Leadership and learning through the arts

PRINCIPALS in the Center’s Partnership schools are drawing on each other’s experiences to become more effective leaders through a joint program of The Center for Arts Education and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform located at Brown University.

The “Leadership for Learning” program began in response to the needs of veteran principals from Center-funded schools. While in the program, school leaders visit each other’s schools to engage in peer-exchange workshops and to observe their colleagues’ programs. They also attend sessions where participants look closely at student artwork, reflecting on new ways to articulate how students are learning through the arts.

“The arts serve as a catalyst for the conversation, but in essence, the conversation is about strong leadership,” says the Center’s Russell Granet, an Associate Program Director who facilitates and helped design the workshops. “These principals learn to describe how the skills involved in learning an art form, such as the ability to analyze, study, respond, or review, can transfer to other subject areas.”

A visit to PS 20’s Learning Fair in Manhattan inspired Kathy LeDonni, the principal at PS 247 in Brooklyn, to showcase student learning at her own school with an end-of-year arts celebration. “One third-grade class here has been dramatizing Aesop’s Fables,” she said. “They put the story into dialogue, designed costumes and sets, and practiced speaking and listening for the performance.” Another class of kindergarteners who began the year speaking only Chinese ended up performing folk and fairy tales on stage, entirely in English. LeDonni has started to see unexpected rewards from arts learning. “We’re a Title I school,” she explains, “but our test scores are high and our attendance has gone up.”

“In an age of test-driven accountability, principals must respond to the expectations of their superintendents with solid evidence,” noted Debi King, the Principal Associate at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, who developed the “Leadership for Learning” program with the Center based on her work at Brown University. “The principals form a professional learning community that breaks down their isolation,” she observed. “They articulate what’s effective and work together on problems they face in their schools.”

James Sarconi, the principal of PS 84, an elementary school in Queens, is among the many principals who found their schools strengthened. He explained, “Through this program I get to see that other principals face the same pressures I do. And yet, I see them pursuing the arts because they can demonstrate its benefit to the students.”

UPPER RIGHT: Debi King at a “Leadership for Learning” workshop.
INSET: Kathy LeDonni (far right) at the PS 20 Learning Fair in Manhattan that inspired her.
WHEN fifth graders at PS 205 in the Bronx became experts on deserts, grasslands, and rainforests this year, the arts played a central role in how they demonstrated their knowledge. Working with an architect and a photographer from their arts partner, three classes designed and constructed model animal habitats and gateways for the neighboring Bronx Zoo, while two more classes created a photo-documentary of the entire process.

With its emphasis on science and technology, the school’s Partnership grant extends a previous initiative that integrated visual arts and drama with literacy and social studies. Teacher Jessica O’Connor said, “Along with their artistic development, you can see the students’ research and writing, their process charts, and all their learning in science and technology.”

Paired with artists from Young Audiences/New York, teachers and on-site specialists receive 12 weeks of intensive professional development. “When the Bronx Zoo entered the mix as a partner, learning skyrocketed,” said school principal Kathleen Pollina. Teachers, artists, and scientists worked together to create challenging curriculum, which, through Zoo workshops, reached classrooms far and wide. The school’s arts and science instructors mentored other teachers, so the effects will long outlive the grant’s term.

The schoolwide arts education effort has lifted student achievement greatly in this K–5 school, which the State’s education department labeled as failing less than ten years ago. “Now,” Pollina says proudly, “the State is studying the school’s success.”

Students at PS 205 in the Bronx constructing an animal habitat.

The art of science

Dear Friend:

It has been a very busy year. The City is facing severe fiscal cutbacks. The Mayor and Chancellor have proposed sweeping changes to the school system. The City Council held hearings on arts education at which we testified in April. During these challenging times, much has been accomplished with your support.

At the Center, we have had a productive year. We funded 149 Parents As Arts Partners grants and placed students in arts-related internships across the City. Our Career Development Program was featured on WNBC-TV, channel 4. We held numerous professional development meetings and seminars including “Leadership for Learning,” which is featured on this newsletter’s front page. Our 31 new Partnership schools have completed their first year, and our Curriculum Development and Access Leadership schools shared their programs citywide.

In addition, we held our first benefit dinner and auction, which was hosted by Christie’s, and raised $360,000 for our programs.

Governor George E. Pataki honored the Center with a Governor’s Arts Award for our outstanding contributions to the cultural well-being of the state of New York. We were thrilled to receive the award from New York City Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin and dance legend Arthur Mitchell from the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

We will be hard at work this summer reviewing final reports, hosting teachers who participate in the Career Development Program, and preparing for the challenges the newly restructured school system will bring. Our Gallery at 180 Maiden Lane will be open, and we invite you to visit and view P.S. ART, a citywide exhibition of public school artwork, presented in collaboration with the Department of Education and the Alliance of Young Artists and Writers.

We will be announcing new grant programs in the fall and look forward to working with many of you again in the coming school year. We thank our supporters for making our programs possible.

