

This article is part of the Los Gatos Education Foundation (LGEF) profile series on LGEF-funded programs for the current academic year.

VISUAL ARTS

What It Is: A \$65,000 grant to continue the very popular *Artist in the Classroom* curriculum and support for the *Art Docents* program. The *Artist in the Classroom* brings hands-on art lessons to students and teachers in all kindergarten through fifth grade classes. These lessons meet California's visual arts standards and are designed to teach art concepts including discussion, observation and student self-critique of their artwork. Through the *Art Docents* program, students learn different aspects of art composition (line, shape, color, space etc.), as well as specific artists, art history and artistic genres and techniques.

The LGEF grant supports one of the District's goals to develop the "whole child" with a broad-based education that includes the visual and performing arts.

Why It Matters: These two programs provide opportunities to understand, connect with and interpret the arts experience. The hands-on *Artist in the Classroom* program exposes children to a wide variety of artistic media and cultures, offering them another way to communicate and comprehend the world around them while developing and honing their fine motor skills.

Both programs help teachers gain technical experience in the teaching of visual arts.

How It Benefits Your Child: Research shows that exposure to the arts at an early age helps develop strong neural connections that produce broad-ranging benefits. "Art has the potential to be both process and product," says Deborah Kotchian, visual arts instructor. "Along with increasing every child's potential for creative self-expression, art is the perfect venue to experience accomplishment and know what finished feels like."

Find out more information about LGEF by visiting www.lgef.org.

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For the 2009-10 school year, visual arts lessons include elements that focus on cultures around the world. One example is a lesson in the style of African masks.

