



## OUT OF THE ARTBOX

Forget coloring inside the lines—the world is now your canvas! The Northern New Jersey Community Foundation's ArtsBergen initiative recently unveiled its latest project: painting Hackensack's utility boxes with anti-littering messages. The group chose eight artists from the area to take part in the creative and Earth-conscious endeavor.

"This project beautifies the city and gives local artists the opportunity to showcase their work," says Danielle De Laurentis, the foundation's associate director.

One chosen artist was Teaneck resident Monica Chavarria (pictured), an art teacher whose decorated utility box is at 321 Main St. She first created functional murals in her home country of Colombia. Chavarria says of her Hackensack project: "I took my time on this project, and as a result I got to know many of the people who pass that corner each day."

Her mural spreads the message of "Go Green" with a creative metaphor. "My artwork, 'Mosaic of Life,' features trees with human characteristics," she explains, and thus shows that "families need to take care of our environment because it is our future."

Mahwah resident Stuart Blank travels through Hackensack during the work week and took notice of the artwork. "Each person took what was a blank canvas and used it to beautify the city," he says. "It puts a little happiness in my day."