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OMA Program Wins Governor's Pretigious Arts Award in the Arts in Education Category

Governor Janet Napolitano honored the Opening Minds Through the Arts (OMA) Program by presenting to the program Arizona's outstanding Arts in Education award. The governor presented the award at a dinner on April 18 at the Camelback Inn, Phoenix, to a crowd of over 600 people from throughout the state. OMA was selected by a panel of judges from among a group of 25 nominees in the Arts in Education category.

Dr. Joan Ashcraft, Tucson Unified School District's director of Fine & Performing Arts/OMA Program, and Dr. Patricia Lopez, TUSD's deputy superintendent, received the award from Governor Napolitano. The award was an original work of art created by Arizona artist Hilary Meehan.

"This is the most prestigious art award offered in Arizona, and it is an exceptional honor to receive it on behalf of the teachers and artists who



L to R: Governor Janet Napolitano, Dr. Patti Lopez, Dr. Joan Ashcraft, Hilary Meehan

implement the program," said Dr. Joan Ashcraft, fighting back tears of joy. Twenty people from TUSD, the OMA Program and the OMA Foundation accompanied Dr. Ashcraft and Dr. Lopez to the awards ceremony.

The Governor's Arts Awards, now in its 25th year, is an annual event celebrating individuals, corporations, community organizations, artists, arts educators and programs. The celebration jointly is presented by the Arizona Citizens for the Arts, the

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OMA Foundation Awarded Grants from Five Foundations & Significant Contributions from Three Businesses

In the past three months the OMA Foundation has received grants totaling \$113,334 from the Marshall Foundation, the Emerald Foundation, the West, Inc., the Margaret E. Mooney Foundation and Southwestern Foundation.

"This will allow us to provide the OMA Program with over \$100,000 more in financial support this year than we previously had projected," said Shirley Kiser, executive director of the foundation,

in reporting the grant awards to the OMA Foundation Board of Directors at a board meeting May 2. "This truly makes my heart sing, and we feel deep gratitude to these organizations."

"The foundation board can rightfully say we are carrying out our mission to support the OMA Program through fundraising," Dr. Mary Belle McCorkle told the board. "This is a milestone in our quest to see the OMA Program established in all TUSD elementary and middle schools."

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OMA Program Wins Governor's Pretigious Arts Award in the Arts in Education Category

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Arizona Commission on the Arts and the Office of the Governor. All proceeds from the dinner will go toward advancing Arizona Citizens for the Arts' mission of increasing discussion and awareness of the importance and impact of the arts in achieving quality of life, educational excellence and economic health for all Arizonans and Arizona enterprises.

The OMA Program, begun in 1999, currently operates in 37 TUSD elementary and middle schools and daily serves 17,000 students throughout the school year. The OMA Foundation's goal is to help establish the program in all TUSD elementary and middle schools. ■



OMA Foundation Awarded Grants from Five Foundations & Significant Contributions from Three Businesses

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In early July the foundation will learn the outcome of two other grant proposals it submitted this spring, one to the Arizona Commission on the Arts, the other to the Stocker Foundation. The combined proposal requests are \$29,000.

In addition to the grant awards, the OMA Foundation also received large contributions from Tucson Federal Credit Union, the Big Arizona Music Festival and the 4th Avenue Business Alliance. These contributions totaled \$20,000.

The OMA Foundation Board of Directors will hold a board retreat on June 6 at the Volunteer Center of Tucson &

Southern Arizona to develop a 2 -3 year fundraising plan. "Our goal for F.Y. 2007-2008 is to increase our financial support to the OMA Program by 10%, moving up this year's support of \$225,000 to a cool \$250,000, a nice number," Kiser said.

The foundation's contributions to the OMA Program primarily are used to pay for the professional teaching artists in the OMA Program, a critical component that contributes substantially to the program's success. ■

OMA Foundation Board Fetes OMA Honorary Board

The OMA Foundation Board of Directors and Advisory Board held a welcoming event for the newly-formed OMA Honorary Board on May 9 at the home of the foundation's President-Elect Carolyn Kemmeries.

