



Architecture professor Sharon Sutton (right) and industrial design major Jennevieve Schlemmer discuss the final placement of earth mounds in front of Tukwila Elementary School, part of an art installation being created through a joint effort of UW students and the school's staff and pupils. It is the first major project of the UW's Public Art Curriculum.

PHOTO BY STEVEN GOLDSMITH

# Art project in Tukwila goes global

By STEVEN GOLDSMITH  
News & Information

The pupils of Tukwila Elementary School hail from 21 nations, and soon they will get to romp and dance atop every continent in the world.

The entrance of their school is being transformed into a 50-foot-wide map of the world — part gathering space, part outdoor stage — designed and built through a pioneering collaboration among UW students, Tukwila residents and the schoolchildren themselves.

Thirty UW undergraduates worked with more than 50 of the elementary school pupils and nearly all its staff to design the \$20,000 art installation.

The UW's "Artmobile" — a 24-foot van jammed with tools and materials — is expected to head back to campus when construction is completed around June 5.

Instead of using the new Tukwila Elementary School's public-art budget to buy a sculpture out of a catalog, school officials decided to try something more innovative. They

wanted an installation that would help solidify the school's identity in a city with a fairly mobile population, as well as serve as a venue for creative activities.

"What we did was to turn this into an educational activity," said Sharon Sutton, a UW architecture professor who heads the University's Center for Environment, Education and Design Studies (CEEDS).

It also is intergenerational. The UW undergraduates — young enough to retain vivid memories of their own childhoods — met three times with the Tukwila children, who already had done their own design sketches.

What emerged from pupils and staff was the desire for a gathering place where kids will be able to display art, sing, recite poems, perform plays and informally gather to learn about each others' cultures.

Children made models with popsicle sticks, colored with crayons or simply described their notions in words. One girl was inspired by the school's Tiger mascot to propose a trail of paw prints leading to the cafeteria, "so we could have lunch with tigers."

Paw prints, she got. Not only will paving stones shaped like tiger's feet meander around the world map, but the huge map itself and its surrounding earth mounds will form the shape of a giant paw.

With children and staff offering so many ideas, hammering out the final design proved a challenge for the UW team, a mix of landscape architecture, sculpture and industrial design majors. Tukwila was the first major project of the UW's Public Art Curriculum, which offers students

from different disciplines the chance to acquire the skills needed to build works for public settings. Students learn to evaluate needs and interact with the community as well as experience first-hand the work that goes into translating a design from paper into three-dimensional reality, said Louise St. Pierre, assistant professor of industrial design.

John Young, the UW sculpture professor who launched the curriculum with a \$333,000 Tools for Transformation grant — UW funding for projects promoting institutional

change — said the mixing of academic specialties "brings the discipline of public art into the 21st century."

Sutton's Center for Environment, Education and Design Studies (itself the beneficiary of a Tools for Transformation grant) organized the partnership with Tukwila, starting with a

design charrette last year. Construction began over the weekend, and the collaboration continues through neighborhood Saturday work parties (May 19 and 26) and a June 5 celebration of the project's completion.

Based in the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, CEEDS involves university students in public service in underserved areas through partnerships with schools and neighborhood organizations. Sutton said the goal is not only the creation of physical projects but also organizational change and community involvement.

The Public Art Curriculum Web site is <http://www.studypublicart.org>. The CEEDS site is <http://ceeds.caup.washington.edu/>.

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SHARON SUTTON  
CEEDS

Children will be able to play and perform atop a 50-foot map of the world at the entrance to their school. Seen from above, the installation forms the giant paw of a tiger — the school's mascot.

