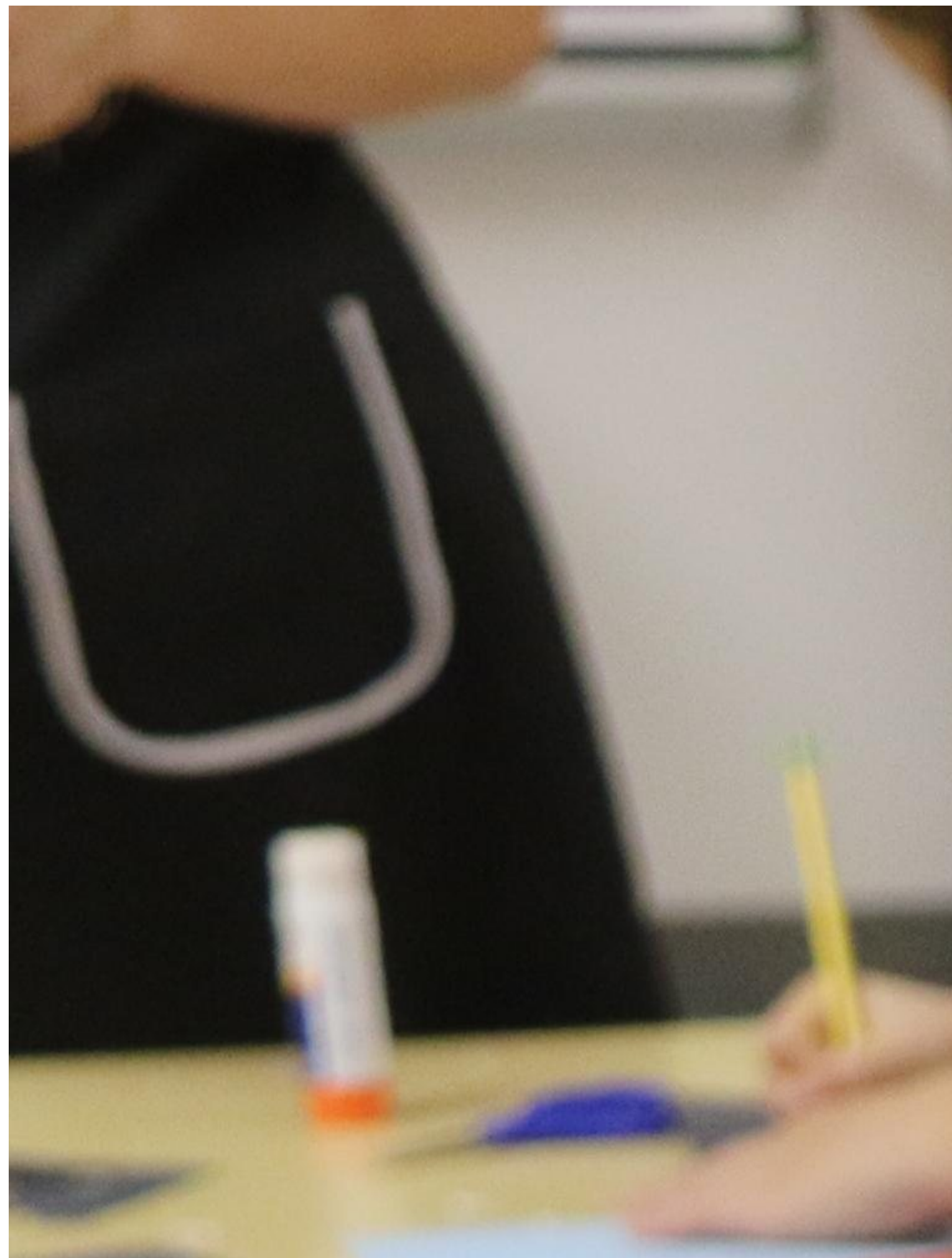
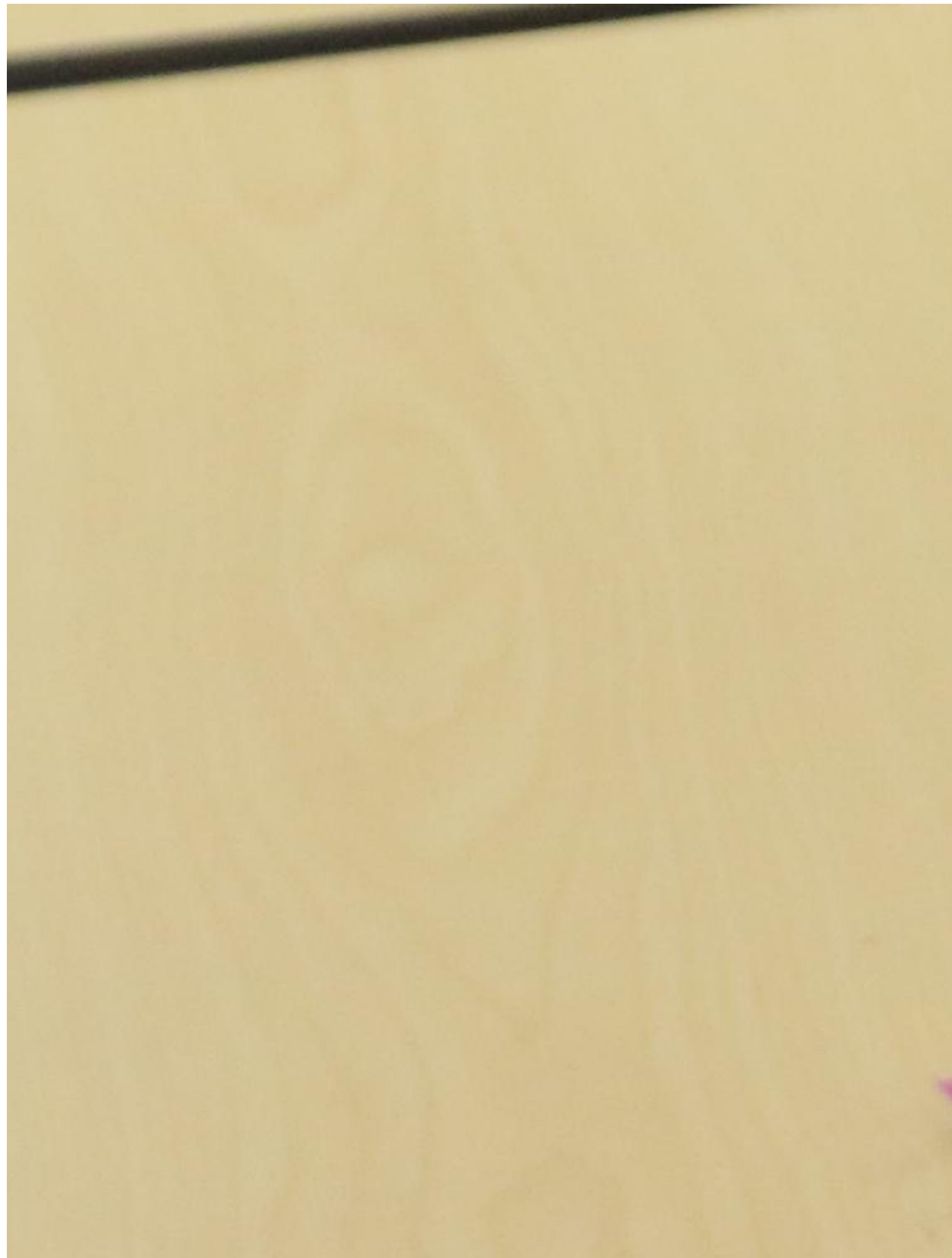


