



Links & Threads

A Newsletter for Arts Partners Published by the Ohio Arts Council and the Ohio Department of Education **Volume IV Issue 1**

Links and Threads is an electronic newsletter for district and school leaders, educators and their arts partners. Its purpose is to assist in making arts learning a more integral part of the core curriculum and achieving the greatest advantage possible from the arts for students. The publication builds upon knowledge gained through the 2004 NEA Summer Institute for School Leaders, promotes dialogue about the role of arts learning in school improvement, shares success stories and provides news about arts-related developments and opportunities.

Poetry Out Loud

Program Goes Statewide for 2008

As linebacker for the Westland High Cougars, Tony Jackson gave his family many thrills and proud moments—including competing in the state playoffs and earning a football scholarship from Ohio State University. But as Tony's dad watched him become Ohio's 2007 *Poetry Out Loud* champion, he turned to his son's teachers, John Weddendorf and Kerri Terman, and pronounced the feat "better than any football game."

"Unbelievable," is how Weddendorf describes taking the state poetry recitation championship back to his school in Galloway (South-Western City School District). "But while we loved the competition," says the English, speech and drama teacher, "what went on in the classroom was even more important."

Westland was one of seven high schools in Ohio's Capital region to participate in *Poetry Out Loud*, a nationwide poetry memorization and recitation competition sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. This year, the Ohio Arts Council is extending the program to allow all high schools in the state to participate.

(continued next page)



State Poetry Out Loud Champion Tony Jackson (far right) with Ohio's six other state finalists.

Teacher Workshop

November 10

"*Poetry Out Loud* connects students' interest in hip hop and poetry slams to America's expansive literary heritage," says Chiquita Mullins Lee, an Ohio writer and playwright and the Ohio Arts Council's *Poetry Out Loud* Coordinator. "It is creating a renewed appreciation for poetry as an art form."

Teachers interested in participating in *Poetry Out Loud* can attend a free workshop in Columbus that will feature talks by poets, information about the process and sessions on how to teach performance techniques and give critiques and feedback. Mullins Lee also is willing to do onsite workshops.

To sign up for the November 10 workshop or register for the competition, contact her at the Ohio Arts Council (614/466-2613) or send an email to chiquita.mullinslee@oac.state.oh.us.

Inside This Issue

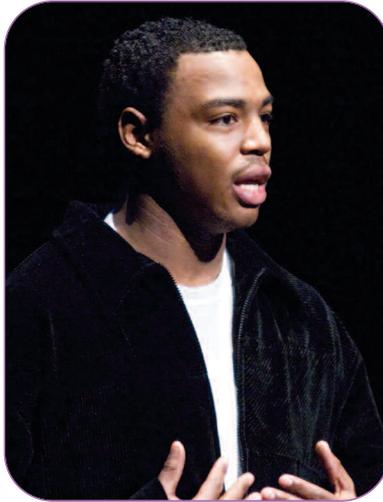
Poetry Out Loud
Information

Promoting Creativity
Conference Highlights

Artist Residency Story: A
Bridge to Transformation

New Developments in
Cleveland Metropolitan
Schools

New Arts Integration
Literature Review



Tony Jackson at the Poetry Out Loud state finals in Columbus (left). "He was genuinely in the moment," says teacher John Weddendorf (pictured right with colleague Kerri Terman). "He felt what he was doing."

An Experience of Excellence

Like their counterparts in the other participating schools, the Westland students selected and memorized poems from the diverse *Poetry Out Loud* anthology. Using established criteria, teachers chose Jackson to compete with six other state finalists in Columbus. After winning the state competition, he represented Ohio in the national finals. Amanda Fernandez from Washington, D.C. claimed the 2007 national championship. Jackson Hille, from Columbus, Ohio, was the 2006 national champion.

Rich Language Learning

Weddendorf believes preparing to recite their poems and listening to classmates' recitations helped students understand the meaning of poems and gave them a deeper feeling for mood and tone. "Just hearing 30 different poems in the voices of their peers is valuable," he says. "You never know how they will be touched."

Beyond the Classroom

The experience also can help build self-confidence and hone public speaking skills.

"I thought we were going to need horses or tractors to drive some of the kids up to the front of the room," says Weddendorf, "but just about every teacher had a story afterward about students who thanked them."

He and Terman, who also teaches English, encouraged students by joining them in the recitation of poems. "We were nervous, so we can imagine how the students felt," he says.

Next Steps

Teachers at Westland plan to participate in the 2008 *Poetry Out Loud* competition and hope to pursue in-depth professional development to make the process even more valuable.

"We had about 600 students involved this year," says Weddendorf. "We hope it will be every student in 2008."

Poetry Out Loud Facts

Poetry Out Loud requires between two and three weeks of class time. Starting early will give students more time to memorize and practice their poems.

