

Oozy concrete
means fun for kids

Leafy path for posterity



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Danielle Odekirk, 13, right, works with other Morrill Middle School students making leaf imprints on fresh concrete at Caltali Park in San Jose. The prints will be part of the park's "A Path of Ten Thousand Leaves," designed by Sheila Ghidini.

Artist creates design for park

BY BETTY BARNACLE
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Students from Morrill Middle School were in kid heaven Friday: They were actually *asked* to make prints in wet concrete.

Not any old prints though. No prints of hands and feet, the kind that have tourists bumping into one another as they walk Hollywood sidewalks, forever looking down and not where they are going.

These are leaf impressions.

The 23 San Jose youngsters were recruited to help artist Sheila Ghidini of San Francisco complete her conception of "A

'The community lost an orchard, but they'll remember it when they look . . . at the path and see the leaves.'

— Artist Sheila Ghidini

Path of Ten Thousand Leaves," part of the sprawling Cataldi Park's redesign.

Long before the children arrived at the park in northeast San Jose, Ghidini was at the site, busy harvesting leaves from

the park's few remaining black walnut trees for students to push into the concrete as it flowed out from a truck and formed a path. Future park strollers should be reminded, she said, that the entire property was a walnut orchard.

"The community lost an orchard, but they'll remember it when they look down at the path and see the leaves," Ghidini said.

Cecile Cogswell, who has lived in the neighborhood almost 30 years, remembers the orchard. She got down onto her knees beside the children to press slen-

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Orchard is out; leafy pathway in

■ PATH

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der leaves into the new concrete as a special monument to her two brothers, who died within 10 months of each other, the last 11 days ago.

"This is fantastic," she said.

But nearby, Mary Doan, 13, finished embedding a leaf, rubbed her hands and said, "Icky!"

J.R. Caampued, 14, didn't seem to mind messing in the gray goop, and not because it was being done in the name of culture, either.

If he weren't here, J.R. confided, he'd be in a classroom, probably doing math.

"This is better," he said.

Today the path is scheduled to be

extended and more leaves added. Adults are expected to show up, thanks to leaflets circulated in the neighborhood by the city office of cultural affairs that asked for public participation.

The leaves are expected to dry and blow away, leaving their images for posterity.

Ghidini, a teacher at the California College of Arts & Crafts, was commissioned by the San Jose Arts Commission and the San Jose Public Art Program to create the \$9,200 project, which will include a circular concrete seating area next to the path. The seats will be engraved in English and Japanese with a haiku about falling leaves.

Ghidini's public creations include a collaborative design of two Munic-



ipal Railway platforms on 19th Avenue and a community garden at Howard and Langton streets, both in San Francisco. She is working on a bus shelter in Lodi, where she has community members decorating clay tiles.

Ghidini laughed when Lindon Lee, 14, asked suspiciously, "Are there really 10,000 leaves here?"

"I didn't count them," she said. "But I think there's probably a lot more."

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