

# Art teacher spreads #HemenwayKindness after hate notes

By [Zane Razzaq](#) November 16, 2018  
Daily News staff

After a Muslim student at Hemenway Elementary School in Framingham received hateful letters the faculty and fellow students were inspired to show support and love through art.



FRAMINGHAM – When a 10-year-old Muslim student reported receiving hateful notes in her cubby, her fellow Hemenway Elementary School classmates were quick to show empathy.

Visitors to the school are now greeted by a bright colorful mural created by third- and fourth-graders, with supportive messages such as “Your voice is important, use it to spread kindness.” Amy Brown, a Hemenway Art Teacher, ([MrsBrownArt.com](http://MrsBrownArt.com)), said the project, dubbed #HemenwayKindness, was meant to remind kids their voice matters.

“As soon as we realized that the community was seeing all the sad things that were happening at Hemenway, we realized it was very important to give students a voice to express how they were feeling. We wanted to remind students that their voices are very powerful,” said Brown.

After the first note, Brown said students immediately asked what they could do. First, they started creating small notes to send the targeted student.

“As things got bigger, they wanted to express things in bigger ways,” said Brown, on how the mural came about. “They focused mostly on keywords, like “love,” “be kind,” “choose kindness,” “you are all welcome.” They chose keywords so that it would be a nice, strong visual.”

Police are investigating a possible hate crime at the Water Street school, after the Muslim student found hateful letters in her bin, school officials said earlier this week. Schools Superintendent Robert Tremblay said the first letter was found on Nov. 9 and the second on Tuesday. Both were placed in the student’s storage bin. Tremblay described the most recent message as “threatening harm,” calling the messages “unacceptable and unwelcome in our community.”

Brown said she had students look to Romero Britto, a Brazilian artist who combines elements of graffiti, pop art, and cubism in his art, for inspiration. The paintings they created mainly feature tempera, a permanent, fast-drying paint that consists of colors mixed with egg and water.

“It’s a very messy paint and kids love getting messy,” said Brown. “It makes for a really engaging, colorful project.”

Parents and teachers can add their own messages to the display in the school lobby, said Brown. Music teachers are also spreading the message in their classes, focusing on songs about love and support such as “Love is all you need” by the Beatles.

“What’s been really nice is the initial notes were written to one student. But what has come out is an outpouring of love from everyone to everyone,” said Brown.

*Zane Razzaq can be reached at 508-626-3919  
or [zrazzaq@wickedlocal.com](mailto:zrazzaq@wickedlocal.com) and on Twitter at [@zanerazz](https://twitter.com/zanerazz).*

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