

# The OMA Outlook

## Opening Minds Through The Arts



### COORDINATOR'S LETTER

Dear Readers,

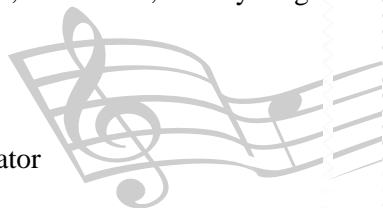
Welcome to the fifth edition of the OMA Outlook. As we wind down the original three-year research project, we find that there is a new excitement about the all of the successes that have generated recognition for the OMA curriculum/program. The Tucson Unified School District has committed to a full OMA program in ten schools, and an additional nineteen schools will have some parts of the OMA Program during the 2004-2005 school year.

Opening Minds through the Arts Project, Inc. has been launched and will provide expanded opportunities to secure funding to support the growth of OMA. As a recognized not-for-profit organization, we are able to receive tax-deductible gifts while individual OMA schools are still able to benefit from tax credit contributions provided through a bill passed by Arizona legislators and utilized through the Arizona Department of Revenue.

A revised form is included on the last page of the newsletter providing an opportunity for readers to make either a tax-deductible donation to OMA Project, Inc. or a tax-credit contribution to an individual TUSD School currently providing OMA services to its students. Directions are given on each form. Please consider both a **tax credit** and a **tax-deductible** donation. Additionally, tax credits taken on Arizona tax returns may also be taken as deductions on the federal form for those who itemize.

This issue of Outlook contains several new items. Because you have been an important supporter of OMA, we want to be sure you are kept informed of all that is happening. Thank you again for your generosity and your interest in the arts, education, and young people.

Sincerely,  
*Carolyn Kemmeries*  
 OMA Project Coordinator



### OMA RESEARCH CONTINUES

Last May, when the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) announced its new **Arts Based Initiative**, Tucson Unified School District answered the request for applications from qualified elementary schools by proposing to implement the **OMA Program** in three of its schools. The grant will infuse nearly \$100,000 annually into the budgets of each school for three years. **Roberts, Davidson, and Cavett schools** will be able to hire all of the grade-level artists, employ a full-time OMA Lead Teacher, provide violin and wind instrument instruction to every intermediate student, participate in the Tucson Arts Connection Matinee series, and maybe most importantly, **conduct a replication study of the OMA research.**

The OMA Research conducted from August 2002 until June 2004 has had incredible impact on a local, state and national level. Tom Horne, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, based his arts initiative on the OMA project and the research demonstrating that students in OMA schools achieved significantly better in all academic areas tested on the Stanford 9 than students in the control schools.

Twice, Rod Paige, the United States Secretary of Education has cited the OMA Program as an example of successful school reform. Most recently, in a letter sent to 16,000 superintendents nation-wide, OMA was the only school program referenced as a resource for districts he urged to include arts-education as integral to school curriculum.

The new research will be an exact replication to determine if OMA can be implemented repeatedly with the same, or better, gains in student achievement. WestEd, a nonprofit research firm based in California, will be responsible for the study. **In the next issue of OMA Outlook, look the final full-report of the original study.**

## **SUSAN FRANANO**

Executive Director

### **TUCSON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Susan Franano began her music career in voice performance and says it was by accident that she moved on to work in arts administration. She has spent the last twenty years in orchestra management, most recently here in Tucson.

When Ms. Franano moved from Ohio to become Executive Director of the Tucson Symphony during the summer of 2001, she learned about the symphony's cooperation with OMA. She discovered how truly passionate those symphony performers who perform in the schools are about the OMA Project. Along with Shawn Campbell, Director of Education and Community Partnerships, she hopes to identify more performers who will train and work with the OMA Project.

The importance of arts in the curriculum is something Ms. Franano knows well. Ms. Franano believes the increased student achievement results of the OMA Project clearly demonstrate that music in the classroom is not only about the arts, but also about learning more readily. Music in the classroom promotes effective learning, cognitive development, and creativity. Music has an impact on learning math, science, and literacy.

Returning arts to the curriculum, with an understanding of how critical it is in affecting learning, is extremely important as it will help improve learning across the curriculum and make a real impact on our educational system. That's why the Tucson Symphony organization is truly supportive of the OMA Project.

## **OMA KIDS ARE GRATEFUL**

Last May when Gene Jones, OMA's "patron saint", visited classes to watch OMA in action, he learned how much the children who participate in this experience really do enjoy it. Following are just a few excerpts from letters written to Mr. Jones by kindergarten and first grade students at Peter Howell.

"The music is beautiful. It is like an angel flying across the sky and I thank you because it is so nice for my ears." Love, Mercedes

"Thank you for giving us OMA. I love the opera. Before I couldn't write music, but now I like writing music and hearing my own music." Love, Anthony

"Music helps me think. I can read at a second-grade level and OMA is responsible for that. My teachers are also responsible and me too." Love, Jacob

"Thank you for paying for the opera singers. I would like to stay in Mrs. Long's class so that I can hear them again next year." Love, Alexis

"Music makes me good. It makes pictures in my head. I like music a lot. The OMA trio is important for us. Thank you for paying for it." Love, Gilbert

"The trio music makes your thinking tube spin and shoot across your brain. Music makes me think quicker." Love, Gavin

"Music makes me happy!" Love, Jennifer

## **LYNN-URQUIDES STUDENTS SPEAK OUT**

Last spring the grant that originally funded the OMA Program was nearing its completion. Fourth and fifth grade students at Lynn-Urquides Elementary School were asked to write persuasive essays to the TUSD Board members convincing them of OMA's importance for students. Fortunately you, our donors, and the decision makers at TUSD, have made it possible for full-implementation to continue at Lynn-Urquides. I think you will enjoy some excerpts from their exceptional work and I wish that space allowed us to print each essay in its entirety.

