

May 2014

PARTNERSHIP POST

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District 79 Arts Education

By Tim Lisante, Superintendent



Arts Educators are among the most effective teachers I have seen throughout my 26 years in District 79. In the 1990's while I was principal on Rikers Island, we collaborated with community arts partners and received a **1M Annenberg Grant** to integrate arts into our curriculum. Students wrote one-act plays with **Manhattan Theater Club** and were able to "direct" professional actors who made student words come to life performed in front of student peers. We are delighted **MTC** still works with D79 students throughout the city. Our students' works have also been performed by professional actors at **Stella Adler Studio of Acting** via **PATHWAYS to**

GRADUATION **Manhattan's** partnership at Marlon Brando's training grounds. Annually, the **Hudson Valley Shakespeare Theater** works with students at **PHOENIX ACADEMY**.

The **Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall** sends visiting artists to work with **PASSAGES ACADEMY** students in songwriting projects where professional musicians and students perform concerts for families, faculty and fellow students.

Murals painted by students in partnership with **Groundswell** adorn several D79 school sites. **Doing Art Together** has been working in Youth Justice Education and Treatment sites throughout **RESTART** and **EAST RIVER ACADEMY** for many years with visual arts creations integrating art therapy. The **Tribeca Film Institute** and **Voices Unbroken** have done great work with many young women at the Rose M. Singer Center. (Pictured above is Chancellor Farina with me and **RESTART ACADEMY** Principal Joan Indart in front of **Doing Art** student paintings)

Thank you to all of our arts partners and to Principal **Marie Polinsky** and Academic Support Team Executive Director **Rachel Dahill-Fuchel** for their leadership in refocusing D79 perspectives **on performing, visual, animated** and **literary arts education**.

On May 8th, the **Queens Museum** hosted a D79 student artwork showcase. Displays included jewelry boxes from Bed-Stuy, ecology T-shirts from Jamaica, a student –produced video and Family Arts from citywide **LYFE** Early Childhood education classes. Expanding **D79's Arts Access** model at Manhattan's **The Door**, we are proud to announce that in September D79 will have at the Queens Museum the **first HSE /GED class to be located in a museum in the country**. Another community-based collaboration with D79 filling a gap in services within a non-traditional educational setting.



Student Journeys

Student Art Showcase

On May 8th the Queens Museum of Art hosted a District 79 Arts showcase. The event featured many great works from throughout the district. **Raelene Holmes-Andrews** (pictured above) is a graduate of Manhattan's **Pathways to Graduation** who created



Three Questions with Marie Polinsky, Principal of Pathways to Graduation Manhattan:

1. How does P2G blend arts education into HSE preparation?

Pathways to Graduation has been preparing both teachers and students over the past two school years to face the new TASC exam which is rooted in the Common Core State Standards. As a program we have utilized our Arts Partnerships not only to expose our students to a variety of hands on experiences, but also to promote the critical thinking and analytical writing skills necessary for success both in achieving their equivalency diploma and preparing for college level work. Our Arts partners work in

a documentary which included artwork from across district 79. It was the centerpiece of the program and she created, edited and produced it along with support from Assistant Principal James Caputo and Lynda Dawson from the media center at the Manhattan P2G site.

Raelene has had a passion for theater and drama since she was young. While a student at Pathways, **Dr. Noah Golden**, a literacy coach introduced her to the educational video center at the hub. "I began to learn art in a totally different form- which was film making" Raelene says. Since then she has created and produced numerous works that center around social issues. Her amazing work has been screened in places such as Lincoln Theatre and even HBO Theatre. She has also learned web design, animation, and 3D. We wish Raelene the best of luck as she is ultimately focused on pursuing a career in Media Technology.

Below are some pictures of student artwork featured at the exhibit.



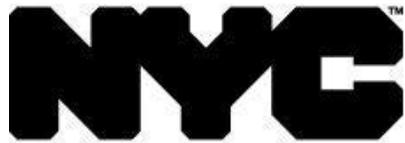
collaboration with our classroom teachers to seamlessly blend the academic curriculum with a project that is based in either theatre or fine arts. We seek partners who can adapt their programs to our student population and needs. Ideally teachers and teaching artists co-facilitate sessions so that the teacher can extend the work beyond the immediate project.

2. What added benefits do students receive when they participate in arts programs?

The Arts programs provide students with an alternate medium of expression. Students have an opportunity to explore interests and talents that may have previously gone unnoticed. Two students in particular in Manhattan have pursued acting and one student filmmaking as a result of participating in a classroom arts collaboration project. When I speak with students about their experiences they always mention how much they valued working as a team with their peers, even if they were dubious at first. Every project always culminates in a showcase and celebration. It is a terrific opportunity to celebrate and recognize student work and to invite and involve parents and families.

3. What are some of your current partnerships/ongoing or upcoming projects?

Currently Manhattan P2G is partnering with Stella Adler Studios, Manhattan Theatre Club, Fran Tarr Productions— Breaking Walls, and WINGSPAN. We also have two fine arts teachers at our Hub and The Door. I look forward to continuing and strengthening our current partnerships as well as explore new opportunities that will extend the walls of our classrooms for P2G students.



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