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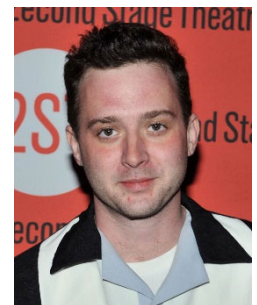
600 PHILLY STUDENTS WILL EXPERIENCE DYNAMIC ARTS PROJECTS DESPITE REMOTE LEARNING

PHILADELPHIA (March 1, 2021) – Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) announced 20 grants to expand arts-based instruction for 600 students in 20 schools across the city. While school is still being delivered by remote instruction, these grants enable artists and teachers to bring traditional classroom content to life. Although remote instruction has limited how students can learn, professional teaching artists work with teachers to find unique ways that students can use household objects to create art and to use the tools of online platforms to support theatrical, spoken word, and musical performances involving students.

The following Philadelphia schools have been awarded Picasso Project funding for arts programming, which could not come at a better time. While SDP’s arts program has grown in recent years, many students still have limited access to art, music, dance, and theater in school, and students are telling teachers how artistic expression is a much-needed outlet as they struggle with isolation and screen-time overload while learning from home. Fueled by small grants from the Picasso Project, teachers and local artists will partner to provide transformative arts-based learning in the online classroom.

And the winners are (drum roll, please)...

At the **Academy of Middle Years (AMY) at James Martin School**, film and TV actor Eddie Kaye Thomas will lead students through energizing improv and theatrical exercises, giving students the thrill of embodying a character other than themselves. Theater offers students various learning styles as an entry into English Language Arts whether it is through performance, writing, or producing. Having a professional actor teaching workshops also offers first-hand insights into the professional acting environment.



Middle school students at **Bache-Martin** will get a full picture introduction to breaking into the contemporary music scene from teaching artist Betsaleel Charmelus. Workshops will focus on the creative aspects such as beat, rhythm, and rhythm scheme, as well as necessary career skills like marketing, social media, team building, and financial literacy.

Students at **Crossroads Accelerated Academy** will experience the fun and therapeutic effect of clay and ceramics with instruction by The Clay Studio. The teacher has arranged to mail supplies to students and provide pick-up/drop-off stations and then will run virtual classes. Most of the art instruction this year has been drawing or digital, so having tactile exercises will engage students in new ways.

Students at **D. Newlin Fell Elementary** will focus on 2D and 3D imagery under the guidance of teaching artist Lynn Blackwell Denton. Hand puppets made from everyday household objects like socks, cardboard tubes, string, and paper bags will be characters that can "perform" in a Zoom setting. Paper pyramids and other geometric shapes can align with class subjects like Egyptian culture. 2D projects might include paintings or drawings of subjects such as self-portraits, and "imaginary animals" or other fantasy creatures.

BuildaBridge International will teach **Eliza B. Kirkbride** middle schoolers to integrate arts-based and wellness-centered learning with the English Language Arts curriculum through activities such as art journaling, songwriting, movement, and improvisation.

Students at the **F. Amedee Bregy School** will learn from the Enchantment Theatre Company to create an inclusive superhero story that incorporates imagery and information from different cultures, showing how common narratives can bring communities together. The students will rehearse and perform the story using items they have at home such as hats, scarves, socks, and paper bags.

Students at **Farrell Elementary School** will learn West African drumming, dance, and storytelling, embodying the African proverb "Good drumming and dancing restores the community to wholeness." Key components of this project, led by Jeannine Osayande & Dunya Performing Arts Company, make the connection between the traditions of the West African diaspora with today's movements for social and racial justice.

Elementary school students at **Francis Scott Key** will explore environmental justice, concentrating on global warming, waste reduction, and regenerative agriculture with Linda Fernandez of Amber Art and Design. Students will create poetry and drawings to illustrate a community-generated coloring book about these issues.

At the **John B. Kelly School**, students will engage in visual arts (drawing, painting, and collage) and drama (original solo, collaborate, and ensemble-based performances). Multidisciplinary artist Francesca Montanile Lyons will develop a curriculum grounded in emotional literacy, storytelling, and play with open ended materials (items with no directions and can be used by themselves or with other materials).

