

## **Eastside in full bloom with artistic pieces**

By: Julie Drake

LANCASTER - Eastside High School's campus was in full bloom Thursday evening as giant abstract flowers constructed from illegally dumped waste decorated the area near the fine arts building and theater.

The giant flowers were the fruit of a collaboration between Eastside High's art department and the Lancaster Museum of Art and History, which teamed up to launch "Wasteland: Turning Illegally Dumped Waste into Art," a schoolwide co-curricular project that involved more than 30 teachers and included green poetry and statistical posters.

The flowers were on display as part of the schools' sixth annual Showcase and eighth annual student

art show.

Hundreds of pieces of student artwork decorated the walls of the school's blackbox theater. Students also created works of art on the concrete near the school's amphitheater for the chalk walk.

The displays included Dr. Who's TARDIS - Time and Relative Dimension in Space - time-traveling machine as well as "Star Wars" robots C-3PO and R2-D2 and Jack Skellington and Sally from "The Nightmare Before Christmas."

The showcase also included music with guitar performances, which were Wasteland percussion, string orchestra, concert band and symphonic band as well as speeches.

"Wasteland" works on display from Advanced Placement art students were showcased in a glass display on one of the buildings.

Senior Anthony Gomez, 18, integrated waste he collected into his painting.

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## Page 2

"I wanted to do something different," Gomez said. "Everyone was making pieces out of trash so I was like, 'Why don't I just do a painting and add trash to it. It came out all right, I like it.'"

Gomez's bearded character has a cigarette butt attached to his lips, a belt buckle on his jeans, a pair of goggles on the top of his head and a shoe in his left hand. Behind the character's left shoulder is a wasteland-type scene with a bright sun in the corner.

Across the way is a spectacular display of Vans shoes designed by Eastside students as part of an online contest to win money for the school's art department.

Eastside is competing against other California high schools and could win \$50,000 for its art department and the chance for the shoes to be produced and sold in Vans stores.

Voting ends at 11:59 p.m. today. To vote, visit [www.vans.com/customculture/vote](http://www.vans.com/customculture/vote).

Robyn Young, Eastside's Visual Arts Department chairwoman, said the AP students' work is sophisticated and demonstrates thinking outside of the box.

"Those kids started as Art 1 students on our campus and we just keep promoting them through the

drawing class, the painting class, they can take ceramics, they can take multimedia," Young said.

Young credited teacher Steve Miller and his stagecraft students for their help in putting the giant Wasteland flowers together.

She also praised the efforts of Monica Mahoney, an assistant at the Lancaster Museum of Art and History, for her guidance in helping students craft their flowers.

Art teacher Evelyn Rivas, the driving force behind the Wasteland project, said she wanted to help the students get connected to their community as well as educate them about illegal dumping.

"It was a great experience seeing them react to the trash sites, the dump sites. They were speechless, really. They saw things that could have been donated, that people could still use," Rivas said.

English teacher Ryan Rivas' (Evelyn's husband) classroom was host to students who brought their parents to school under the pretense that they would witness a debate.

Instead, the students stood at the front of Rivas' classroom and poured their hearts to their parents or any other person they wanted to thank.

Tears flowed not only from the students and their parents but from observers including Young, who dabbed at her moist eyes as senior Johnny Bran, 17, thanked his father, Ramon Bran.

"He changed a reunion he has every single Thursday to come here," Johnny said. "Mr. Rivas told him it that it was actually a thank you speech, so, I'm sorry I lied. I just did it from the heart. It could have been longer, but there's just so many things he's done that I didn't know where to start. I just love the simple fact that the little things he does amaze me at times."

Ramon Bran said it was a surprise when he entered the classroom and didn't see many people for what he thought would be a debate.

"I liked to hear what he say," he said.

Rivas has staged the ambush-style thank you speeches for about four years, beginning when he taught a speech class.

"In all of my classes I like to teach my students about not just understanding their feelings but understanding their environment, understanding their surroundings, understanding the idea of

everybody's actions and reactions, really, is what shape us, shape the world and shape our futures," Rivas said.

Rivas added that as graduation nears there's all these emotions and seniors' feelings about graduation are potentially a bit ambivalent.

Rivas thinks it's important for students to understand and reflect on their emotions.

"The key thing is to say thanks, to look back and say thanks to people that have made them who they are," he said.

Senior Josten Lowe, 17, gave a speech to his mother, Angela Lowe, and his former wrestling coach, Terry Rush.

"You missed my speech," Lowe said. "I was so tearful, I made my mom cry, I made my coach cry, I made Mr. Rivas cry."

Lowe said Rush has always been a support system for him even after he could no longer coach because of a work conflict.

The teen admitted it was awkward to thank his mom because they got into an argument earlier in the week but it helped bring them back together.

"We're on a better relationship than we were before this," he said.

This is Lowe's fourth showcase. He has been involved in different aspects either through band in the past or helping out the art department this year.

"I think it's a wonderful thing because it shows what our school's about, how we're one of the major art schools in the Antelope Valley and it shows off our art skills to everyone else," Lowe said.

As the flowers were created as part of a collaboration between Eastside art students and the Lancaster Museum of Art and History in conjunction with the "Wasteland" project, they will be on display on the roof of the Lancaster Museum of Art and History as part of the Bloom 2013 exhibit.

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