The Honorary Board was created to help the foundation develop new contacts and networks and gain greater visibility in the community.

Honorary Board members are: Dr. Jean-Paul Bierny; Michael Chihak; Dorothy Finley; David Fitzsimmons; Rodney Glassman; George Hanson; Ellen Hargis; Kasey Havas; Chuck Huckleberry; Robert Knight; Cress Lander; Kelly Langford; Nancy Ledebouer; Harman Lomawaima; Dr. Patti Lopez; Dr. Ron Marx; Dr. Peter McCallister; Roger Pfeuffer; Tom Philabaum; Joel Revzen; Dr. Helen Schaefer; Dr. John Schaefer; Dr. Maurice Sevigny; Ruth Solomon; Mayor Bob Walkup.

“Bird” Lands Safely at LIRC to Highlight Exhibit

It took three men, three trucks and two bags of clothing to transport one very large, brilliant-colored ceramic peacock “tree of life” to the Lee Instructional Resource Center. But thanks to Rey, Daniel and Robert of TUSD’s Property Control Center, TUSD’s beloved bird has landed safely and is ensconced in its new home, a glass case at the center.

This peacock has been on display for many years, first in the office of former TUSD Superintendent, Dr. George Garcia, and later in Tucson High’s library.

Now this amazing bird is on display in the lobby of LIRC, the focal piece in an exhibit

featuring the Fine Arts Department’s collection of Mexican arts and crafts. The exhibit is called the “Mexican Mercado” and is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

This spectacular bird is just one of many exceptional artifacts in TUSD’s Fine Arts Department’s multicultural collection, and everyone is encouraged to join in celebrating the arts and crafts of our neighbor, Mexico. ■



From the Classroom: Another Example of Why OMA Works!

The third graders and their teacher in a classroom at Duffy Elementary School were checking their answers to a multiple-choice math test. The teacher began to discuss the correct answers with the class, saying, “For question 1, the correct answer is ‘A.’ For question two, the correct answer is ‘B’. Do you have any questions or comments?”

A small hand shot up, and when called upon, a boy excitedly made this observation: “We can play the answers on our recorders!” Classmates responded enthusiastically and announced to the teacher that they wanted to conduct this “experiment” to see if the answers would make a song.

The teacher, just as excited as the students, stopped while the students retrieved their recorders, again began reviewing the answers and playing along with them on their recorders.

Who could have anticipated that in an OMA classroom composing music and testing can go hand-in-hand – and that OMA students can find art even while taking a multiple-choice test!

Submitted by Kathleen Halstead, arts integration specialist, Duffy School ■

100+ Year-Old Violin Contributed to OMA Program

Thanks to Daniel Clifton, a Tucsonan since 2002, a talented high school student will inherit an antique violin, one made in Germany about 1890. The student was selected for his intense interest in studying music after graduating from high school.

On April 4, Mr. Clifton brought the violin to the OMA Foundation to contribute the violin to the Fine & Performing Arts Department/OMA Program, asking that we identify an appropriate new owner.

Mr. Clifton tells this story about the violin. From Germany where the violin was made, it found its way to a Sears & Roebuck catalogue where it was bought by a fiddler. The fiddler traded the violin to

pay off a long-term debt to a Mr. Holter. Mr. Holter’s daughter inherited the violin, and before she died, she asked Mr. Clifton if he would like to have it. He enthusiastically accepted the gift, but he felt he should begin playing the violin again, which he hadn’t done since he was 13.

In Tucson, Mr. Clifton found a music teacher, Jonel Lauver, from whom he has been taking lessons for about 10 months, and he then decided to buy a new violin and donate the antique violin to a student.

That’s the history behind this unique instrument, given generously and lovingly to a TUSD student by Mr. Clifton. ■

Active Volunteers For the Arts Serve TUSD & The Community

TUSD's Active Volunteers for the Arts (AVA) members participated in KUAT's March fund-raising drive and promoted AVA's volunteerism for TUSD's Fine Arts/OMA Program. Wearing OMA t-shirts, the volunteers each spent five hours at the KUAT station at the University of Arizona responding to calls from contributors.

