

Oriole Elementary gets mural and more in makeover



Junette Reyes South Florida Sun-Sentinel

October 3, 2017, 2:36 PM

[Oriole Elementary School](#) in Lauderdale Lakes got a makeover in September.

The 50-year-old school's revamp was part of a community service project by insurer Appreciation Financial.

"We do quite a few school makeovers throughout the nation," said Eric Creekmore, regional vice president. "This year, we were focused on community involvement and appreciating schools that do a lot for their community."

The project involved the creation of a 26-by-10-foot mural in the school's cafeteria, designed by Miami artist David Lavernia. The colorful design incorporated the school motto, "Orioles S.O.A.R." Audiovisual equipment was installed in the front office. Additionally, a school store was set up, stocked with small gifts and incentives to tie in to the school's attendance and good behavior program.

"Many of our students come from economically disadvantaged home lives," said principal Sheneka Blue. "Having the opportunity to come to a school that is welcoming, with a welcoming environment and welcoming adults, just really sets the tone to their day and motivates them to come in and do great things on a daily basis."

As the makeover followed Hurricane Irma's landfall, repairs and debris cleanup were added to the list of tasks. Some trees were uprooted, while one of the fences was lost. The outdoor work also included landscaping with mulch and new plants to attract butterflies.

All of the work was done by more than 35 volunteers from Appreciation Financial. Despite it being a day off on campus, about 20 teachers also participated in the school's rejuvenation.

"It was just a great opportunity for us to come together as a school community and do a great thing for our students," said Blue.