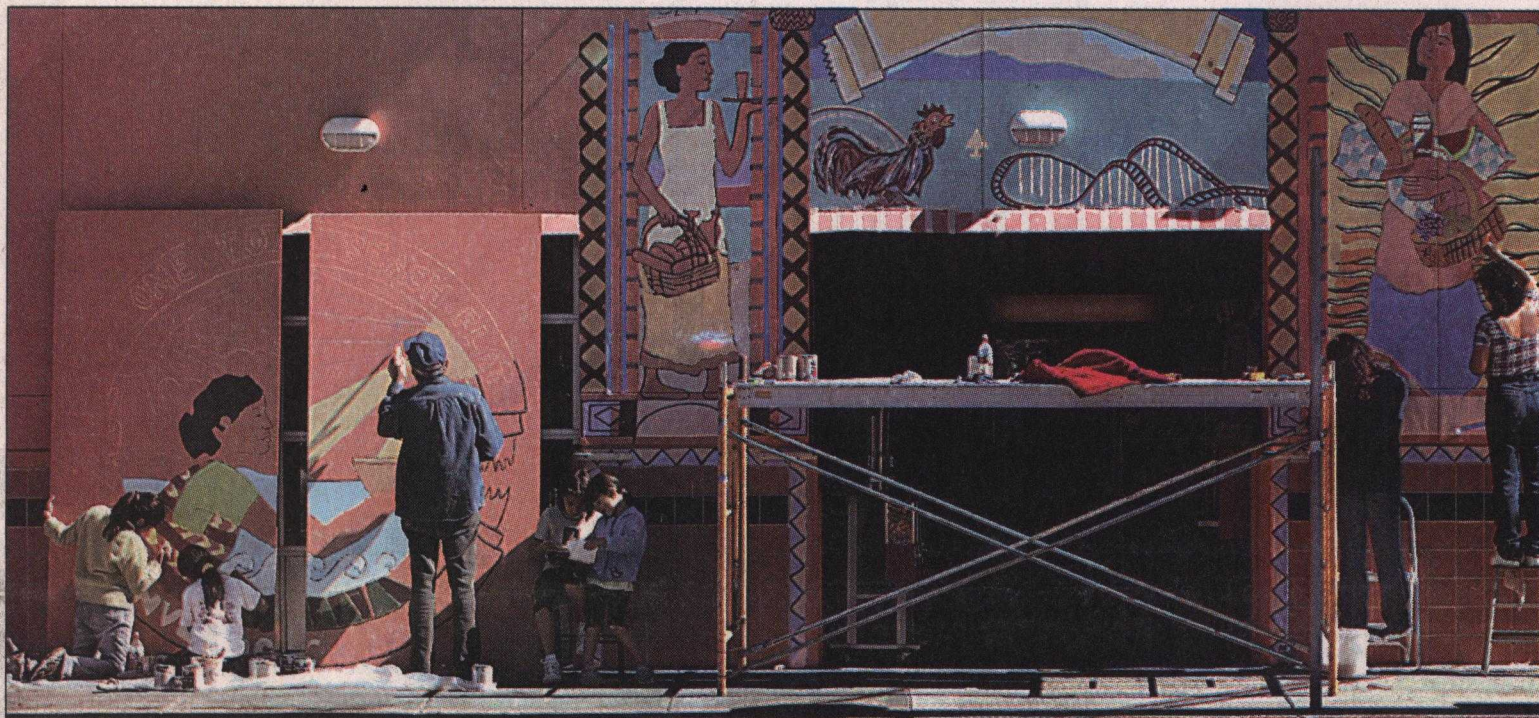
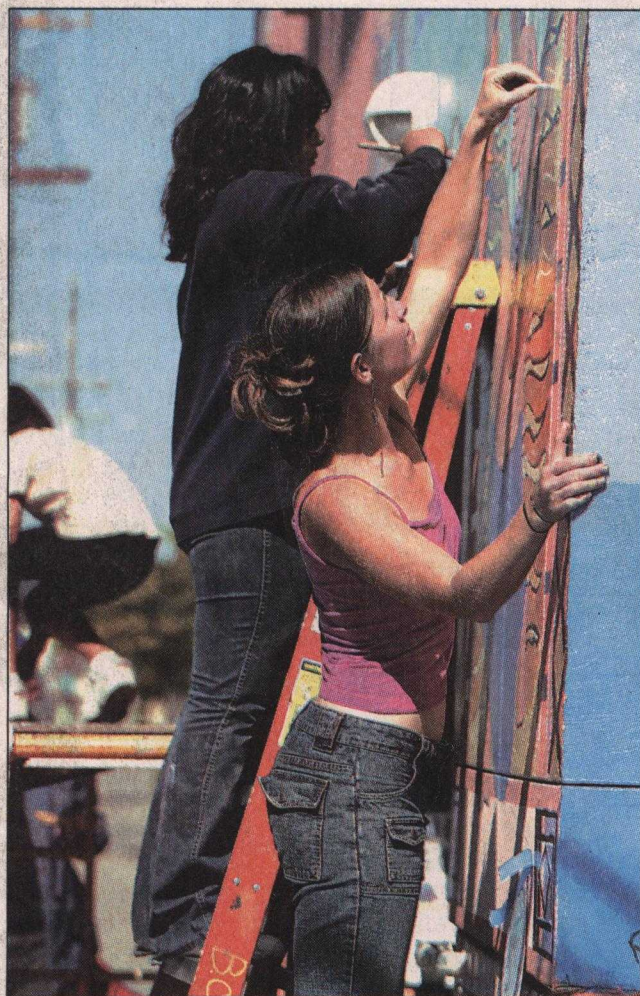


STREET SCENE



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos

The new mural at the corner of Riverside and Leibrandt avenues transforms the walls of Rosy's Market into a work of art.



New mural helps brighten Beach Flats neighborhood

SENTINEL STAFF REPORT

As of Saturday, women walk on the walls of Rosy's Market and cornstalks crawl up the sides.

SANTA CRUZ

All thanks to dozens of members of the Beach Flats neighborhood who came together the past two weekends to paint a scene of celebration on the high-profile corner store at Riverside and Leibrandt avenues.

"The mural looks great," said Rosy's owner Rosa Tapia, who sells everything from beach toys to fresh meats in her popular shop and operates a taqueria in the rear.

"We're interested in having a more attractive store for our customers," she said.

So, neighbors like Josefina, 10, and Maria, 6, dunked their brushes in paints of all colors Saturday and stroked over the dull terra-cotta walls, producing human forms, agricultural bounty and natural landscapes on three sides of the

building.

"There's a woman holding a bowl to the sun," pointed out Josefina, her fingers tinged with shades of red and yellow.

The mural is the result of a collaboration of neighborhood groups and is headed by local artist Crystal Birns, who sees art as a way of bringing communities together.

"Art overrides differences, and people respond to colors," she said.

Originally, Birns was going to paint the mural herself, but thought the work would be much richer if others were involved. So she provided the design and an outline, and the community has helped fill it in.

Birns' prior work includes the temporary mural on Pacific Avenue at Cathcart Street, "At Home on the Earth," which fronts a construction site.

The mural at Rosy's is expected to be complete within the next few weeks.

Mercy Housing is the primary sponsor while the Beach Flats Community Center, the Kiwanis Club and Rosy's market have also contributed to the effort.

Artist Crystal Birns creates the lines and form for a Beach Flats mural.