Featured in the photo are: First row, left to right. **Mark Heyman, Dotti Plotkin, Sophie Katz, Becky Schulman.** Second row, **Evelyn Schnider, Marilyn Hulkower, Gus Hulkower, Sonya Sapin, Thelma Heyman and Julie Tretakoff.** AVA has worked with TUSD Fine Arts/OMA for three years, recruiting and training professionals from education, the arts and business.

Mostly retired, these volunteers contribute hundreds of hours a year to volunteering for Fine Arts. They are passionate about helping school children succeed through arts experiences that integrate with core subject content. These

dedicated volunteers primarily work in the arts, music, drama and dance and assist with the ArtsMobiles, the computerization, restoration and identification of artifacts, representing Fine Arts/OMA at public events, performing general office work and much more.

New volunteers are oriented in the areas in which they will work before being assigned to a project or a school.



People interested in the arts, education and becoming part of AVA can call Marsie Chaiken, AVA volunteer coordinator at: (520) 577-6646 or e-mail her at: chacha56@comcast.net

OMA Showcase "Wows" Audience!

The third annual *OMA Showcase* held March 24 played to a full house in Rincon/University High School's auditorium. Declared the "best ever," the auditorium was packed with an appreciative audience of parents, students and supporters of the arts. David Fitzsimmons, editorial cartoonist for the *Arizona Daily Star* was the MC.

The Showcase honored Dr. Carroll Rinehart who received numerous accolades and awards, including those from Governor Napolitano and Tucson's Mayor and City Council.

The program highlighted the talents of over 150 OMA students from 15 OMA schools and two of their teaching artists, Thom Lewis and Kimberly Chaffin.

Adding excitement and drama to the event was the presentation of substantial checks from five of the

OMA Foundation's key contributors to foundation Executive Director Shirley Kiser. These came from: H. Eugene (Gene) Jones, the Marshall Foundation, Tucson Federal Credit Union, Southwest Strings and the Big AZ Music Festival.

A "Meet the Artists" reception followed the performance at which an exhibition of students' art was displayed and entertainment was provided by The Middle School Honor Orchestra. The reception food was donated by community supporters.

Plans already are underway for next year's Showcase.

Last, we want to update our Showcase contributors list by adding here the names of people who donated \$100 or more after our Showcase program went to press. Like the many others who contributed to this year's Showcase, we are deeply appreciative. **David & Ursula Fillman • Steve & Sue Fry • Girolama Garner • Mary Goodman • Dr. & Mrs. Wallace Haworth • Lynn Kastella • Linda Linthicum • Jan Vesely • Cressworth Lander**

YES, I WANT MY TAX CREDIT CONTRIBUTION TO GO TO AN OMA SCHOOL

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Contribution Amount \$ _____

Please clip this form, make out your check to an OMA school of your choice, write "OMA" in the memo and return it to: **Dr. Joan Ashcraft, 2025 E. Winsett Street, Tucson, AZ 85719.** When we receive your check, we'll quickly mail you a tax receipt.

OMA Foundation Seeks Input From Parents & OMA Program Participants

Grant funds from the Emerald Foundation will allow the OMA Foundation to gather and analyze important data from the parents of OMA students, principals, principal coaches and supervisors, arts integration specialists, teachers and teaching artists. TUSD Accountability & Research Director David Scott is working with the foundation on this project, which was approved by TUSD Superintendent Roger Pfeuffer.

To conduct this study, the foundation has contracted with a highly reputable, well-known research and public polling firm, Behavior Research Center (BRC) in Phoenix. Starting in mid-May BRC will conduct phone interviews with over 400 parents of OMA students to determine their satisfaction with the program. This is the first time since OMA began in 1999 that there has been an organized effort to collect information from a large number of OMA

parents by an outside company.

