

WHY AN ARTS EDUCATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER



Arts in education, which are threatened by budget cuts and an increasing focus on academic testing in some school districts, aren't just a frill, or an "extra," in a child's education. Sure, art, music, and dance are fun for our children and create a lively atmosphere at school. While it's entertaining to watch them perform, and fun to indulge their creativity, it is through the arts that they learn critical life skills such as resilience and cooperation, and enhance academic skills such as math and reasoning. Through participation in the arts, our children are learning lessons that support their academic achievement and prepare them for successful lives in the 21st century. **Through Kiddo!, community members like you have spent 28 years making sure Mill Valley students are getting a vibrant, integrated arts education.**

"When I examine myself and my method of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing knowledge."

Albert Einstein

Enhancing Student Achievement in the Classroom

Traditional research shows arts programs support basic school curriculum. Studying music is clearly linked to math proficiency. UCLA Professor of Education James Catterall references almost 3,000 published studies involving music and spatial-temporal reasoning, which

is the understanding of relations between ideas and objects in space and in time. Spatial reasoning influences how we plan, solve mathematical problems, and understand spoken and written language. The impact of drama in the classroom also has attracted wide attention among researchers. Notably, drama positively affects children's understanding of written text as well as reading and writing skills.



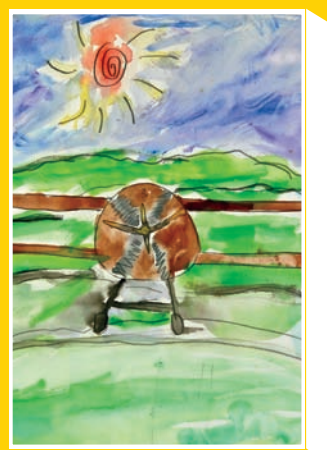
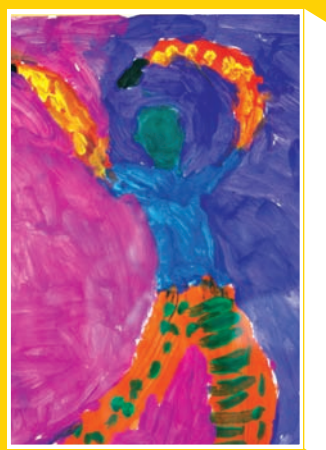
Multiple independent studies, including a recent study from The College Board, show a positive correlation between increased years of arts curriculum and SAT verbal and math scores. Students who took four years of arts coursework outperformed their peers who had less than six months of arts coursework. While such benefits are important to student learning, the arts have significant impact on our children in other, critical ways.

Transforming Students and Teachers

There is more to success in school and in life than basic academic achievement. **The arts experiences you provide through donations to Kiddo! improve the social development of children, enhance the school environment, and motivate children to learn.** When young people become producers of arts, they develop a positive sense of identity, research shows. Ongoing research from the Arts Education Partnership indicates that when children are challenged creatively, they develop persistence and learn resilience in order to work through setbacks and turn them into opportunities for growth.

In addition, when children work together to produce art in the form of ensemble music, theatre, or dance performances, they learn how to balance their individual expression within a social context. Simply stated, children learn to collaborate and they develop empathy and tolerance for others. Richard Deasy of the Arts Education Partnership has conducted research showing how participation in the arts gives children the chance to develop important cognitive skills including abstract and critical thinking as well as practice in processing and analyzing information.

Kiddo!'s arts programs also create a learning environment that encourages students and teachers to be successful. Professor of Arts Education David Burton has studied the ways in which arts programs strengthen relationships and encourage collaboration among teachers, students, parents, and visiting artists. Kiddo!'s annual Teacher Mini-Grants cultivate teacher innovation, community engagement, and positive school identity.



Barry Oreck, Ph.D. Educational Psychology and current director of In-School Programs at Arts Connection in New York City, has found that teacher-student relationships are stronger in schools with rich arts programs. Studies by Deasy, of the Arts Education Partnership, point to the arts experience as an opportunity for students who may feel marginalized or who have different learning styles to become more comfortable and active participants in group projects. Attend a Kiddo!-sponsored performance and see how your contributions help to shape the lives and experiences of our school community.

Preparing our Children for the Future

A recent study by the U.S. Labor Department found that the abilities to communicate, adapt to ambiguity and change, and to solve problems creatively are more important than ever in our modern business environment. Children who participate in arts programs throughout their education learn to draw upon and deepen their creative abilities at an early age. Once learned, creative thinking lasts a lifetime and can be applied to all work and social situations. Knowledge-based occupations in computer technology, healthcare, finance, and teaching are among the fastest growing 21st century occupations, and all require the creativity and skills that our children learn through arts programs.

