

Updates

Events:

The 4th Annual **Opening Night Preview Party of the Los Angeles Antiques Show** on April 21st was a huge success for P.S. ARTS, raising more than \$280,000!

More than 200 designer handbags were sold at the 7th Annual **Bag Lunch** on May 7th raising more than \$133,000!

Check out the press coverage at www.psarts.org/press

Programs:

P.S. ARTS hosted the second annual Summer Camp with Reef-Sunset Unified School District in Kings County. This year more than 200 children attended, participating in science-based visual arts, drama, and dance classes.

P.S. ARTS is expanding to the Camino Nuevo Charter Academy José Castellanos campus, and will provide 500 Kindergarten through

5th grade students with a comprehensive visual arts program this year.

P.S. ARTS is spearheading an exciting new partnership in the South Bay area, facilitating a cooperative arts education program in the Lawndale, Lennox, and Wiseburn school districts, collectively serving nearly 10,000 students.

To read more about our programs visit: www.psarts.org/programs

P.S. ARTS



Improving Children's Lives through Arts Education

Fall 2010

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Community Celebrates Arts in Lawndale

On Saturday, June 5th, Friends of Lawndale Arts (FOLA) hosted the first annual Lawndale Arts Festival, to celebrate arts education in the Lawndale Elementary School District (LES D).

"It's really been a groundswell of the whole community coming forward for our kids," said LES D Superintendent Ellen Dougherty. "Bringing the community into the schools and having the community be a part of the students' lives is really important and the arts is one way to do that."

The event drew more than 500 children and their families who collaborated on arts projects, while entertained by a series of music, theater and dance performances. Guests also explored an exhibit showcasing student, school staff and

community members' art.

FOLA was created by P.S. ARTS in 2006, gathering community members, teachers, local artists, parents and administrators to advocate and promote for the sustainability of the arts plan.

Betsy Hamilton, LES D Assistant Superintendent of Education Services, believes that events like Lawndale Arts Festival "keep the arts alive in the schools and also foster more artistic expression in the community."

"The arts festival is important for the community and the students because it's a small, tight-knit community and arts and the expression of visual and performing arts are really important for motivating our students," Hamilton added.



This event was possible through the support of The Herb Alpert Foundation, The Angell Foundation, The Green Foundation, and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. ●



with Professor
Dr. James Catterall

As a Professor at the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, Dr. James Catterall's research focuses on the roles of the arts in human development. He has published numerous articles and books on the topic, including his most recent book *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art*. In March, he shared his thoughts with a group of P.S. ARTS supporters at the home of Tia and David Hoberman. P.S. ARTS was thrilled to have such a pre-eminent arts researcher speak to guests and answer our questions in this follow-up conversation.

Q: Why do you think arts education is important? **A:** I'm sure the P.S. ARTS audience and I would agree on many answers to this question. I begin with the importance of experiences and awareness in the arts in the complete education of adult citizens. The arts provide windows on the world's history – on the struggles and celebrations of mankind. The arts encourage expressive choices for human feeling and emotion, and bring mystery and wonder to a society over-saturated with machine-like views of living and working. The arts, in opposition to most of what passes for school curriculum these days, bring personal values and beliefs into things we want know about. (No wonder that our ubiquitous school assessment and accountability systems can't grasp the arts in authentic ways and thus avoid the subject.)

Closer to my own research, artistic learning and involvement bring joy and fun to in-school and out-of-school life. We see levels of cognitive and emotional engagement in the art room, the orchestra, the stage, and the dance floor that appear less frequently during regular classroom instruction. That the arts can be fun for children produces doubts about their importance among all work and no play educators and politicians. That the arts can be fun for children is a good reason to build the arts into how we educate our children.

Q: As state education budget cuts threaten to further reduce arts instruction in schools, what do you think is most important for Californians to understand about arts education?

A: The answer to this question seems straightforward. The things we most value and the things that garner our commitment are first and foremost the things we find important. When we total up what we've done over the last year and realize that we didn't exercise as much as we might have, or that we watched 26 episodes of *House* in lieu of the four books we could have read during that time, we are effectively auditing our true beliefs about what is important. Sometimes to some chagrin.