Also in May – and for a similar reason – BRC will send electronic surveys to the participants listed above. They will be asked to answer 8 – 10 objective questions and one or two optional open-ended questions. All information will be exchanged solely between BRC and the study's participants.

The parent polling and surveying is expected to be completed by early June, and a written report, prepared by BRC, will be issued by early July.

The report will be distributed to all participants in the study, the TUSD Governing Board, the foundation's Board of Directors, Honorary Board, Parent Council and to other interested parties. ■

TUSD's OMA Schools to Be Recognized by State Superintendent Tom Horne & Other Recognition

At Superintendent Horne's Spotlight on Success dinner on May 16 in Carefree, the superintendent will recognize the OMA Program, giving special acknowledgement to Cavett and Davidson Elementary Schools. Principals from these and other schools, along with Dr. Joan Ashcraft, director of TUSD's Fine & Performing Arts/OMA Program, will attend the dinner. Accompanying them will be H. Eugene (Gene) Jones, one of the

key founders of the OMA Program and OMA Foundation and the key contributor to the OMA Foundation.

Additionally, Dr. Ashcraft and Rick Wamer, OMA program coordinator, have been selected from numerous applicants to make several presentations at the National School Development Council Conference in Dallas, Texas, December 1 – 5. ■

✂

Please Consider a Tax Deductible Contribution to the OMA Foundation

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Address _____

Zip Code _____ Phone Number _____

Please make check out to: Opening Minds Through The Arts Foundation

Would you be interested in volunteering? YES _____ NO _____ (please check)

Send donation to: **Opening Minds Through The Arts Foundation**
2025 E. Winsett Street, Tucson, AZ 85719

** You will be sent a receipt
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Opening Minds Through The Arts Foundation

Joan Ashcraft, DMA
Director, TUSD Fine &
Performing Arts/OMA

Mary Belle McCorkle, Ed.D.
President

Shirley Kiser
Executive Director

2025 E. Winsett Street
Tucson, Arizona
85719-6942

PHONE:
(520) 225-4656

FAX:
(520) 225-4863

E-MAIL:
shirley.kiser@tUSD1.org

www.omaprogramaz.org

Why Attend This Year's Fine Arts Summer Institute (FASI)?

"The arts help engage children in the educational process," enthuses Melody Myrand, a fourth grade teacher at Vesey Elementary School. "They get children excited about learning, so they can learn without even noticing. My students love it. It's a hoot!" That's why this summer Melody has enrolled in the Fine Arts Summer Institute, one of two professional development arts opportunities offered every summer by TUSD's Fine Arts Department.

Like many teachers, Melody's interest in integrating the arts into the core curriculum isn't driven by the joy the arts bring to her personally. Rather, she explains, it helps her keep her students engaged.

"Students have a range of abilities and learning styles", Melody says. "We're not all the same, and we don't all learn in the same ways. Using the arts in the classroom helps address differentiated learning styles."

Melody is attending FASI because she hopes the institute will provide her techniques and activities that she can implement to help students who learn in less traditional ways. She also expects she'll learn ways to help

students express what they know, "I want to be able to have examples of their work on the classroom walls," she says. "I want to help them express their success."

This summer's Fine Arts Summer Institute, "***Unlock Your Artistry: Keys to Successful Learning***," will be held two times. The first session will be held **May 29-June 2** and the second, **July 30-August 3**. Both will be held at Booth/Fickett Magnet School from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. daily.

The institute provides 45 credit hours. The fee is \$100 for TUSD teachers and \$200 for out-of-district teachers. A few scholarships are available, and at publication time, there are openings for a few more teachers. Registration forms are available on the OMA website at www.omaprogramaz.org, but it would be best to phone the Fine Arts Department at 225-4900 to be certain space is still available. ■

OMA Quote of the Month:

"If you really want to reach out to at-risk children, then you have to find something very powerful to involve them. And OMA is that powerful tool."

*Dr. Pamela Clarridge, Principal,
Kellond Elementary School*