



art¹

March 2016 Newsletter

e-Leader

The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.

The Arts are extremely important for the education of our children. Many times when there are to be cuts in programs in our schools, the arts are the first to be considered, but when a community comes together in a multitude of ways to celebrate student artists, the school district hears a mighty voice. My own district of East Meadow has some wonderful examples to show how celebrating students supports arts education.

I am very proud to say that this year all nine schools participated in the National PTA Reflections program "Let Your Imagination Fly". Students, across the district, created original works of art in each of the categories: film production, photography, music composition, literature, special artists, dance and visual arts (including the new 3D art category). The works of art that advanced to the region level of judging get displayed at the East Meadow Library, so they can be enjoyed by the proud artists, their families, and the whole community. Many a smile is seen when someone reads the words of a kindergartener about how they "Let their Imagination Fly". After the library exhibit, each PTA celebrates their student artists and then once again, displays their art, this time in the spring district-wide art show. Setting-up public art galleries of student art gives the whole community a chance to see the diverse talent of our children, emerging from East Meadow's many arts programs and classes.

The arts bridge generational gaps and brings families together in our district, too. Both of the High Schools, East Meadow and W.T. Clarke, invite senior citizens to attend the first performance of their spring play productions. It is wonderful to see the seniors enjoying themselves. They applaud and praise the student actors. It never fails, if you listen closely you will hear them comment about how wonderful these kids are and that should be on Broadway someday.

Another event for the senior citizens in our community is sponsored by the W.T. Clarke PTA. It is an annual themed celebration held in May. While the teachers, administrators and PTA parents provide fun for all the seniors of East Meadow, the most important stars of the event are the students. The chorus serenades the audience with songs to fit the event's theme. The drama department highlights performances from their latest production. The Tech department coordinates the audio equipment and sound production for the event. The seniors would have never known what these talented children could achieve if they had not been invited to celebrate with the kids. They truly appreciate the hard

work and talent of these students. They get to see first-hand how important it is to keep the arts in our school curriculum.

Our music department gets the kids out of our buildings and onto the streets of East Meadow and beyond. Both high school bands march in parades like the NYC Columbus Day Parade and enter highly competitive events where they often earn the highest honors. Our orchestras have performed at the Tilles Center and numerous budding musicians perform in the NYSMA Solo and ensemble festival.

East Meadow formed a new “Artist in Residency Program” for middle school students with disabilities. Family Residences and Essential Enterprises (FREE), an agency for disabled adults has many services, including one geared towards adults who have a passion for performing arts. These adults work with our students from the REACH (Recognizing and Encouraging Accomplishments in Children) program once a week for eight weeks. Their lessons include poetry, performing on stage and music. Self-esteem, language, social and leadership skills are natural outcomes in this program. At the end of the 8 weeks, the students showcase all that they have learned. In addition, our district supports the FREE Players adult program by hosting their wonderful performances & plays.

Celebrate the artistic achievements of students in your district and watch the support for quality arts curriculum in your schools increase. I have always been a huge supporter of having quality arts programs in education. So, it is with great pride that I say I am an East Meadow resident, a celebrator of the arts in my district, and a parent full of pride for my child who has made the arts an important part of his future.

Maria Smith

Nassau Region PTA Assistant Director

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