Glen Carbon Elementary School Students Create Art Projects for Hispanic Heritage Month

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE/GLEN CARBON - Students at Glen Carbon Elementary School have completed special art projects to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

Over the past few weeks, art teacher Sarah Willig has taught her students how to make papel picado, flores de papel, and molas. These three art projects helped students learn about Hispanic culture while practicing fine motor skills and enjoying the process of creating.

“It’s fun to be introducing those new cultures to them, and they get really excited to learn about what people do in other places,” Willig said. “It’s so, so important, and it’s really special for them.”

Kindergarten students made papel picado, a traditional Mexican folk art that encouraged students to cut intricate designs into paper. The finished banners are typically used as decorations for celebrations like weddings, birthdays and Day of the Dead.

First graders made flores de papel, which stressed folding and cutting skills. These paper flowers are a traditional folk art popular in Mexico for decorating Day of the Dead altars.

Second grade students made molas, a traditional textile art form from the Kuna people of Panama. Students used construction paper and repeated geometric patterns to create this project.

All of these projects are now on display in the school hallways. Willig shared that Jose Batana, a former student teacher who now teaches at Alton Middle School, suggested creating a display with the projects. The students display their work every year to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month, which Willig said “brightens up the school.”

It’s important to Willig to teach about Hispanic Heritage Month. She pointed out that many of the younger students don’t know much about the world beyond Illinois. These students are always excited to learn about different cultures and experiences through the universal language of art.

“Especially the young students are very excited about it, to learn about how other people live and talk,” she said. “But also, how we all have so many similarities, especially art, knowing that every culture creates art in their own way. I think it’s very important, and they really appreciate and like it as well.”

Additionally, Willig noted that projects like this allow students to practice fine motor skills and express themselves. She believes these are important benefits of art classes, especially for younger students. She encourages everyone to support art programs in schools.

“This is a class where they actually get to come up with their own ideas. It’s so important,” she added. “I just can’t stress how important it is to support the arts for the kids. It is a time where they get to be creative, use those critical thinking skills, be expressive where there is no wrong answer.”





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