

UPF New Jersey Creates a Sawdust Tapestry in Celebration of UN Day

Carol Pobanz
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On October 23, at the invitation of the Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations, students from Nutley High School, working virtually with students from Honduras, created a sawdust tapestry in celebration of UN day.

The project, organized by Carol Pobanz of Universal Peace Federation (UPF) USA and Mario Salinas of UPF-Honduras was inspired by the Honduran tradition of creating sawdust carpets to adorn the streets during religious processions.

Using cell phones and computers, students at the Nutley High School Art Department had worked together with Honduran students to come up with a final design.

On the day, which also marked the 72rd anniversary of the UN, students worked from early morning to lay out the design and, using dyed sawdust and other materials, created a beautiful image portraying a worldwide hope for peace.

After being introduced by Ms. Alison Smale, Undersecretary for Global Communications at the United Nations Department of Public Information, Honduran Ambassador Elizabeth Flores Flake took the podium and shared words of gratitude to the students for their time and effort. She recognized them as our future leaders and also shared about the Honduran tradition of making the tapestries and about the design of this particular carpet:

“The tapestry depicts our shared world, with doves radiating and flying out into our atmosphere with a gradient of blues from dark to light. The border includes the symbol of the sustainable development goals, representing the path to opportunities and prosperity.

We have carried this activity all the way from home, Honduras into the Nutley art class and finally to the UN grounds, replicating a tradition we uphold each year on the morning of Good Friday in Comayagua and other native towns of Honduras.”

Since these tapestries serve traditionally as the ground upon which to conduct ceremonies, the Ambassador invited the students to walk onto the carpet and concluded the program by asking the more than 40 ambassadors and other dignitaries in attendance to meet the students there. In her final remarks, Ambassador Flores suggested, “Take a walk of Peace letting the sawdust color and spirit become a part of you.”

Throughout the day, passersby stopped to view the project, take photos and to write messages of peace on a poster the students had set up.

As Mario Salinas remarked, “This has been an opportunity for students to create goodness together.”