Photo by: Hannah Catterall



LA Arts Funding Snapshot

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

In June 2010, Superintendent Ramon Cortines and the LAUSD School Board agreed to restore \$5M for arts education into the 2010/2011 budget. This reduces arts spending by 1/3 rather than the anticipated 1/2. Unfortunately, this plan still eliminates 30% of Elementary Arts Teachers for the current school year.

Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD)

When Measure A, a parcel tax initiative that was intended to offset projected state budget cuts, failed to pass, SMMUSD was forced to eliminate four elementary music teachers and \$320,000 was cut from the elementary arts program. A district-wide fundraising campaign was launched, allowing donations to be earmarked. The fundraising campaign, Save Our Schools by the Santa Monica Education Foundation, raised \$1.5M, \$200,000 of which restored 2.5 music teachers. Fortunately, SMMUSD received additional federal stimulus money and was able to restore the other 1.5 music teachers.

Lawndale Elementary School District (LESD)

The Herb Alpert Foundation has renewed support for the I AM initiative in LESD for a sixth year. In addition, the district is one of P.S. ARTS' top contributors. LESD allocates \$125,000 to provide comprehensive arts programs to the district's seven elementary schools.

Reef-Sunset Unified School District (RSUSD)

RSUSD's programs are fully funded through the support of Stewart and Lynda Resnick and the Paramount Agricultural Companies. ●



Quick Facts

With your support, more than **11,000** children will go to art, music and/or theater class at least once a week, every week during this school year. Of those students, approximately **75%** are living below the Federal Poverty Line, **45%** are English Language Learners and **11%** have moderate to severe special needs.

Over **75%** of classroom teachers surveyed agreed that P.S. ARTS students had demonstrated clear gains in critical thinking skills, vocabulary, and other literacy skills.

Over **90%** of classroom teachers and school principals surveyed agreed that their students demonstrated improved social skills and gained confidence through their participation in P.S. ARTS.

Magic Moment from Teaching Artist Johanna McKay

I have a first grader, Jorge, who won't dance. Just won't. His fellow classmates confirmed it. "He won't dance." "He's too shy, Miss Johanna." Well, we're doing a show with three dances in it!!! I said, "Jorge!! No dancing?" He tearfully shook his head and sat down in a chair next to me. "Well," I said, "I guess you'd better be my assistant."

He looked hopeful so I asked him if he'd be willing to run the lights, the sound, do the opening curtain speech and hand out props and costumes to the actors - basically, be in charge. He nodded. The class patted him on the back and we carried on. Now, each day he plants himself next to me with his own copy of his script in his little hand. He watches everything and knows just who to give cowboy hats to, when to turn off and on the lights, and has his opening speech memorized (about turning off cell phones and enjoying the show)!

During last week's class, the young actor who plays the farmer mimed knocking on the wise, old man's door! Then, the small boy playing the old man slowly hobbled up with his cane and then mimed opening an invisible door!! What collaboration! What attention to detail!! I asked them if they wanted to keep it that way every time. They said sure! But we agreed it looked a little funny without sound effects. Then Jorge knocked three times on the desk near him... We all LOVED it!! I jumped up and grabbed a drum mallet for him. We practiced him watching the farmer intently - they make eye contact and together make the knocking and the sound!!! But it got even better when the old man opened the door and Jorge made a creaking sound. It was perfect.

Today when he plunked down next to me with his script in one hand, he had gotten the mallet from the top shelf and had it in his other hand. He did the speech, the lights, the sound effects - the "knock, knock, knock" and then the "creeeeeeeeeeak!" of the door. And every time we all died laughing. He's making this class's show SO much BETTER! It's a nice success story of a boy finding his own way to be a part of the show. ●



with Teaching Artist Johanna McKay

and props from their heritage to share with us and to use in the show. Of course, even if they're not Mexican, we honored ALL of their heritages and stories! We had kids bring in eggrolls from Vietnam, bread from Nigeria, handmade dolls from El Salvador, as well as pictures, clothes, pottery, etc. from all over the world! It was very educational and of course, quite moving.

