



Black toy guns dominate a recent sculpture by Nasser Pirasteh intended to teach children to avoid violence.

Staff photo by
Raenell Hooten

Penasquitos sculptor stresses anti-violence

By **Jessica Long**

Rancho Penasquitos resident and sculptor Nasser Pirasteh is using his craft to educate a society that has bestowed many gifts upon him.

Pirasteh recently completed a sculpture intended to teach children to stay away from guns, both toy and real.

"Society gave me a lot of goods and I need to give back," Pirasteh said. "I am the father of two and a husband.

Pirasteh's most recent piece is comprised entirely of black toy guns. Molded together, the guns are wrapped in a large red "X." From the dark image comes two flowers — one red, one yellow. The red symbolizes energy and the yellow means happiness, he said.

"There's a power that comes from change," Pirasteh said, noting that if it's done correctly, change brings on happiness.

The piece will soon be on display in Los Angeles, in conjunction with the International Health and Epidemiology Research Center's Anti-Violence Campaign.

As an Iranian, Pirasteh said he realizes recent terrorist attacks have spurred negative stereotypes against him and other Middle

Easterners. But he and many other Iranian artists are striving to break that negative stereotype by participating in the anti-violence campaign.

"We're trying to say we are part of society," he said. "Instead of just selling our pieces, we want to help with kids and society."

Pirasteh moved to PQ two years ago from Minnesota to be closer to his ailing father. He is currently creating a garden in his back yard that will feature many of his sculptures. The garden will be open to the public because for Pirasteh, sharing his art with others is part of the appeal.

"I want people to look at my work and see me," he said. "If I'm good enough, you'll know me through the piece. I shouldn't even have to be there."

Other issues tackled in Pirasteh's work include womanhood, homelessness and the environment.

"I like to have a message," Pirasteh said. "Like with homelessness, I believe they are all angels. No one knows at first glance how they got there. To judge is not right. The same goes for women. They are beautiful, yet they have to face so many barriers. Their beauty should be free and cherished."