

NEIGHBORS — The Memory Project: SSSH art students create portraits for orphans in Mexico

Written by By TERRY MATHEWS, Arts Editor, thmathews@ssecho.com
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Sulphur Springs High School art teacher Philip Dick's students have been involved in humanitarian projects before, but the latest one is likely the most personal.



“We’ve done several, like making a ceramic bowl for rice,” Dick said during an interview in his bustling classroom. “We heard about that one through the National Art Education Association.”

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This year, Dick and some of his students chose to lend their talents to The Memory Project.

“We require the students to enter two art competitions,” he explained. “We also allow them to submit non-competition pieces where there’s not a prize or award. The Memory Project was one of them.”

According to their website, www.memoryproject.org, “The Memory Project was developed by Ben Schumaker as a graduate student of social work at the University of Wisconsin.



“In 2003, while volunteering at an orphanage in Guatemala, Ben learned that the kids had few special belongings to represent moments of their childhood. They had very few photos, for example, to serve as memories from their early years. Since Ben had always enjoyed making portraits in school art classes, he had the idea to get art students involved in creating portraits for the kids.

“The Memory Project was officially born in 2004 and Ben still coordinates it full-time today. To date the project has created nearly 50,000 portraits for kids in 34 countries.”

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~~With the help of the SSSH art students, the portraits of the orphans in Mexico are being painted and will be sent to the orphanage in Mexico.~~