

# Great Lakes Children's Museum gets 'Mini-Mac'

BY MARTA HEPLER DRAHOS [mdrahos@record-eagle.com](mailto:mdrahos@record-eagle.com)

5/13/2016



Traverse City artist Peter Abrami, center, and Interlochen Arts Academy visual arts student Bella Rios of West Hartford, Connecticut paint portions of a mural on the side of the Great Lakes Children's Museum building. The mural is the backdrop to a new mini-Mackinac Bridge replica visitors will cross to enter the museum.

TRAVERSE CITY — Drivers heading north along M-22 in Greilickville now are greeted by a familiar, if out-of-place sight: the Mackinac Bridge silhouetted against the Straits of Mackinac.

A mini version of the bridge appeared in April on the south side of the Great Lakes Children's Museum where a mural of the Straits — complete with ship and tips of the Upper and Lower Peninsulas — began taking shape in May.

The project is the latest addition to the museum's three-year-old Building Bridges exhibit, which begins inside and will get a makeover this year.

"The intent has always been to have a bridge out there," said Executive Director Michael Long, who envisions a bridge complete with mini mile markers and welcome signs posted at the Mackinac City and St. Ignace points. "When we're done you're going to be able to enter the museum across the bridge."

The two-level, 13-by-20-foot steel bridge — dubbed “Mini-Mac” — was designed, constructed and installed by Team Elmer's based in Traverse City and Moran Iron Works and its Industrial Arts Institute in Onaway. Its colorful backdrop was designed and painted by visual arts students from Interlochen Arts Academy.

“This is the first of a couple different outreach projects we’re doing in the next couple years,” said Megan Hildebrandt, Interlochen instructor of painting and visual media. “We wanted to start with something bold.”

The mural was created from a composite of the students' individual drawings and includes depictions of a fox, a porcupine and a Petoskey stone on the Lower Peninsula side, and a moose, a bear and pine trees on the Upper Peninsula side.

Student Angelica Bohanan balanced high on a ladder on a recent Saturday to paint a giant moose antler. She said she hopes her work on the mural leaves a lasting impression of Interlochen on museum visitors and passers-by.

“A lot of people don’t know what Interlochen is. They think it’s a music school or a camp,” said Bohanan, of Broken Bow, Oklahoma. “I used to camp (at Interlochen State Park) on the other side of the street, and I didn’t know what it was.”

“Having this chance to help the community is really great,” said classmate Sam Thiele, whose art experience includes painting a “Dio de los Muertos” — Day of the Dead — mural on a Mexican bar and grill back home in Springfield, Illinois. “And we don’t often get to work on something this large.”

Long said the Great Lakes Children’s Museum plans to hold a “grand opening” of the exhibit before the end of June and perhaps a childrens' mini Labor Day Bridge Walk in September.

Original article: [http://www.record-eagle.com/news/lifestyles/great-lakes-children-s-museum-gets-mini-mac/article\\_fa252ef1-6d98-55b5-ade0-6f6c0cf8744e.html](http://www.record-eagle.com/news/lifestyles/great-lakes-children-s-museum-gets-mini-mac/article_fa252ef1-6d98-55b5-ade0-6f6c0cf8744e.html)