Q: What's your favorite part of your job? **A:** My favorite part of the job is when the kids discover something! When they have an "aha!" moment! When they get a huge laugh from their peers, when they discover that they are GREAT at something, when they have a vital part in the production - even if it's running the lights or being in charge of opening the curtains - that they can feel that they are an important part of the unity of the group. I love it when they realize that they are being recognized and applauded for their particular talent and that it's very GOOD.

Q: Why do you think arts education is important? **A:** Life is so much more wonderful with the arts. The kids LOVE to come to school on a day when they have art, music or drama. It opens up a world for them where they may truly find "who they are" and where their greatness may lie! ●

P.S. ARTS currently has 13 full-time and 16 part-time Teaching Artists. P.S. ARTS Teaching Artists are practicing artists who integrate their art forms, unique perspectives, and professional skills into the classroom.

Q: When did you join P.S. ARTS? **A:** In 2001, first working part time, then full time at one school in Lawndale and now full time at seven schools in Lawndale (thanks to Herb Alpert - whom I've never met, but have great respect for)!

Q: What do you teach? **A:** I teach DRAMA - in collaboration with an art and a music teacher. We use a theme or "big idea" each year that connects us throughout the year. Last year we had a poem from Mexico by Gina Valdez as our masterwork, so we worked on a Mexican folk tale called, "El Anciano". It's very funny and the kids were very proactive in bringing in costumes



and props from their heritage to share with us and to use in the show. Of course, even if they're not Mexican, we honored ALL of their heritages and stories! We had kids bring in eggrolls from Vietnam, bread from Nigeria, handmade dolls from El Salvador, as well as pictures, clothes, pottery, etc. from all over the world! It was very educational and of course, quite moving.

Planning Strategically

P.S. ARTS recently completed a strategic planning process that helped clarify the organization's vision and articulate the impact that P.S. ARTS seeks to make in the field of arts education. We contracted with the national consulting firm, La Piana, to identify the core challenges to achieving P.S. ARTS' mission, build organizational capacity, and strategically plan program revision and expansion. The "Real-Time Strategic Planning" methodology La Piana used focused on the current issues facing the organization and planned for the next eighteen months. The process produced a flexible, living document.

Thank you to all the stakeholders that participated in our strategic plan. Your input was greatly appreciated. If you'd like to learn more about the strategic plan, please call P.S. ARTS at 310.586.1017. ●

Mission Statement As part of our Strategic Plan for FY 2010/2011, P.S. ARTS generated a new mission statement: To improve the lives of children by bringing arts education to underserved public schools and their communities. ●

Why Support P.S. ARTS? P.S. ARTS is the only artists-in-residence program in Los Angeles County and California's Central Valley that serves an entire school and seamlessly integrates Teaching Artists into the regular school day for the full school year. As an already established, trusted, and integral presence in 25 schools, P.S. ARTS is in a particularly good position to step up to the challenge, support schools in weathering this state budget crisis, and level the educational playing field for children struggling with economic, ability, or literacy barriers. ●

Q+A with Professor Dr. James Catterall Cont'd from page 1

The arts gather support to the extent that our society believes that the arts are important to children and adults. I have not seen a national opinion poll, but our society surely suffers a deep division on this question. Of course, around this point swirl the currents of education goals and budgets—driven by ebbs and flows of political organization, the actions of lobbyists, and gyrations in the economy. Not to mention the rising general concerns about literacy among our young which increase hours spent on reading instruction and limit in-school time for everything else.

But the fortunes of arts education in the long run are hinged on the value we place on the arts in our lives, and any long-term public agenda for boosting the fortunes of arts education must tend to the question of social value. As an individual or school looking out into this gulf, perhaps the best place to start is by promoting the most high-quality, accessible arts learning we can. ●

To read the complete interview visit www.psarts.org/publications

Friends of P.S. ARTS

P.S. ARTS is excited to launch Friends of P.S. ARTS, a Membership Program that celebrates your generosity and offers exclusive benefits. To learn more about this new Membership Program, please visit www.psarts.org, call us at 310.586.1017 or email us at info@psarts.org. ●

P.S. ARTS is supported in part by grants from the California Arts Council, the Department of Cultural Affairs for the City of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

