

## WARTIME CHILDREN'S ART SURPRISES VISITORS AT MARITIME CENTER OPEN HOUSE

A sample of thousands of pieces of recently rediscovered 60-year old art created by Children at the Maritime Child Care Center during World War II riveted visitors' attention during a Sunday afternoon open house held today in conjunction with the National Trust for Historic Preservation [Partners in Preservation](#) grant competition.

The largest federally funded child care project during WW II was in Richmond. The main activity in these child care centers was the creation of art. The art curricula was devised



A naval engagement painted in 1945 is clipped to an original easel that dates from the same era

and sustained under the direction of Monica Haley, the supervisor of children's art for what was then the Richmond School District. Children painted cut and pasted and printed with linoleum blocks.

Some two thousand examples of children's art were donated to the Richmond Museum of History, and this unique collection is thought to constitute the largest and best-documented source of children's art anywhere in the United States.



A Richmond shipyard worker in 1944 with Liberty ships and Whirley cranes in the background

There are paintings of trains, boats, military subjects, animals, holiday scenes, folk tales, and depictions of shipyard workers. Each piece includes the name and age of the artist and the date it was created.

Besides the art, the collection includes teacher instructional books, instructions for the use of art materials, teachers' comments on the students'

work, photographs of children and teachers, quotations from children and letters and diaries of Monica Haley.



An unflattering 1945 portrait of Hitler

The collection and the work accomplished at the child care centers forcefully demonstrate the significant connection of women, work, childcare and children's art during and after WW II. As such this would constitute an extraordinary exhibit of a special period of United States history that might have been lost or gone unnoticed. The individual pieces of art could be rotated so as to provide a historic and cultural view

of a long-past time and the response to it from both educators and children.

Support for the Maritime Center to serve as a pre-school for the soon to be reconstructed Nystrom Elementary School will be on the WCCUSD agenda Wednesday, October 18, 2006. This would be in conjunction with the building's rehabilitation to also serve as an interpretive center as a part of Rosie the Riveter WW II Home Front National Historical Park. The project has a \$2 million grant from the California Cultural and Historical Endowment and needs local matching funds. The Richmond Children's Foundation, which will also use the building, has committed \$1 million toward the match.



This entire family all attended the Maritime Child Care Center before it closed in 2004 after 61 uninterrupted years of service. The mother attended Maritime in the 1960s and later taught there.

Click for more information about the [Maritime Child Care Center](#).