Laurie Tisch Sussman, Chairman
Hollis Headrick, Executive Director
Inspiring career success in educators and students

BRENDA NALIBOFF declared that the Center’s Career Development Program was “the best thing that has happened to me in the 12 years I have been an assistant principal” at Chelsea Career and Technical Education High School. The program develops students’ awareness of career opportunities in the arts and related industries.

The semester-long program enrolls eleventh and twelfth graders and combines workplace preparation with placement in internships. “It’s one thing standing in front of a class and saying, ‘You can go and work for Sony Music,’ and another thing going and actually seeing what people do there,” Naliboff said. Before working with the Center, she added, “We really weren’t aware of those opportunities. We need more things like this, even if it’s just job shadowing for one day.”

The internships also gave Naliboff a “phenomenal incentive for students with low motivation,” she recalled. “One girl got into the program in its first year, but then her grades slipped and I pulled her out. She worked really hard to get back in.”

Teachers, also, have gained first-hand knowledge of how the classroom connects with the workplace in areas as varied as music and fashion. Naliboff added that many Chelsea teachers now make use of the program’s curriculum materials. “I’d known that New York City is a center for all kinds of arts, but I’d never thought of it in terms of what we teach here. Now I’ve incorporated arts into our program. Our electrical students learn about lighting; and in business we use the arts to teach marketing. You can be so much more than a performer . . . The Center has changed the culture of this school.”

While teachers are engaged, the focus of the program remains primarily on the students. All the students who participated in the program are now in college, she noted. One Chelsea student, Alex Ogando, was studying to be an electrician when he interned at Columbia Records. He is now a third-year college student at SUNY/Potsdam in the Music Business Program. Naliboff said, “The workplace really inspired him.”

Parents find peace in painting

A PAINTBRUSH and palette were the last things Diane Campione considered squeezing into her busy life as the working mother of an autistic six-year-old. But for five weeks, with other parents at PS 37 on Staten Island, she has been creating artwork that calms her spirit. The Parents As Arts Partners project at this K–12 school for autistic and multiply disabled students, she says, has also given her a new perspective on her son’s learning.

“We’ve tapped into something,” says Campione, as she reflects on parents and school staff sharing their experiences as they create their art. Artist Maureen Bennett O’Connor leads the “Peace by Piece” project, in which they design and paint squares for a giant canvas quilt.

Parents also participate in activities introducing them to the arts in the community, from a slide-show tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art to a visit to the Chinese Cultural Gardens at Snug Harbor. “Many parents face emotional turmoil while raising a child with a disability. They seek a calmness and temporarily find it through this program,” said teacher Judy Gruber.

The workshops allow parents a window on the work their children are doing at the school, which infuses its curriculum with art, music, and movement. “The kids love their parents being around,” says principal Evelyn Phair Finn. “It’s a validation of what they’re doing. In the midst of their stresses,” Phair Finn continues, “art brings a new level of humanity to their lives.”

The lessons parents and children learn in school extend to their home lives. “My son loves to paint,” Campione says, “and yesterday we painted together.”
The Center’s auction benefits all

THE EXCITEMENT at Christie’s on March 10 was about an auction, but it was not the typical event one might expect from this prestigious auction house. There would be no Kahlo, Hopper or Warhol up for bid this evening. However, auction lots did include a signed Hirschfeld lithograph, Super Bowl tickets, high tea with Kitty Carlisle Hart, and cooking lessons with famed cookbook author Joan Nathan. The bidding was spirited, and at the end of the night $360,000 was raised for arts education.

The occasion was The Center for Arts Education’s first benefit dinner and live auction. The focus of the evening was arts education in the City’s public schools and, while our students were not bidding, they were winners. From the invitation to the centerpieces, student artwork was the highlight of the evening. Guests were delighted by the fanciful centerpieces created by students at PS 9 in Manhattan and PS 144 in Queens with guidance from their teachers Stephanie Lebowitz and Joanne Wasti and designer Matthew David at Environments for Entertaining. These centerpieces would be used again at Gracie Mansion for an event hosted by the Mayor. The walls were adorned with impressive paintings and photographs created by talented student artists participating in the Center’s Career Development Program, as well as whimsical sculptures, paintings, and drawings by students from PS 9M, PS 144Q, and Martin Luther King, Jr., High School.

Guests at Christie’s dined to the music of the Peter Duchin Orchestra and saw a new video created by Nancy Mendelson about the Center’s programs. After the dinner and auction, the Chamber Singers from the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts sang several songs which brought the audience to its feet.

