use too much energy. "The people on the top, we have to go down, take some breaks and get out of the heat before we end up baking to death," Davey smirked as he wiped his brow.

While the temperature gained strength at 11 a.m. atop the Talbert House building in North Fairmount, student artist Kim Gombita of Lebanon, Ohio kept refuge below in the cooler shadow of the structure.

"There's no air conditioning here that's for sure," smiled Gombita. She exaggerated the difference between being on high versus down below, "It's like a 100 degree difference," giggled Gombita. "It's drastic. You can tell the people that are up top, their faces are really red."

"It's amazing! If I had to estimate... it's probably 10 to 15 degrees difference and then with the sunlight shining on you... it just takes so much out of you," explained Ustick.

Sun or shade, the heat was stifling Wednesday morning. The suction sound of water bottles being pulled away from mouths was constantly heard. They drank water and took breaks sitting in shaded grass to recharge themselves, while beads of sweat continually streamed together and dripped off their bare skin.

"If someone looks a little faint or peaked or maybe moving a little more slowly than usual, we say, 'Come down off the wall and take a break,'" said Ustick.

The team should finish the project on time, according to Ustick. "We are lucky our mural got off to a great start. So we're okay on time... I don't think this will slow us down too much."

The goal is to show hope through art, depicting neighborhood residents and scenic views of the industrial area nearby.

The project is scheduled to be finished in two and a half weeks.

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Aaron Davey battles the sun at high noon
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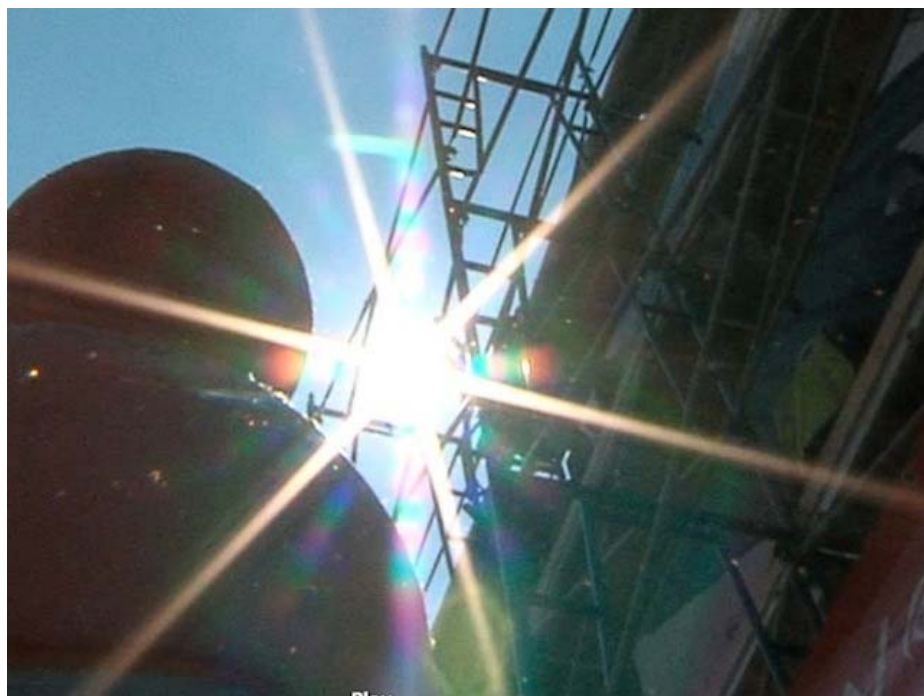
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Kim Gombita keeps cool by painting in the shade. Copyright 2010 The E.W. Scripps Co. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

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