Books, posters, CDs containing readings by poets and other materials are free. Teachers can preview them at www.poetryoutloud.org.

The 2008 *Poetry Out Loud* state finals will be held Saturday, March 15 at Ohio Dominican University in Columbus.

The winner for each state receives \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to the national championship in Washington, DC. A runner-up wins \$100.

The state winner's school receives a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The runner-up's school receives a \$200 stipend.

The National Finals will be held in Washington, DC, on April 29. The *Poetry Out Loud* national champion receives a \$20,000 college scholarship.

Promoting Creativity

Ohio Educators and Teaching Artists Convene in Columbus

Teams from Ohio schools and OAC artists in residence met at the 2007 *Promoting Creativity* Conference to explore the significance and potential of their shared interest in creating powerful arts experiences for students.

Providing a national perspective was keynote speaker Burns Hargis, founder of the Oklahoma Creativity Project. Hargis talked with humor and conviction about the decision to “brand” Oklahoma as the “state of creativity” and then live up to the title by creating an environment that will “unleash the creative capacity of all citizens.”

“We’re asking every school, business and institution to do a creativity project that will make their field better,” he said. “We have designated 2008 the year of creativity.”

The state plans events to celebrate its creative people and achievements. Among those achievements are the Oklahoma A+ Schools, which are raising student achievement through daily instruction in the arts and arts integration. An interactive [Web site](#) also is helping people from different fields to connect and share ideas.

The energy and creativity that teaching artists can bring to schools—and to professional development—was evident as teams of teachers, school leaders and artists shared ideas and explored potential partnerships. School teams discussed some of the practical and logistical aspects of residencies but also had time to talk with artists and see documentation and samples of their work.

As the photos suggest, active, creative learning experiences made the conference a memorable two days.



Keynote speaker Burns Hargis with Susan Saxbe, chair of the Ohio Arts Council board.



Participants enjoyed an arts exhibition at the Riffe Center Gallery.



Teachers attended a workshop by the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange that integrated reflection and dialogue with movement.



Artists Kate Gorman and Patty Mitchell shared student work from a quilting project at St. Mary Central Catholic High School in Sandusky. In a series of performances by OAC creative writers, Nancy Kangas (right) used cello as part of her poetic statement.



A Bridge to Transformation

She was a troubled adolescent when she entered Bridges, a six-month residential chemical dependency treatment program for girls ages 14-18 offered by The Counseling Center in Portsmouth, Ohio. Along with addiction, her history included an unstable home life and rejection by peers at school. At first, she made little progress, showing no emotion and resisting therapy.

Then she found her bridge—creative drama sessions with Jean Howat Berry, a theater artist and mask-maker who serves as an Ohio Arts Council residency artist. Peggy Gemperline, who directs the

Bridges program, says the breakthrough came when the young woman had the opportunity to write and perform a monologue about what her life had been like.

“Listening to her,” says Gemperline, “we could tell she had really reached the other side of it. She completed the program, and the last I heard, she is doing well.”

Back to Beauty

With Berry’s help, the girls made masks to wear in a play that they also wrote and performed at the Southern Ohio Museum. The subject was the Greek myth of Persephone.

Persephone is brought back.

There is a celebration.

Beauty is restored. Knowledge and experience have caused them to grow like the beauty that exists all around them.

from a poem by a Bridges participant

“They understood the underworld where Persephone found herself,” says Berry. “The choice to return to beauty was such a moving, symbolic moment. They designed a litter to carry Persephone back into the sun.”

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Theater artist and mask-maker Jean Howat Berry worked with adolescent girls who were battling drug and alcohol addiction. They wrote, produced and performed a play based on the Greek myth of Persephone. They also made the masks they wore during the performance.

Transformation—continued from page 4

The audience, which included family members and adult women from another program at The Counseling Center, joined in a group discussion following the performance. The girls stayed in character as they responded to questions.

The Power of Process

Creating the play incorporated learning in visual art, music, poetry, myth, costume and movement. The process of “becoming” that led to the production, says Berry, was the real performance. The girls explored literature, writing and drama and talked about their lives and the challenges of becoming women. They often established relationships that aided recovery.

“Each day, changes occurred in these girls, whether they knew it or not,” she says. “And they grew.”

The Magic of Masks

Bridges had used creative drama before, including residencies with OAC artist Roger Jerome. He and Gemperline developed approaches for using creative drama to help the girls explore some family roles that often accompany addiction—the hero, the worrier and the “bad girl,” for example.

“Theater is a wonderful medium for helping girls express their feelings, as well as process some of the things that have happened to them without additional trauma,” says Gemperline. “It sets their imaginations on fire.”

Berry’s mask-making added a new dimension to the program.

During her twelve-week residency, funded by the OAC, the Portsmouth Arts Council and private donors, Berry created masks for use in role-playing during group therapy sessions.

