

Jon Hayman hopes painting will be backdrop to An Evening of the Arts, with music of the Depression.

By [Ken Stone](#)
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Jon Hayman is no Picasso. But his playful mural on a stucco wall at Rolando Elementary School recreates the art giant's 1953 work *The Dance of Joy*—in the name of peace.

A fifth-grade teacher in his third year at the Tower Street school, Hayman on Sunday finished work (with some help) on a 17-by-8-foot artwork overlooking the school garden.

"It's very kid-friendly," Hayman says of the mural, which bears the legend: "I will build peace ... at home ... at Rolando ... in my community."

Hayman and the PTA got donations of materials for the acrylic enamel project, which will get a topcoat of anti-graffiti preservative.

"While I did not intend for this to be a covert operation, I think the mural has gone 'under the radar' of most of our staff who, naturally, have been committing themselves to lesson planning, etc.," Hayman said Monday.

Fellow Rolando teacher Mark Arapostathis, the city councilman, worked with Hayman on layout last week, he says.

Previously, Hayman produced murals for Bancroft and Highlands elementary schools in Spring Valley and at La Mesa Middle School—a series of panels in the lunch area based on Matisse classics. On Friday—with an amplified iPod playing a variety of classic songs befitting his generation (he’s 55)—Hayman had the school to himself. Students were on a two-week break. They return Monday. He carefully put paint to a powerwashed wall and talked about plans for An Evening of the Arts.

“We’ve done a few shows here at Rolando,” said the La Mesa resident, who also plays guitar and ukulele player with a band. “The theme of this one will be: Songs for the New Depression.”

He’ll include tunes from the 1920s and 1930s.

“That’s where I’m drawing my inspiration ... trying to teach the kids about history, fashion and also music, the great songs,” Hayman, the school district’s 2010 Teacher of the Year, said between brush strokes in a garden setting.

“I think we find ourselves in a difficult time right now,” he said. “I know I feel that way. And when it was difficult [in the past], some amazing songs were written, great music was made.”

He said he hopes the mural draws classes to the garden for lessons involving art and science.

“We agree that the mural project will have a positive impact on our school’s **PeaceBuilder** culture.” He said. “In fact, while working in the garden space, I caught something of a vision for future projects to involve our newly formed ASB. I am excited to meet with the members and strategize ways we can positively impact school climate.”