

Diversity theme of new mural

A cheery new mural that's all about appreciating people's individuality is the first thing Beau Rivage employees see when they get to work and the last thing when they leave.

The 40-foot by 10-foot mural covers a space that was "always kind of sterile ... not a lot of pizzazz," said the project's instigator, Greg Van Stone. Now, it is both pretty to pass and relevant to read.

Named the Diversity Wall mural, it was painted by student artist and WINGS member Maura Worch of Ocean Springs.

It is the product of employees who have gone through the Beau's diversity training for management, which includes writing brief identity statements, or IMs, that have been transferred to the wall.

Messages in one area of it include "I am an idealist ... a friend ... a motivator" and "I am blessed ... learning ... passionate."

"There is a lot of pride in that wall because people see their statement up there," said Mary Cracchioli-Spain, the Beau's public relations director. "Diversity training is part of orientation. Every single person is united through diversity. Our employees related to these statements."

Van Stone, now director of food and beverages, led the onset of the project as president of the diversity council in 2008. It was completed by 2009 council head Mike Davis. Van Stone said the initial idea for it was formulated by the director of housekeeping, Alice El-hamki, during a brainstorming session on goals,

"We thought, 'what a great way to welcome our employees as well as expose them to the commitment we had to diversity,'" he said.

Besides IM messages, the mural incorporates MGC Mirage's corporate symbol for its culture of inclusion, diversity and respect; a cloud that represents the local property's program; and eight people in primary colors standing around a globe.

"The earth is basically our global perspective on creating changes," Van Stone said, "(for people) to see their work environment differently, not be stuck on preconceived stereotypes. We used the eight primary colors because you can make any colors using those,"

At the dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony for the wall held in August, Worch, the young artist, told those gathered that she had become very aware of the IM slogans as she painted them on the wall and was surprised to find they could all be her.

Ceremonies included the song, "I Believe," by WINGS Performing Arts group of Lynn Meadows Discovery Center, and a dedication by Beau president and COO George P. Corchis Jr.