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## Community center gets inaugural murals

By: David Casey , Times staff writer

CENTRAL FALLS - Four dozen students and faculty and staff members from the Community College of Rhode Island's Lincoln campus painted murals at the Ralph J. Holden Community Center Tuesday as part of inauguration week for incoming CCRI President Ray M. DiPasquale.

The Lincoln contingent was one of five groups -- representing CCRI's four regional campuses -- to participate in the college's first Community Service Day -- a nod to Di Pasquale's professional reputation for noblesse oblige.

So from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., volunteers from the Flanagan Campus painted inspirational murals in Central Falls while volunteers from CCRI's Newport County campus read to Head Start students at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center in Newport. The mural project was a natural extension of the CCRI's longstanding relationship with the city of Central Falls, according to Brenda Pacheco, CCRI's Americorps\*VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) Resource Coordinator. Through its VISTA program, Americorps works with non-profit and public agencies (like CCRI) to develop educational community service initiatives.

Angelo Garcia, the director of Channel One, the city's social service agency, and the Ralph J. Holden Community Center, said he was delighted by CCRI's most recent overture.

"I love this partnership because these people are in constant contact with us and they know what's going on," he said. "They come to the meetings, they're accessible and there's a real connection there. Our relationship with CCRI is genuine."

Before the paint started flying, the Lincoln volunteers were divided into groups and each was assigned a theme - diversity, hope, joy, community, respect and leadership. It was up to each group to compose a six-by-three-foot mural exemplifying its appointed theme.

Once finished, the murals will be displayed at all four CCRI campuses, before returning to the Ralph J. Holden Community Center for good and all.

By 2:30 p.m., most of the painters were putting the finishing touches on their murals.

Jessica Turcios, a freshman art major, said she was happy with the final product, a surrealistic "joy" montage that included a beach scene, a bouquet of red helium balloons and a dove with an olive branch in its beak, lounging on a cloud.

Turcios said she volunteered for the mural project because she loves art and cares about the community center, where she volunteers as an arts and crafts instructor three days a week.

"I like our mural," she said. "I think it represents different aspects of joy, from partying to peace. I had a good time today; it was fun."

CCRI's Community Service Day is part of a weeklong inaugural celebration, which features the slogan "Changing Lives, Achieving Dreams." The celebration will culminate with an inaugural ceremony at the Knight Campus Field House in Warwick on Friday.

For a schedule of the week's events, visit [www.ccri.edu](http://www.ccri.edu).



Vanessa Turcios, a CCRI art major, paints one of the mural segments Tuesday at the Holden Community Center in C.F.

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