

## **Grant Proposal for The Art League After-School Program**

### **Project Description/Need Statement**

The lack of art education in schools is disconcerting considering how valuable of an outlet it is to foster creativity and critical thinking at an advanced yet accessible level to many students. Art is a core academic subject and crucial to academic enrichment, but many public schools resort to laying off art teachers and narrowing art curriculums in the face of budget cuts. We seek to bring art directly to elementary students at their schools. The current after school program, hosted by the Champagna Center, which serves families of the Alexandria District Public Schools, offers learning activities in math, reading, and other subjects but lacks on-going art projects.

Different people learn and understand in different ways—many of whom are more visual or abstract thinkers whose skills are better developed and nurtured through art. STEM subjects and other core subjects are typically emphasized in public school systems but the inclusion of art will not only encourage creativity, critical thinking, and innovation, but it will also promote a comprehensive education in today's youth. Art can benefit all children by uplifting talents and encouraging emotional expression. The Alexandria School District already seeks to incorporate art in other academic subjects, but through our after-school program, students would have the option to pursue art for the sake of art, which is widely deprioritized in the education system. Fostering an interest in youth early on will allow them to pursue potential art interests with knowledge and confidence later on in high school and even college.

### **Program Model**

The Art League is already in the process of following the seven stages explained in *The Insider's Guide to Arts Education Planning* as formulated by the California Alliance for Arts Education. We have adapted these methods to satisfy our program needs:

- Build an arts team of educators in the Art League to carry out the project. Our team of educators is prepared to teach weekly art workshops and lessons at the schools.
- Assess the current arts education and after school programs at the Alexandria elementary school to tailor our strategies.
- Establish a policy for the school board to adopt in order to create and execute a quality, standards-referenced arts education program within the existing after-school program.
- Generate a strategic plan by working with Art League instructors and after-school program instructors to create a feasible plan to incorporate arts in the existing Champagna Kids after-school program, which cites positive academic and social outcomes for students enrolled.
- Determine specific funding needs and, with the help of your grant award, allot funds to different areas as laid out in our funding overview.
- Present the after-school arts education plan to the school board and community and adopt the plan by the start of the next school year.
- Officially implement the plan by revising strategies as necessary and ensuring it is the most appropriate and beneficial means of bringing art to these specific groups of students.

### **Audience, Timeline, and Staff**

Our program will be available to all K-5 students in the eleven Alexandria District Public Schools. We are partnering with Champagna Kids, which hosts after-school programs in these elementary schools and served over 1,000 students in 2013. Our contribution of art education will take place directly in the schools.

We plan to implement this program in September of 2015. It is crucial that we start as soon as possible to begin promoting arts education while students are still young. The program already has a wide variety of

outlets for educational development, but it lacks art opportunities, creating a gap in arts enrichment education. Our hired staff will consist of program directors and five trained arts educators who currently teach classes in the Art League. These educators will divide their time between the 11 schools, covering 2-3 schools each. Volunteers from the community and the Art League will also contribute to ensure a full staff of support.

### **Organization Qualifications**

Our established outreach programs include:

- *A Space of Her Own*, a mentoring program that reaches over 150 at-risk girls in the area that promotes developmental skills.
- *IMPART*, an art program for injured military personnel that offers individualized instruction to veterans and their families.
- Our art school provides students of all ages and levels with lessons in a wide variety of mediums and disciplines for reasonable tuition rates. We have a full staff of experienced teachers and resources that will go into the after-school program as well.

### **Goal Statements and Outcomes**

*As a result of our after-school arts program, 1,000 students will be exposed to a well-rounded art education.*

Through demonstrations of different age-appropriate art techniques and mediums, focused instruction, collaboration, workshops that focus on free expression, and application of art to school subjects, this standards-referenced art curriculum will expand on art topics taught in class and assess student progress. Professional development meetings amongst teaching staff will give teachers a chance to assess the effectiveness of their teaching methods based on student responses and successes to ensure the goal is being met.

*As a result of our after-school arts program, approximately 200 elementary school students will take advantage of these opportunities by pursuing art further through the Art League.*

At no cost to them, interested students will have the opportunity to travel from the after-school center to go to special workshops and demonstrations hosted a few times per academic year at the Art League center where supplies, instruction, and support will be more extensive. These opportunities will be ensured through supportive staff members who will encourage participation.

*As a result of our after-school arts program, approximately 900 students will experience academic improvements through the arts.*

The Champaign Center already cites an 82% success rate of academic improvement in students who attended their after-school program in 2013. Incorporating the arts will reach even more students who may not have thrived in the STEM-focused environment. Speaking with and surveying students, families, and daytime teachers will help us to track academic improvement and measure the influence of our art education program.