



# Asphalt Painting

If you are looking for an artistic and inexpensive way to liven a barren space, try asphalt painting such as painted games, maps and artistic images. Not only will this break up the monotony of hard play surfaces but it will also provide more opportunity for active and imaginative play that expands the skills and ideas of children. Asphalt painting exercises complement other play and social opportunities on the school grounds and build teamwork and self-confidence in creative and dynamic group settings.

*did you know...*

*Street painting, using chalk, has been an Italian tradition since the 16th Century. Some cities celebrate this tradition with street painting festivals — plazas, streets and sidewalks are divided into squares and local artists are invited to fill these pavement canvasses with their unique designs and inspirations.*



## Design details

### Tips for Asphalt Painting

- Let the students design the games and other images to paint on your school grounds. One great example is to have the students survey the whole school to see what games are needed or wanted and then have a competition to pick the winning entries.
- Engage the help of a local artist to inspire and guide students.
- Use chalk for temporary games and drawings and use non-toxic waterproof paint for long lasting designs. Make sure to touch up asphalt paintings yearly to prolong their life and use.
- Study the asphalt play area and plan for painted games and images where they will not interfere with basketball courts or main walking routes to and from the school grounds.
- Allow an area for free expression and creative drawing using chalk and pastels. Poems and other forms of creative writing can also be explored in these area.
- Have special events and games days with the whole school using the painted asphalt activities.
- Use good quality, exterior latex paint for durability and safety. Latex paint cleans with water and is less toxic than oil-based paints.

# Types of Asphalt Paintings

There really is no one method or style to doing asphalt paintings. Here are a couple of examples to demonstrate what other schools have done and what is possible on your school grounds.



## *St. Stephen's Elementary School, Halifax, Nova Scotia*

Our Environment Committee took a look at the large expanse of asphalt at the back of the school which joins the school to the city sports field. The asphalt area is where the students line up before school starts and where they engage in play before the bell rings. We thought that we could enhance game-playing activities for the children by painting some defined game spaces, both traditional and some new designs, on the asphalt.

The research for this was done by interviewing several grades, suggesting to them some possibilities, and then encouraging them to brainstorm and record their ideas on paper. We also spent some time observing what the children do to organize game-time on their own. We consulted some library material for the rules of certain games and how we could adapt others. As well, different levels of games and details were planned to consider the difference in ages. The students line up according to grade: one end is for Grades Primary to 2, the other entrance is for Grades 3 to 6.

The selection of games range from the traditional hopscotch to ideas such as the 'geometric shapes' area, where we didn't have any rules in mind but left it up to the students to invent a way to use it. One more detailed project is the Nova Scotia Map Game, which is being further developed by Grade 6 students this year as they complete their social studies curriculum. In addition we made several sets of beanbags and dice, made of four-inch wooden cubes, to complement the use of the game spaces. They are kept by the teachers and brought out under supervision when classes are outside.

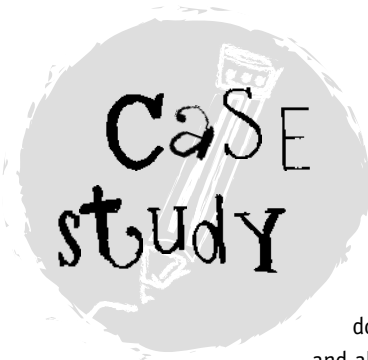
Paint was supplied by local companies who were approached to donate mis-tints and other leftover paints. Latex paints were chosen for their decreased toxicity and ease of cleanup. Although most of the work was done by parent volunteers, some of the older students participated in the painting. The first applications were done in June of 2000 and the paintings are still as legible as when they were first painted.



St. Stephen's Elementary School

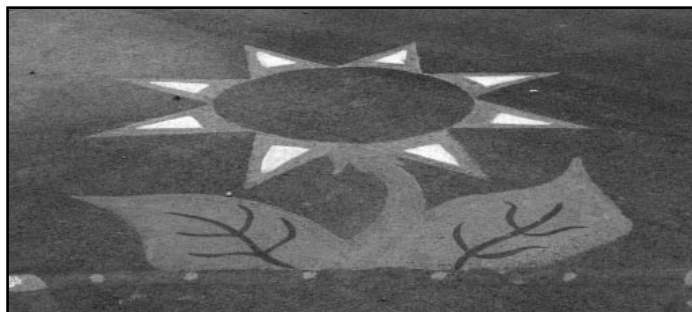


St. Stephen's Elementary School



## St. Martin de Porres, Kanata, Ontario

Various games and murals have been painted to brighten our play area and give the children activities to do at recess, such as number and alphabet snakes for counting, a hundreds square, a map of Canada, the solar system, 4-square and a bull's eye. We have also provided frames in which the children can do chalk drawings.



St. Martin de Porres

## The Telephone Pioneers Map Project

*Geography may have gotten somewhat lost in today's school curriculum, but the Telephone Pioneers are putting it back on the map — providing both educational fun for young students and a teaching aid for educators. Playground maps are a great resource for students to discover where they are in relation to other areas and to study the geography across Canada. The Pioneers, a volunteer group, are painting maps on school grounds in various regions across Canada. The maps are large enough for students to stand inside and reconnect with their geography of place.*



## Where to *gO* from here?

### Sources for this fact sheet

Kenny, Kate. Chapter 4, a section entitled "Expressive Arts". *Grounds for Learning: A Celebration of School Site Developments in Scotland*. Winchester, England: Optimum Litho, 1996. Available from Learning through Landscapes, [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)

### Organizations and Web sites

Telephone Pioneers of America: <http://www.telephone-pioneers.org>; (306) 777-1982

### Example projects

Bridlewood Community Elementary School, Kanata, Ontario: (613) 591-3683

Glendale Public School, Brampton, Ontario: (905) 451-2463

L'École Beaufort, Halifax, Nova Scotia: (902) 421-6761

St. Martin de Porres, Kanata, Ontario: (613) 831-4754

St. Stephen's Elementary School, Halifax, Nova Scotia: (902) 493-5155