

# Otterbein Lake Project Donation Box

(featuring "Wessie" - the friendly Westerville Otterbein Lake monster)

## Robert Frost Elementary School – Hyla Skudder Artist-in-Residence 2004 - 2006

As part of the fundraising efforts to renovate a small lake near Otterbein College in Westerville, and create a beautiful community park and nature center there, local artists and school groups were asked to decorate special wooden contribution boxes. The boxes were to depict "Wessie" (Westerville's answer to "Nessie" the Loch Ness monster) in a creative and playful way. The completed boxes were placed around Westerville in area businesses to collect funds for the lake project. I worked with a third grade class at Robert Frost Elementary School to decorate one of the boxes.

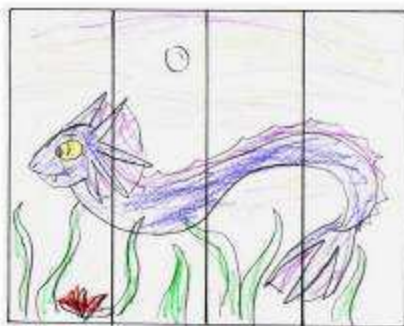


*Mrs. Guseman's 3rd grade class with the completed wooden donation box.*

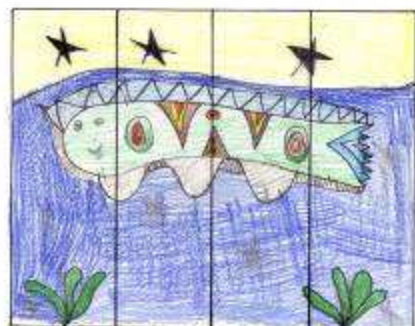
**SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR PHOTOS OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND CREATION**

## The Making of a Friendly Monster -- The Group Design Process:

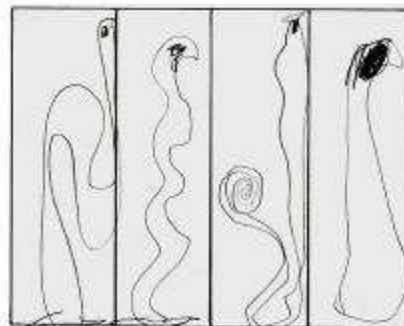
To help the students create their design proposals I gave them each a sheet showing the 4 panels of the side of the wooden box. Each student drew a picture of their vision of what the "Wessie" monster might look like. We shared all the drawings, and students voted on their favorite ones. Then we voted on which parts from these to combine into a new group-designed Wessie. I made a sketch using all the input from these decisions. Then I made copies of this sketch and each student got to color it in the way they thought it should look. We voted again on the final colors and on the construction materials to be used on each part. Then it was time to begin production!



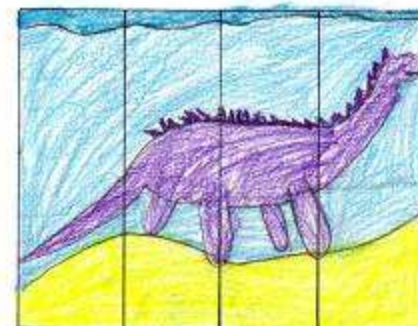
We used Leah's head, tail, and seaweed designs.



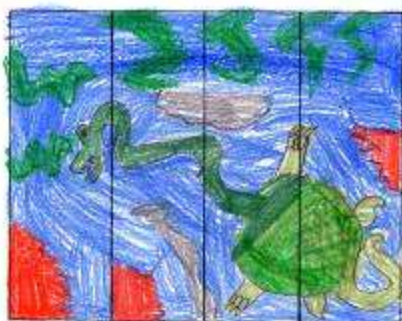
We used Caroline's cool body patterns and plants.



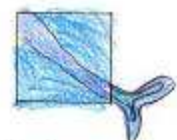
We used Jelanie's marvelous swirls for the water pattern.



We used Lexi's long neck, and sandy lake floor.

