



For Immediate Release

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ArtSpark is Reigniting Creativity in 4J Schools

Lane Arts Council in-school Artist Residencies re-engage elementary students in the classroom

Eugene, Ore.— The 2022-23 school year has seen a major resurgence of the arts in elementary classrooms across Eugene School District 4J. Supported by the district and funding raised through ArtSpark, Lane Arts Council has scheduled 23 Artist Residencies in 12 Eugene 4J elementary schools so far this year.

[ArtSpark](#) is a collaborative effort between Eugene School District 4J and [Lane Arts Council](#), and was founded in partnership with the [Rotary Club of Eugene](#) in 2016 to ensure that elementary students have access to high quality arts education as part of their in-school learning. The funds raised through ArtSpark, along with funding from Eugene School District 4J, make it possible for every 4J elementary school to have up to two full school Artist Residencies each year. The effort to raise funds for ArtSpark is ongoing and direct donations can be made at lanearts.org/eugene-artspark.

As pressure on academic benchmarks and funding has reduced or eliminated arts programs and instructors over time, Lane Arts Council has grown its programs to fill the arts learning gaps in Lane County schools. For many students in Eugene and Lane County, Lane Arts Council's arts education programs are one of their only opportunities to experience high-quality arts learning.

Through ArtSpark, teachers and administrators have the opportunity to choose from dozens of Lane Arts Council [Artist Residencies](#), bringing in professional Teaching Artists who introduce artforms that educators would not otherwise be able to provide to their students.

Teaching Artist Jen Hernandez recently led an ArtSpark residency at Charlemagne Elementary where she adapted her Story and Comic-based curriculum to specifically explore stories of kindness, which aligned with the schools Spreading Kindness Campaign. This is one example of how Lane Arts Council's arts education programs supplement core academic topics with lessons presented through a creative lens. Each residency introduces a new pathway of expression for students to share their creativity, unique voice, and grow their confidence. Overall, educators have consistently shared that students who participate in the arts in school are more deeply engaged in school and across all academic learning.

"We know that the benefits of arts learning are far-reaching and have a broad impact for students," shared Stacey Ray, Lane Arts Council Executive Director. "Having arts opportunities in school not only exercises student creativity, but it provides a whole range of benefits that help young people be successful in all areas of their lives, from building cohesion and school community to helping students learn how to express complicated ideas. Especially during the pandemic, we consistently heard how arts experiences were supporting student mental health and social-emotional wellbeing, keeping them engaged, and helping students feel heard and that their voice mattered."

This year, 3,884 Eugene 4J elementary students will explore a wide variety of visual, literary, and performing arts. Just some of the artforms that ArtSpark helps bring to classrooms include ceramic sculpture, fiddle playing, salsa dance, mural painting, natural dyes, glass fusion, and much more.

Learn more about ArtSpark and Lane Arts Council's Artist Residency Program at <http://lanearts.org/artist-residencies/>

About Lane Arts Council

Lane Arts Council is a nonprofit organization that works to cultivate strong and creative arts communities throughout Lane County by providing high-quality arts experiences, engaging people of all ages in arts education, and encouraging artistic endeavors. Lane Arts Council has developed and implemented arts education programs in Lane County schools for almost 50 years and is recognized as a leader in arts education locally and statewide.

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Images:

Artist Residency "Alebrijes: Paper Sculptures inspired by the art of Oaxaca, Mexico" with Lane Arts Teaching Artist Tom Miller

Ceramic Tile Artist Residency with Larry Meyers