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# Brentwood volunteers clean up graffiti

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**QUICK SUMMARY** 13 Brentwood High School students painted a new mural on the side of a strip mall.



Photo credit: Ed Betz | Junior Mendez from Brentwood, volunteers with others to paint over graffiti in Brentwood. (May 1, 2010)

## videos



[Officials announce anti-graffiti initiative](#)

Marcos Maldonado decided to document how bad the graffiti had gotten in Brentwood, where he lives. Maldonado, 29, went around the village with a camera and took pictures of every bit of graffiti he could find - on fences, on walls, on street signs.

He and a friend collected 120 pictures. The photos led Brentwood Residents Against Violence Everyday, BRAVE, to come out in force Saturday with buckets and paintbrushes to clean up the community. About 380 volunteers fanned out to replace at least some of the graffiti, which they said intimidates some residents and gives Brentwood a bad name.

"You will find an entire community painting back the streets," said Maldonado, a BRAVE volunteer. "It's very nice to see the community

wants to take a stand."

## galleries



Volunteers say goodbye to graffiti

At [Suffolk](#) and Jefferson avenues Saturday, 13 Brentwood High School students painted a new mural on the side of a strip mall. When complete, the mural will depict the sun shining on the village, with an amalgam of characters. One was a scarecrow, with a circular patch on its front resembling a "No Smoking" sign.

Instead of cigarettes, the circle blocked out a can of spray paint.

"We're trying to ward off graffiti," said Melinda Gomez, a Brentwood resident and art teacher at the high school.

Next to the site of the mural, Jesus "Chu-Chu" Gonzalez, 40, had sweat on his forehead as he knelt on the ground and pushed a roller of dark red paint.

"We're trying to make a foundation for our kids," said Gonzalez, a father of two. "Everybody talks about the 20 percent that are messing this up, but they forget about the 80 percent that are good people."

Saturday's effort couldn't clean up all the graffiti. There were still stop signs and walls that hadn't been cleaned yet.

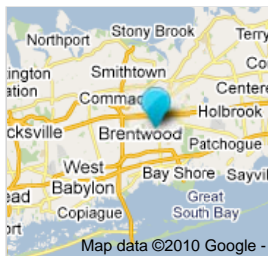
But Ruthie Martinez, the president of BRAVE, said she hoped the project would "redirect" vandals and inspire Brentwood's residents.

"We want to give good kids a better view than when they're going to school on the bus, seeing graffiti," she said.

And officers from [Suffolk County Police](#), which sent 15 patrol cars to Brentwood Saturday in case of threats, said they would set up cameras at some locations and ramp up efforts to catch taggers.

"When they hit again, and I expect they will, we'll lock down one or two of them and make an example of them," [Suffolk Police Insp. Jan Rios](#) said.

## where



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