

Work wraps up on Wagner Street hill mural, details remain



NOVEMBER 11, 2015 7:00 AM • [CALEB BROWN](#)
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Rush-hour traffic zipped up and down the Wagner Street hill Tuesday evening as 11 children from the Voyagers Community Learning Center huddled against the wall that bears the mural they've all spent the last several weeks working on.

The children held up a maroon blanket as they stood concealing the center of the nearly 300-foot long mural: a depiction of Bridge Street as

seen looking south towards the Chippewa River.

Then, after offering a rehearsed group line of introduction, they dropped the blanket and moved to the side in presentation of their work.

"This was the best experience ever," exclaimed Hannah Small, a girl enrolled in the Voyagers program.

Abby Wiberg agreed.

"And we got to work with the community," she added.

The children began the process in early September by scraping away the old paint. Then along with the help of Jean Arneson, the original artist of the mural, they began to repaint the giant picture, including some updates.

"It's a tremendous job," Chippewa Falls Mayor Greg Hoffman told the children. "I'm really impressed."

Hoffman isn't the only one who is impressed either. He said he's heard nothing but positive feedback from the community.

Arneson was also pleased with the work the children did.

"It went well," she said. "I'd give them a task and they'd get to it."

The ceremony concludes the work on the mural, at least for this year. Arneson said that it's completely painted but some detail work remains.

That work will resume in late spring or early summer 2016 and will involve applying details that will give the mural a three-dimensional look.

Students from the Chippewa Falls Senior High School's Art Honor Society will be helping out with that painting.

The Voyager Center also hopes to raise more money for the project. The goal is to reach \$10,000 to cover all the projects cost. So far, the group has received \$4,000 and many donations.