

Los Altos Art Docents

Visual Arts Education



Volunteers of the Los Altos Art Docents have been bringing art to the classroom since 1970 and are accomplishing more than ever before. Boasting an impressive 4 to 9 classes per grade level, covering art appreciation and several creative media, such as; drawing, water color, asian brush painting, printing, clay sculptures, and more, the docent program offers a highly diverse educational experience. In addition, new classes are continuously being developed while current lessons are updated year after year.

Visual arts stimulate the imagination, enhance observation skills, offer outlets for self-expression and encourage creative problem solving while underscoring the intimate relationships between history, culture, science, math and the humanities. All of the program's classes are in compliance with best teaching practices such as Visual Thinking Strategies and meet or exceed California State Content Standards for the Visual Arts. As one teacher observed, "Amazing how well this lesson addressed some of our standards...social studies (types of communities), science (cobblestones), and math (arrays). Wonderful!"

This year 80 docents and 21 trainees will teach an expanded art curriculum that includes 3 new, age-appropriate classes for Transitional Kindergarten. There will also be greater California content in our Cityscape lessons, and Exploring the Arts Elements shall have added interactive strategies aimed at helping students better grasp the fundamental concepts presented. We will also host 3 art shows at Almond, Covington and Loyola schools.

Students and parents are fans of our art program. One 5th grader exclaimed, "Thank you, you opened me up to art!" after his class and a parent shared this, "Johnny instigated a discussion last night about art, including Picasso and The Weeping Woman, American Gothic and the Mona Lisa...it was a fantastic opportunity to talk about art and he even pulled out some pens and got to work on his own piece."

Betty Latta, an art docent in her 39th year of volunteering, explains why she still teaches, "I could not 'retire' from something that brings me so much pleasure. It was, and is, a very flexible, informative program," this reflects the attitude of many.

In 2013/2014 art docents; taught 795 art classes, hosted 4 art shows, offered 46 distinct lessons, including 15 art appreciation and 31 hands-on classes, and trained 21 new docents. If you would like more information about the program, contact Kimberly Dickerson, Art Docent Coordinator, at (650)947-1195, or visit us at "www.losaltosartdocents.org."