“The recovery process tends to be a game of hide and seek,” says Berry. “Being able to cover the face provides a sense of security. Often the girls are able to express more.”

But self-revelation is only the beginning. “The goal,” says Berry, “is transformation.”

Phersu, the name of Berry’s Dayton studio, conveys what she is trying to do: “Phersu is an Etruscan word meaning the synergy between who the individual is and who the individual becomes in the mask—a whole new creative being. The girls had to grow into the characters they played and animate the roles. And when they removed the masks later in the process, they were symbolically taking a step toward their essential selves.”

To learn more about the Ohio Arts Council’s Artist in Residence Program and the many OAC teaching artists who work with Ohio schools and community organizations, go to www.oac.state.oh.us.

Newsbreaks

Links & Threads Hotlist Added

Links & Threads has moved all the Web links that have appeared in past issues to a single online location that can be accessed from the Arts Learning portion of the OAC Web site. Sites are categorized according to their major emphasis. [Link to the list.](#)

Kennedy Center Offers Community Arts Education Audit

The Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education offers a free community audit tool to assist local education, community and cultural leaders in assessing the status of arts education in school districts. It can be used to evaluate programs or spark conversation and community planning in support of arts education. [Download pdf.](#)

NCES Improving School Arts Data

Longitudinal data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will play a key role in assessing the state of arts education in coming years. NCES is using suggestions from the arts education research community and practitioners about how to make data less ambiguous and more aligned to important research questions. [Link to NCES.](#)

KnowledgeWorks Profiles Arts-Based Small High School

The KnowledgeWorks Foundation, based in Cincinnati, has released *Every Student Deserves a Legacy*, a collection of stories featuring teachers, school leaders and students in the schools that are part of the Ohio High School Transformation Initiative, the largest concentration of high school redesign work in the country. The first group of stories in a volume dedicated to urban high schools features Progressive Academy in Lima, which has adopted an arts-based curriculum. [Download a pdf.](#)

National Forum Held in Cleveland

Cleveland Metro Schools Share Story of Arts Education Renaissance

Why was Cleveland, Ohio, an appropriate site for the Arts Education Partnership's Fall 2007 forum, *Arts Integration: Theory, Practice and Lessons Learned?* The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) answered that question in a presentation about its vibrant arts education department and impressive array of community partners.

The district has engaged in a series of partnerships and collaborations over the last 10 years, said Tony Sias, executive director for the CMSD Department of Arts Education, and Karen M. Clark-Keys, director of visual arts and arts education curriculum. Most notable is ICARE (Initiative for Cultural Art in Education), which has supported arts-focused, knowledge integrative learning in 59 schools.

With funding from the Ford Foundation, the Cleveland Integrated Arts Collaborative, a consortium of CMSD and over 30 arts and cultural organizations, has launched the *Art is Education* initiative. The goal is to provide a systemic process for developing learning units and lessons centered around the offerings of Cleveland arts and culture providers. Sias has been working with a number of organizations, such as the 35-year-old University Circle Linking Education and Discovery (LEAD) program, to align their offerings with both CMSD priorities and state standards.

With funding from the Cleveland Foundation and the Gund Foundation, the Department of Arts Education is completing an arts education strategic plan, which should be made public by the end of the year.

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Art^{is} Education in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Photos from Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio

Arts Integration Research Highlighted at Forum

The Cleveland forum was an opportunity for the Arts Education Partnership to introduce a newly published arts integration literature review. ([Download Free](#))

Presented by the principal author Gail Burnaford, Professor of Education at Florida Atlantic University, the review summarizes nine large-scale studies related to integrating the arts and other subjects, as well as smaller

qualitative and quantitative studies. The introductory discussion of publications and articles concerned with the theoretical and methodological aspects of arts integration is likely to become a centerpiece for conversations seeking to answer the question "What is high-quality arts integration?"

While the document reveals a research base of growing breadth and depth, panelists

stressed the need for better assessment and richer documentation of results. They urged researchers to spend more time in classrooms and to co-author with teachers.

They advised practitioners and program directors to become not just implementors but also inquirers. "Redefine all your work as inquiry," advised Arnold Aprill, creative director of the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education.

Ohio Emphasizes STEM and the Arts at AEP National Forum

Arts education leaders, managers and practitioners can find synergy between the arts and broader education priorities—including a nationwide push toward the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. That’s the message given to more than 200 participants at the Arts Education Partnership’s (AEP) national forum in Cleveland by state arts consultant Nancy Pistone, a representative of the Ohio Department of Education.

“At ODE, our mission is to develop thinkers, leaders and innovators for the future,” she said. “All of us here know the arts provide all students with engaging and direct pathways to becoming all three, and it’s our responsibility to show and tell others how.” Ohio’s emphasis on 21st century skills and the STEM subjects is an opportunity for the arts education community to have a greater impact, she said.

