

SANTA MONICA Mirror

Santa Monica-Malibu 'Informances' Provide Interactive Learning

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MIRROR STAFF

After weeks of learning rhythm and movement, acting and singing, and

several mediums of visual arts, students in transitional kindergarten

through second grade at five Santa Monica-Malibu Unified elementary

schools will showcase what they've learned in a special "informance," an

integrative learning experience for both parents and their children.

SMMUSD Superintendent Sandra Lyon said studies have shown that

student success not only increases dramatically with parent engagement,

but also when a student can comfortably and effectively demonstrate

what's been taught.

"Instead of a typical performance or recital for the final class,

these events bring parents into the classroom, while allowing the

student to teach and practice what he or she has learned throughout the

course," Lyon said.

This new comprehensive visual and performing arts program is part of

SMMUSD's Vision for Student Success — a District-wide initiative



Courtesy Photo

Phoebe Benun (center), a second grader at Franklin Elementary, poses and smiles with her parents, Sue and Robert Benun, after Christina Garden's second grade class held a theatrical informance in front of parents on Nov. 13.

launched this year primarily funded by the Santa Monica-Malibu Education

Foundation (SMMEF), the District's non-profit partner.

Students participate in either a rotational model of 10 or 15 weeks

of visual arts, theater or music class or 30 weeks of a single

discipline arts instruction each year, with individual school sites

having the discretion to implement the programming, model and

discipline.

The arts program, now active at all eleven elementary schools, builds

students' advanced problem-solving and critical thinking skills, while

sparkling imagination, creative potential and emphasizing the value of

teamwork.

With the support of the District, SMMEF partnered with P.S. ARTS on

the expansion to ensure all students receive high-quality performing

and/or visual arts instruction each year from transitional kindergarten

through the fifth-grade.

The Foundation is also funding cutting-edge professional development,

student enrichment and academic support programs for all SMMUSD

schools.

Executive Director of SMMEF, Linda Greenberg Gross, said the

Foundation was so grateful for the community's donations to support P.S.

ARTS education for all elementary schools in Santa Monica and Malibu.

"We truly believe these art programs provide for educational

equality, leveling the educational playing field by teaching creative

and cognitive skills to students of all backgrounds," Greenberg Gross

said.

With the conclusion of the first rotation of classes, students at

Point Dume, Webster, Roosevelt, Grant and Franklin elementary schools

who have completed visual arts, theater and music classes will be showing their parents rhythms, songs, theater scenes or artwork they've learned or created. Parents will then join their children in the classroom to participate and experience the arts together.

P.S. ARTS Executive Director of Education & Programs Kristen

Paglia said the organization was thrilled to be active at all elementary schools in the District.

"Teaching our students, parents, and community about the value of art programs, especially at a young age, ensures we equip all students with the capacity to be successful in the future," Paglia said

P.S. ARTS is a local organization, serving more than 20,000 students in 10 school districts throughout Central and Southern California, employs qualified and professional teaching artists who visit each school site, teaching and adapting their own curriculum to the artistic model and discipline selected by the principal and faculty.

After culmination of the program, the teaching artists moves to another site, ensuring that all students receive high-quality art instruction.

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