Kensington Health Sciences Academy High School students will embark on poetry/spoken word as a powerful creative outlet with arts organization ArtWell. Sally O'Brien, poetry and English teacher who will be running the program, said "Spoken word is a confidence booster for young people. The seniors that will be participating in this project are having a really rough time and these exercises can help them speak their truths."

Artist Eric Abaka will teach students at the **Lankenau Environmental Sciences Magnet High School** to combine new media and traditional art forms, learning to transform their COVID quarantine experiences into meaningful artwork.

Students at the **Mastery Charter School-Lenfest Campus** will use art to connect to current conversations on race and equity. Teaching artist Jihan A. Thomas will infuse creative writing into visual arts and communication using images, photos, comics, or still life animation as students explore their experiences with social justice and activism.

Art teacher Julia Hanes at **Robert E. Lambertson Elementary** said "Many of my students come from first or second generation African and Central American families. Cloth is embedded in their personal histories, and I want to provide the opportunity to explore how textiles and prints are art." Students will learn printmaking, 2D designs, sewing, drawing, and fabric dyeing. The teaching artist, The Fabric Workshop & Museum, has a professional screen printing studio and dye facilities to create a final project to be dropped off safely at the school.

Paper techniques will be the theme at **Southwark School** in South Philly with teaching artist Kay Healy. Students will learn book making techniques including origami books, pop-ups, and accordion books, using mostly found objects and basic office supplies. The storytelling and design will incorporate themes from other class subjects like English Language Arts.

Music will be the theme at **Spring Garden School** as David and Jenny Heitler-Klevans of Two of a Kind introduces students to the art and process of songwriting. Through a group creative process, students will learn about cooperation, creativity, compromise, and accomplishment as well as specific skills and information related to songwriting. This project is especially noteworthy because the school's art curriculum this year did not include music, so the Picasso Project grant made it possible to have music in the virtual classroom.

The U School will focus on visual arts, poetry and spoken word with arts organization ArtWell. With wellness and self-expression at the center of the project, U School students will make connections between visual art and poetry, giving them crucial tools to express themselves during this challenging school year.

At **Tilden Middle School**, students will play with poetry and drawing, Artist and illustrator Martha O'Connell will teach students to use their own writings and simple drawings as tools for

self-expression and empowerment. One project they are considering is having students design a mini-magazine of their writings and drawings that they can share with each other virtually.

Students at the **Vaux Big Picture High School** will learn West African drumming, dance, and storytelling, embodying the African proverb “Good drumming and dancing restores the community to wholeness.” Key components of this project, led by Jeannine Osayande & Dunya Performing Arts Company, make the connection between the traditions of the West African diaspora with today’s movements for social and racial justice.

Fleisher Art Memorial will teach students at **the William H. Hunter School** the techniques and creative problem solving needed to turn everyday household objects into three-dimensional works of art. Hunter teacher Maria Alvarez remarked on how important arts are to the learning experience, especially for children with special educational needs. “When I work with these students to try to reach IEP goals, it is clear how helpful the arts are to their academic work. For example, in one lesson my students might work on attention span, emotional regulation and expression, accomplishing novel tasks, and fine motor skills all at the same time.”

Enchantment Theatre Company will work with students at the **William Loesche School** to create an inclusive superhero story that incorporates imagery and information from different cultures, showing how common narratives can bring communities together. The students will rehearse and perform the story using items they have at home such as hats, scarves, socks, and paper bags.

PCCY established the Picasso Project in 2002 to boost high-quality, innovative arts projects in Philadelphia public elementary, middle, and high schools through grants and community support. Since 2002, the Picasso Project has supported 186 projects at 105 different schools, engaging 50,000 students at all levels.

PCCY is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that works to improve the lives of children in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties by developing initiatives and advocating for quality health care, child care, public education, and family stability. Learn more on our website (www.pccy.org), Twitter (@pccyteam), and Facebook page (PCCYPage).