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Local news

Marine mural adds a splash of colour to Glenwood

The project was born out of a smaller mural on Brents Avenue by artist, Robin Opperman of Umcebo Design.

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 Danica Hansen - 3 minutes read





5 Kate Jamieson and Grace Harwood enjoying painting.

A BRIGHT burst of colour has been injected into the Glenwood cityscape in the form of a vivid marine-themed mural. Drifting jelly fish and diving sunfish decorate the wall of Glenwood Preparatory School on Bulwer Road.

The project was born out of a smaller mural on Brents Avenue by artist, Robin Opperman of Umcebo Design.

“During lockdown, I started painting with left over paint in the alleyways,” said the artist.

What started as a solo project has flourished into a community initiative as the Glenwood Urban Improvement Precinct (UIP) has partnered with Opperman and a local property company has sponsored the project.



Ansa Liebenberg paints a patch of blue ocean.

“They saw us painting in the alleyways in Brent Avenue, picked up on the idea and have grown the project into what it is now. It’s about making Glenwood a better place to live,” said Opperman.

Adding to the team are local students and residents, he said.

“The idea is for people to come and have some fun and feel some ownership over this project. I designed the mural, but the artists involved have added their input as well and it just makes the mural better and better. The idea is to share public art in Glenwood. The UIP centres around improving the environment, so the marine theme fits in well. People love it, they have been responding really well to it. This is an artist’s dream- it’s like painting in Time Square. I think art like this restores confidence in the community,” he explained.



Partners in paint: Robin Opperman (Umcebo Design) Sam Harwood (sponsor) and Vernon Stokes (Glenwood UIP).

Second year art student, Chantal Van Rensburg said: “I’m studying multimedia art and I’ve been working as a digital illustrator and artists for the past four years. I really enjoy painting murals. It’s nice to bring something positive to the community and involve different community members. It’s so accessible, if you can hold a paintbrush, you can help. It brings the community together.”

Manager for the Glenwood UIP, Vernon Stokes said they are a business funded UIP which operates in the area stretching from King Dinizulu Road to Lena Ahrens Road in Umbilo.

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“We have four pillars: cleaning, greening, place making and there’s a measure of security which we also offer on a 24 hour basis. This mural is part of our place making initiative. The idea is to enter into partnerships to uplift the area in such a way that when people drive or walk past, it’s a better place to be. We know the area is not a brand new area, so we owe it to ourselves to get involved in initiatives like this that can take an old brown wall and make it a feature that people will talk about and enjoy. It’s all about the feeling- if the area is clean and pristine, you feel safe,” he said.



Chantal Van Rensburg shows off Robin Opperman’s design for the mural.

Property professional, Sam Harwood, who owns a company by the same name, said they decided to sponsor the project

“We invested in Glenwood. a couple of our agents live here and we really want to get involved in the rejuvenation of the area – making Glenwood a better place to live.

“We wanted to give back to the community we work in. We have sold many properties here and want to reinvest in the community,” added Peter Hattingh who works as a listing and marketing agent at Sam Harwood Property.