"Music makes us feel relaxed and happy. It makes us have lots of compassion. Without music our brain cells will not work as well." Marcos, grade 4



"We learn math better. We know this because the time signature and note values teach us fractions. We also learn rhythms and counting, two things we use in math everyday. OMA makes us want to come to school". Carlos, grade 5

"Music is fun and interesting because it teaches us math, history, reading and so much more. School is fun, but learning to play instruments and my music teacher make it so much better." Clarissa, grade 5

"Students here are smarter because we have OMA. Our test scores have improved in math, reading and writing. We all feel successful. If we didn't have OMA we would not learn how to play the trumpet, violin, recorder and clarinet. I plan to be a teacher so I can show little kids how to read and write music." Karina, grade 5

## TUSD AND OMA ARE SELECTED FOR NATIONAL STUDY

In August, Fine Arts Director Dr. Joan Ashcraft, and Steven LaFrance from TUSD's Educational Technology Department, traveled to Pacifica, California to participate in a planning session for a national research project studying the effect of arts-integrated teacher professional development that utilizes technology in the training design. Arts4Learning, a website developed by Young Audiences, Inc., will be the focal point of the technology piece for the teacher professional development program.

Several hundred teachers from the Miami-Dade Public Schools, the Chicago Unified Public Schools, and the Tucson Unified School District will participate in the training that will focus on third, fourth and fifth grade teachers. The three districts were selected because of their current emphasis on arts-education and because they are three of the most successful among the two hundred school districts represented on the site. Ten TUSD school sites will participate.

Richard Bell, Executive Director of Young Audiences, said input by Joan and Steven was core to the final design of the study. John Bransford, well-known research expert from the education department at The University of Washington, is conducting the research, which is being funded by some of our nation's most prestigious nonprofit organizations such as the Ford and Hewlett Foundations, and the National Endowment for the Arts. OMA and TUSD are proud of being selected to receive this honor and are pleased to receive the benefits associated with participation.

## OMA'S TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

OMA'S most recent collaboration is with the Instructional Technology Department in Tucson Unified School District. We are very grateful to Lisa Long, head of the department who has been a strong supporter and has assisted us with our website, professional development and now with our involvement in the Arts4Learning national arts education study. Lisa has made it possible for Steve LaFrance, a staff member of Instructional Technology Services (ITS) to work 2 days a week on OMA related business. Her support has been invaluable and we are grateful.

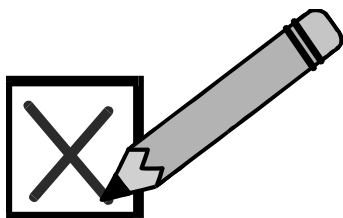
Lisa has been a part of the TUSD family for 18 years. Her contributions to TUSD schools and to all TUSD departments has been recognized by more than one superintendent and governing board. It is natural that Lisa would be a supporter of arts programs as she spent four years in choir at Palo Verde High, studying under the direction of Tom Patrick. Music was important to Lisa and she has passed her passion on to her three children, all of whom are studying either viola or clarinet.

TUSD Fine Arts is also grateful that Steve LaFrance, who served many years as Director of Sabino High School's award winning instrumental music program, has moved into technology, combining his love for both areas in his work for OMA. Steve's wife, Terry Gonzales of Channel 9 News, is a great support for TUSD students as well and has made student internships available to Steve's students. Thanks to both of you for your work supporting students.



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## *Important Bond and Override Election*



On Tuesday, November 2, 2004 all registered voters will have an opportunity to elect the next President of the United States. A question nearly as important to Tucsonans will appear on the same ballot and that is the TUSD bond and override. We have been told that voters often do not finish their ballots once they have completed voting for the major offices. Although this item will be near the end of the ballot, we hope that voters will persevere and finish the entire ballot, as this is an item of vital importance.

There has not been a bond election for the area's largest school district for many years so voters typically aren't looking for such an item. We hope that all qualified voters will carefully study all three parts of this issue so that theirs can be an informed vote. A large voter turnout is expected this year. We all have much to consider as we prepare to take advantage of our opportunity to participate in the voting process, the essence of a true democracy.

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Opening Minds Through The Arts, Inc.  
P.O. box 41934  
Tucson, AZ 85717

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Organization  
U.S. Postage  
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### Tax Deductible Donations Form

Taxpayer's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check out to: Opening Minds Through The Arts, Inc.**

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

Send donation to: Opening Minds Through The Arts, Inc.

P.O. Box 41934, Tucson, AZ 85717

You will be sent a receipt acknowledging your donation.

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*Please Send Your "OMA" Tax Credit Donations to:*



**Dr. Joan Ashcraft,  
Fine and Performing Arts  
2025 East Winsett  
Tucson, Arizona 85719**

Taxpayer's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number (required by the state of Arizona) \_\_\_\_\_

In order to receive a tax-credit, **your check must be made out to a school.** (Write: "OMA" in memo section)

OMA schools include: Booth/Fickett, Cavett, Corbett, Davidson, Dietz, Duffy, Kellond, Lynn/Urquides, Peter Howell, and Roberts.

**You will be sent a receipt acknowledging your contribution.**