The evening was attended by the Center’s partners: the Departments of Education and Cultural Affairs and the United Federation of Teachers. Mayor Michael Bloomberg was represented by Nanette Smith. Supporters, ranging from Vartan Gregorian to Bob and Joan Tisch to Stephen Lash, were also in attendance. 📸
Contributors
July 1, 2001 – April 1, 2003

$12 Million
The Annenberg Foundation

Over $1 Million
Department of Education of The City of New York
Department of Cultural Affairs of The City of New York

$200,000 to $499,999
Carnegie Corporation of New York
Laurie Tisch Sussman Foundation

$100,000 to $199,999
Arnhold Foundation
Booth Ferris Foundation
City of New York
Judith and John Hannan
New York Community Trust
New York State Council on the Arts
Picower Foundation
Joseph S. and Diane H. Steinberg Charitable Trust
Vivendi Universal Foundation

$50,000 to $99,999
Barker Welfare Foundation
Citigroup Foundation
Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation
Cheryl Cohen and Blair Effron
E.H.A. Foundation
Entertainment Industry Foundation
The J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation
Pinkerton Foundation

$25,000 to $49,999
Renée and Richard Barasch
Charles Evans Hughes Memorial Foundation
Dana Foundation
Judy and Jamie Dimon
O’Grady Foundation
Beth M. Uffner

$10,000 to $24,999
American Express Foundation
Bloomberg
Bloomindale’s Fund of the Federated Department Stores Foundation
Capital Z Partners
Amy and James Chanos
David L. Klein Jr. Foundation
Leucadia Foundation
New York Community Trust – Anonymous Donor
New York Times Company Foundation
Prudential Securities
Ira M. Resnick Foundation
David Rockefeller Fund
Melanie Shawin and Greg Feldman

Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation
Sony Corporation
Joan and Preston Robert Tisch
UBS Warburg
Universal American Financial Corp.

$5,000 to $9,999
Felissimo Universal Corporation of America
Myrna and Stephen Greenberg
Agnes Gund
Jeffrey C. Keil
Mr. and Mrs. Leonard A. Lauder
Christina M. Mason
Maurer Family Foundation
Lindsay McCrum
Ruthe and Tony Ponturo
Pat and John Rosenwald

$2,500 to $4,999
Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Arnhold
Marydale DeBor
Ernst & Young, LLP – Don Caste
Greg Davis
Sharon Frankel
Barbara and Peter Freund
Anne Heller
New York Community Trust – Ellen L. and Sam P. Sporn
Jennifer and Mark Pearlman
Lisa Perry
Melissa and Robert Soros
Jane R. Stern
United Federation of Teachers – David Sherman

$1,000 to $2,499
Barbara Bantivoglio and Joseph Magliocci
Judith and Howard Berkowitz
Deborah and Martin Bernstein
Debra and Leon Black
Andrea and Charles Bronfman
Joanne Leonard Cassullo
Jill F. and Irwin Cohen
Maria Cuomo Cole and Kenneth Cole
Cowles Charitable Trust
Ellen & Gary Davis Foundation
Dime Foundation
Peter Duchen
Craig Effron
Nancy Fisher and Marc Kirschner
Charlotte K. Frank, Ph.D.
Irene and Richard Frary
Mary Ann Fribourg
Kim Greenberg
Antonia and George J. Grumbach, Jr.
Gail and Walter Harris

Jane Hartley and Ralph Schlossstein
Walter H. Haydock
Jill Iscol
Mr. and Mrs. John Klingenstein
Sandra Kummerer and David M. Frankel
Cindy Kuntz
Jill and Barry N. Lafer
Rachel and Jean-Pierre Lehmann
Carol Loewenson and Andrew Levander
Peter K. Loeb
Carla and Nino Magliocci
Iris and James Marden
Carol and Arthur Maslow
Brooke and Daniel Neidich
Lynn and Nickolas Nicholas
Janet and David Offensend
Liz and Gus Oliver
Martha Parrish and James Reinish
Robert A. Pruzan
Liz Rosen
Martha A. and Robert S. Rubin
Jane Dresner Sadaka and Ned Sadaka
Pam and Scott Schaffer
Irwin Schneiderman
Maurice Sonnenberg
Donald Stone
Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee
Alice and Tom Tisch
Toys “R” Us Children’s Fund
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Warner
Larry Warsh
Joan Weberman
John L. and Sue Ann Weinberg Foundation
Nina and Gary Wexler
Lois Whitman
Cathy Wright and Robert B. Silver
Barbara and David Zalaznick
The Zankel Fund

$500 to $999
Patricia P. Abramson
Paul Beirne – Bernstein
Investment Research and Management
Barbara Ross Belin
Maura and Bruce Brickman
Margi Briggs-Lotton and Michael Lothn
Schuyler Chapin
Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz
Susan and Ed Falck
Eddiie de M. Firth
Susan and Arthur Fleischer
Ballet Hispanico
Muriel and MacDowell Foundation
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
Vivendi Universal
Picower Foundation

The Center for Arts Education gratefully acknowledges its 2001–2003 contributors, whose generous support makes our programs possible. Due to space limitations, we regret that we are unable to list all of our supporters.
The Center for Arts Education receives 2002 Governor’s Arts Award

ABOVE: In November, Laurie Tisch Sussman and Hollis Headrick accepted the 2002 Governor’s Arts Award at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on behalf of The Center for Arts Education.

LEFT: The award, which was presented to the Center for outstanding contributions to the cultural well-being of the state of New York.