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CARMEN CARDINAL/The Kansan

Muralist Joe Faus, left, credits the 11 students, including Andy Xiong, for the colorful and playful panda mural, 1118 Seventh St. The students worked all summer on a Hmong mural and this school year after school and Saturdays to finish the pandas. The murals are designed to illustrate the worlds opened up through reading and play.

## Pandas, pandas everywhere you look

By CARMEN CARDINAL  
Kansan Staff Writer

Pandas may be an endangered species around the world but not in Kansas City, Kan.

A new mural was dedicated on Saturday, Nov. 19, at 1118 N. Seventh St., in downtown KCK, depicting dozens of whimsical black and white

creatures, covorting and having fun.

Muralist and artist Joe Faus, who is known throughout the metropolitan community for his work in other murals, and who has directed mural projects in Mexico, directed the work. Eleven students have been employed by City Vision Ministries since April. Many put in long hours to paint a mural about the Hmong culture at 749 Minnesota Ave., this summer and have been working after school and on Saturdays to finish the Pandarama Mural.

The mural is part of the Youth Mural Arts Project, sponsored by the community development corporation, City Vision Ministries, and funded by the Kaufman Foundations Youth Advisory Board.

"I want to thank City Vision Ministries for giving me a great group of kids to work with," Faus said on Saturday. "Even though kids

get busy with school and other activities, they were dedicated to this project and gave it their time."

The youthful artists include Joshua Ford, Christina Her, Jerry Her, Mandy Her, Luis Hernandez, Starbright Jackson, Jerry Moua, J'Hlesa Richardson, Darrel Taylor, Alfred Vine and Andy Xiong. The students attend Wyandotte, Sumner, J.C. Harmon, Washington and E.L. Schlagle high schools.

Xiong explained during the dedication ceremony that the students took part in every aspect of its design and installation.

The mural is 17 feet high and 90 feet long, which took more than three months to complete from start to finish.

The mural weaves a very special story about a young boy who falls asleep and the eager pandas climb into his

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AGE ONE

THE KANSAS CITY KANSAN



CARMEN CARDINAL/The Kansan

This mural follows the story of a sleeping child who dreams of inquisitive pandas who playfully cover the 11- by 90-foot mural. The murals are designed to illustrate the worlds opened up through reading and play.

## Pandas

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dream.

The pandas pose a series of questions to young visitors, including, "Can you spot the meadowlark, the state bird of Kansas?" and "What do frogs catch on their tongues?" and other questions.

Then the amusing pandas discover the outdoor world around them as they climb trees, hide, slide down a waterfall, blow bubbles and meet the Wizard of Oz's

Cowardly Lion. They play on a jungle gym, swing and put together pieces of another Oz character, the Tin Man.

The mural is one of several murals in downtown KCK, all projects of the City Vision Ministries.

The other murals include "Dawning of a New Day," located at 1207 N. Seventh St., created in 2004; "El Baile de la Vida," (the dance of life) 826 Minnesota Ave., created in 2004; "Facing the Past, Looking to the Future: A Kansas Hmong Storycloth," at 749 Minnesota Ave., created in 2005.

This spring, a Wyandotte mural will be completed and dedicated, and the South Slavic Heritage Mural will be reinstalled in 2006.

Molly Ekerdt, with City Vision Ministries led the dedication ceremony. She thanked Carolyn and Morris Sipple and their daughter, Tiffany, the owners of Pandarama Pre-schools, the site of the mural, for their cooperation in the project. Pandarama Pre-school has taught thousands of young children in its classrooms since 1976.