In his article, Art the 4th R, Jason Ohler, professor emeritus of Educational Technology at the University of Alaska, reminds us our children will live and work in a multi-media environment that includes written text and pictures, diagrams, sound, and movement. They will have to think and communicate as designers and architects because they will have to manage, interpret, and interact with media in ways we can only imagine today.

What will employers want when it comes time for a job interview? In a study funded by the University of Washington, the most frequently requested qualities were the same for work in every sector of the economy. Besides job-specific skills and experience, employers want to hire people with strong analytical skills, creative

problem-solving skills, and excellent communications skills. We can thank the arts for giving our children the chance to develop critical skills for their success in the future.

When you make a contribution to Kiddo!, you help provide vital programs to our children. You also help create the best environment for their academic achievement, social development, and their future success as productive and responsible global citizens.

Thank you for helping our children to reach their full potential!

Kids Need Kiddo!

"Once learned, creative thinking lasts a lifetime and can be applied to all work and social situations."



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Spring 2010

**AS MILL VALLEY SCHOOLS FACE BUDGET CUTS,
 COMMUNITY SUPPORT BECOMES CRUCIAL**

The financial situation at many public schools is becoming critical. Educators are struggling with deep cuts to their budget from decreasing property taxes and reduced state funding. The Mill Valley School district is not immune. More than \$2 million has been cut from the budget as of the most recent round of reductions and more cuts are almost certainly coming. While up to now we have been able to preserve quality education with the strong support of the community through passing a parcel tax and bond measure and continued financial support of Kiddo!, the new budget reality is that we need everyone to pull together. Without the community support needed to augment the dollars the district has, our schools are at risk.

Kiddo! has stepped in. Kiddo! increased the amount of money it raises for programs in the schools by 39 percent since 2005, and the amount has more than doubled since 2000. Kiddo! funds 100 percent of the art, music, drama, poetry and dance programs, as well as a significant portion of technology and library and classroom aides. Kiddo! also funds Mini Grants, which allow teachers to incorporate innovative new ideas into the classroom. Kiddo! works closely with the school district each year to identify any additional district needs that might be funded by the foundation. Kiddo!'s contributions currently represent about 6 percent of the Mill Valley School District's \$28.2 million budget.

In the past five years, enrollment in the Mill Valley School District has increased 22 percent, while property tax growth slowed and money received from the state declined. That is where Kiddo!, which has been providing programs and support for the Mill Valley School District for the past 28 years,

"I have come to realize and appreciate how interdependent and powerful the relationship is between the District and Kiddo!, especially in these difficult economic times," says school district superintendent Ken Benny. "We are fortunate to have such a supportive community that still sees such incredible value in a comprehensive education for all children."

Indeed, the majority of dollars raised have come from community partners and from families in the district. The Annual Giving Campaign, the yearly fundraising drive that begins each May to raise funds needed for the following year's programs, has risen 67 percent in the past five years, to \$1.6 million in 2009. Every gift counts, and we have received donations from a handful of change on Donation Day to extremely generous gifts of \$25,000. We strive for 100 percent parent participation, especially since 100 percent of the students benefit from our programs. While our current participation rate of 71 percent is among the strongest for California school foundations, it still means almost 30 percent of our district families don't contribute. We need everyone to keep our schools strong.

"The children in our district are lucky to live in a community that values education and is willing to dig deep into their pockets through contributions and parcel taxes," says Trisha Garlock, Kiddo! Executive Director. "It takes everyone - parents, businesses and community donors to make quality education a reality in Mill Valley."



DONATION DAY • MAY 7, 2010

On May 7, Kiddo! will launch its 2010 Annual Giving Campaign. We ask school district families to help Kiddo! lower fundraising costs by making their annual donations on a single day. Hundreds of families participate in this effort, which helps save valuable volunteer time and significantly decreases the cost of paper, printing and postage for follow-up mailings.

In light of the ongoing budget constraints facing our local schools, it is critically important that we financially support our children's education. We encourage you to make your annual contribution to Kiddo! on May 7th and help fund this year's arts and technology programs as well as save classroom aides from budget cuts. Giving is easy – just drop off your donation at school, make your donation online at www.kiddo.org, or mail it in to 409 Sycamore Avenue. Thank you in advance for your participation in Kiddo!'s fundraising efforts this year – together we can protect the quality education our students deserve!

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Kids Need Kiddo

