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### Kids & Education

## Jefferson Houston's New Four Seasons Mural

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A sunny mid-winter morning provided the perfect setting for the dedication of Jefferson-Houston Elementary School's new outdoor mural of the four seasons. Kimberley Graves, the Jefferson-Houston principal, and selected representatives of the first and fifth grade classes presented artist Ashley Spencer, who donated half of the time required for the work, with a huge thank-you card and drawings. The exterior paint materials were donated by Potomac Paints, formerly Alexandria Paints, at Bradlee Shopping Center, and Omar Gales was on hand from the store to receive a hearty thanks from the school and a certificate of appreciation from the artist.

The 50' foot long mural of the four seasons is on display on the east end of Jefferson Houston school, and on the playground wall at the corner of Cameron and West streets. The seasonal mural has been in the works for over a year. Wendy Sparrow, of ACPS selected Ashley to do the mural, which was designed to brighten the space and to help the students learn about the seasons, part of the Virginia Standards of Learning tests and the Alexandria Core Knowledge curriculum. Wendy wanted a mural that included: seasonal changes, plant and animal life cycles (butterflies and frogs), interdependence of living things, affect of seasonal changes on living things-hibernation, migration, food chains, producers and consumers, predator and prey, adaptations of animals (hibernation, dormancy, migration, the interaction of living systems, soil layers, cloud types, vertebrates, invertebrates, and fossil evidence.

Two young artists, Pete Winslow, a high school senior, and Jane Winslow, a college freshman, helped with roughing in the flora and fauna once she sketched the mural. Pete says, "We were glad to volunteer and work on the mural. There was a lot of prep work to do before we could start painting. I hope to do something art-related once I graduate from college. His sister Jane added that "It was really fun for Pete and me to work with Ashley and be a part of something that will be on display for years."

"Words cannot express how excited we are to have the mural on the playground. It is beautiful, and it makes the playground brighter," said Ms Graves, adding that she is "humbled that Ashley Spencer would volunteer her own time and energy to do this project."

Marty DeVine

