



Breaking your family patterns may be the most important work you do and the most challenging.

It is easy to believe that in leaving our childhood homes and embarking on the journey of adulthood, we have effectively removed ourselves from harmful and self-perpetuating familial patterns. In looking closely, however, we may discover that our behaviors and beliefs are still those that were impressed upon us during our youth by our parents, grandparents, and those that preceded them. We may find ourselves unconsciously perpetuating cycles of the previous

generations, such as fear of having enough, not showing affection, and secrecy patterns. Yet the transmission of negative patterns from one generation to the next is not inevitable. Breaking the pattern is a matter of overcoming those values imprinted upon us long ago and replacing them with pure love, tolerance, and conscious awareness.

The will to divest yourself of old, dark forms of familial energy and carry forth a new loving energy may come in the form of an epiphany. You may realize that cer-

tain aspects of your early life have negatively affected your health, happiness, and ability to evolve as an individual. Or you may find that in order to transcend limiting beliefs, irrational behavior, and emotional stiltedness, you need to question your values and examine how your family has impacted your personality. When you understand how family cycles have influenced you, you can gain freedom from those cycles.

In order to change, you must give yourself permission to change. Breaking family patterns is in no way defiance or betrayal. Trust yourself implicitly when determining the behaviors and beliefs that will help you overwrite the generation-based value system that limits your individual potential.

In breaking negative family cycles, you will discover that your ability to express your feelings and needs grows exponentially, and you will embark upon a journey toward greater well-being.

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Earth Day the Keys Way

by Karen Beal

Pam Caputo, Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math (STEAM) program instructor at Key Largo School, knows how to inspire people for Earth Day. She envisioned one of the school buildings with large, inviting walls as the perfect space for murals. "Although I'm not an artist, I've always wanted to see something creative on that wall."

In March, Deb Riolo, of BellaNonaArt, donated art work for a fundraiser Caputo was organizing. Conversation lead to the idea of working with the kids on an Earth Day project. Riolo accepted the challenge and the collaboration began.

Donations of paint came from Berry's Benjamin Moore, KLI, and Riolo's own supplies. The artist painted the background of the two murals: the lower half of mangroves on one and the globes of the hemispheres on the other.

Keeping the Earth Day theme, the mangrove mural included sponge prints of leaves, pods and flowers pressed by students, raising awareness of the Keys' fragile ecosystem.

Science teacher Jessica Graham came up with the inspir-



Everglades Ambassadors filled in the KLS mural with Earth Day hand prints and memories.



ing idea of using children's handprints to create a mural of the world. Riolo worked with KLS Everglades Ambassadors to scale the design onto the wall. On Earth Day students added blue and green handprints to complete the global mural. As

Riolo stated "The kids are literally leaving their handprint at this year's KLS Earth Day event."

KLS principal, Darren Pais, along with the Earth Day Committee, invited local organizations, including REEF,

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earth day 2025

Dolphins Plus, Crocodile Lake Refuge, MOTE Marine Lab, and Turtle Hammock to host engaging learning stations for the students.

Throughout Earth Day, all 400 students rotated through student-run interactive stations: "Where Does Our Water Come From—and Where Does It Go?", a nature scavenger hunt, pop-top bracelet making, edible aquifers and guided tours of the school nature trail.

Ms. Caputo, admiring the work of her students, was heard to say, "I truly hope we'll collaborate on more murals for KLS in the future."