Pistone told the audience that ODE strives “to open the doors and windows on arts education in the state by encouraging more new voices to contribute to our discussions and efforts.”

The Department has expanded its outreach to schools and arts teachers through increased professional development opportunities and the formation of a statewide arts advisory committee—the Committee for the Arts and Innovative Thinking (CAIT). The 39-member group represents various Ohio constituencies and regions and is affiliated with 27 education, community and cultural arts organizations to ensure a high level of collaboration. She reported that the committee would contribute to a new AEP national initiative that will be announced soon. This connection will influence CAIT’s state-level efforts to develop a compelling action plan with arts education central to learning, disseminate information to grass roots networks and strengthen the appeal of STEM programs.

Pistone’s encouraging remarks reminded the audience that an education department is an agency with several important roles. With the right collaborative effort, it can become an agency of empowerment for the arts in the educational lives of all children.

What is high-quality arts integration?

Arts integration refers to instruction that incorporates content, processes and techniques from one or more arts and at least one other discipline. Approaches vary, but one major mark of quality is a design that leads to significant learning in each discipline.

How is it achieved?

Check these resources.

[Arts4Learning](#)

[Chicago Arts Partnership in Education \(CAPE\)](#)

[The ArtsLiteracy Project](#)

[Southeast Center for Education in the Arts](#)

Cleveland—continued from page 6

How did CMSD do it? “Long-term team planning has been important,” said Clark-Keys. “Schools are thinking more strategically about bringing in the arts. They are getting better at using conceptual themes as building blocks.” Clark-Keys also stressed the importance of both standards-based and assessed learning in the arts and knowledge integrative learning through the arts.

Three arts education partners who also played a major role shared the podium with Clark-Keys and Sias.

Marsha Dobrzynski, executive director for Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio, cited the importance of the long-term relationships represented by the Cleveland Integrated Arts Collaborative. Her organization, which manages the ICARE program for CMSD, also has been facilitating the *Art is Education* initiative.

Deena Epstein, senior officer for arts with the George Gund Foundation, and Kathleen Cerveny, program director for arts and culture with the Cleveland Foundation, told of the extended dialogue among funders that helped set the district on the path of arts integration.

“As we funders began asking the right questions,” said Epstein, “we started seeing better proposals. The programs became more student-focused.” While affirming the important role funders play, however, she also stressed the need to turn the work over to the schools.

The Art of Improvement *Grants*

March 3, 2008, is the Ohio Arts Council's final deadline for Arts Partnership program applicants and sponsoring organizations applying for the Artist in Residence grants.

Here is a "to do list" to help you get started. Taking these steps by early January can improve the quality of your application:

1: Look at the [OAC Web site](#) to find out more about the programs. The grant guidelines are there and they even include examples of typical activities that are funded by each program.

2: Discuss the most compelling assets, needs and interests of those you serve. Analyze gaps in arts programming and determine the impacts of those gaps. Review your community assets to determine potential long-term partners, as well as generate ideas about what might interest constituents.

3: Talk with the people in your organization who have ideas about how arts learning experiences might benefit those you serve. Look for promising practices in the literature and locally. Read about what some of the OAC's artists in residence offer. Brainstorm with staff members. Develop a description of the activities that will be supported by the grant.

4: Decide which grant fits your goals and activities. Arts Partnership grants support more systemic efforts that involve long-term arts partnerships among organizations. Artist in Residence grants support intensive arts learning experiences in which an OAC artist spends at least two weeks working in your location. A residency also can be a way to launch a new, more long-term aspect of your arts education program.

5: Thoroughly analyze the criteria the OAC will use in reviewing the proposal. Determine what evidence you will need to cite in the narrative and begin organizing your ideas.

6: Appoint a team and determine what materials you will need from other sources (bios of key personnel, for example). Create a checklist and deadlines for gathering those materials. Look at your budget and talk with partners to determine the amount and source of matching funds.

For both programs, the OAC suggests submitting a draft application by February 1 using the agency's Online Grant Applications tool (OLGA).

Need to Start Smaller? Sooner?

The OAC's Artist Express Grants support one- or two-day artist visits for schools, arts organizations and other community organizations. This grant is a good first step if you have never conducted a residency. Applications are due no later than six weeks prior to the date of the visit. Funds are limited and will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. You must assume \$50 per day of the \$300 per day artist's fee.

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ODE Mission

The Ohio Department of Education supports high achievement for all students every year by setting clear and high expectations for all students; by making sure that educators have the skills, knowledge and resources to help students improve; by fostering the ability of families and communities to help students succeed; and by measuring, publicizing and rewarding achievement results.



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OAC Mission

We're Building Ohio through the Arts. The Ohio Arts Council is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically.



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