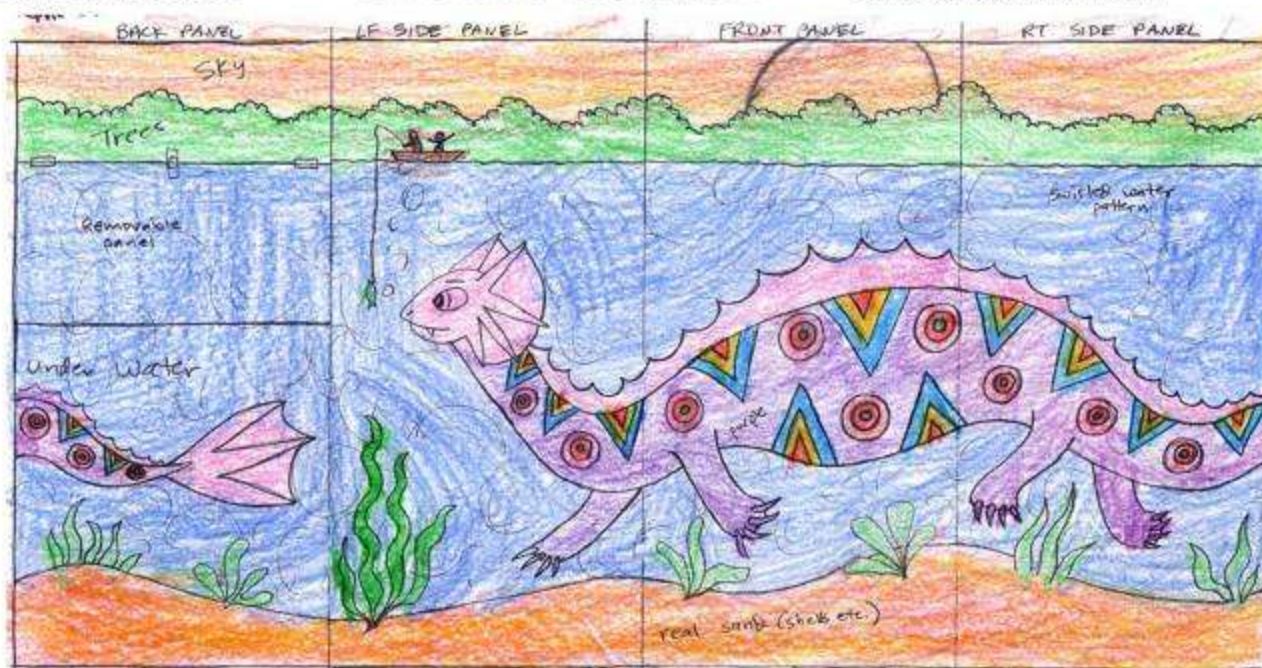


We used Avery's awesome clawed feet.



Cody came up with a cool flipping tail idea. Even though we

weren't able to use it, it was still a great idea and a cool drawing!



Cody's colored version of the final group design, complete with sunset sky!

## Production begins on the “Wessie Box”

I primed the wooden box with white primer, and traced the final design onto the box in pencil, and then outlined it in permanent black marker. Students were called out of class in pairs for 15 minute sessions during silent reading period and recess. The background was painted in with acrylic craft paints, and then the Wessie Monster was colored in with colored sands and glitter (using white craft glue as the adhesive). Playground sand was used for the lake bed, and students brought in shells and colored glass pebbles that we glued on later. We also cut the seaweed and aquatic plants from painted illustration board drawings and cut green craft foam. Various fishermen in fishing boats, and many marvelous fish were drawn and painted on illustration board, and then cut out and glued on.

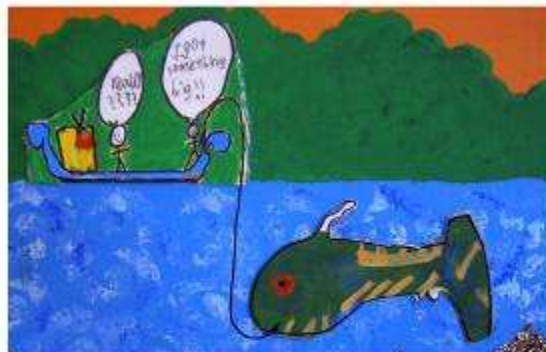


Students working on painting the orange sunset sky.



Jelanie sponge stamping swirl patterns onto the water.

Here are two details of the finished project. The detail on the left shows a fishing boat (complete with TV!) and big green fish painted on illustration board. The detail on the right shows the sand, seaweed and shells and glass pebbles on the lake bottom.



**Sand and Glue:** Students carefully paint glue one color area at a time, and then sprinkle the colored sand over the glue and pat gently. We tipped the box over newspaper to recover the extra sand so it could be used again.



# Creating a Park on the Top of the Donation Box



On the top of the box, where the donation slot was, we created a scene of Otterbein Lake, complete with people walking, skate boarding, resting on benches, and also featuring ducks and birds. And of course "Wessie" saying "Thank you!"



Students used small sticks, rocks and dried mosses to create the trees and shrubs (and the really cool rustic bench in the detail to the right). The people, birds and animals were drawn and painted on illustration board, and then cut out and glued onto the scene.



# The Finished Donation Box -- Ready for Action!



FINISHED FRONT AND TOP



BACK WITH LABELING



FRONT DETAIL

