

# Santa Barbara County

The arts play an integral role in contributing to the overall well-being of every child. Arts education engages students of all backgrounds and abilities by fostering creativity, developing critical thinking skills, and building empathy for others. These skills are transferable to various academic disciplines and are crucial in preparing our students for future careers in an ever-changing world.

– Susan Salcido, Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools



**Santa Barbara County Education Office** ■ Contact: Kai Tepper, [ktepper@sbceo.org](mailto:ktepper@sbceo.org)

## SANTA BARBARA COUNTY EDUCATION OFFICE AND THE CHILDREN'S CREATIVE PROJECT

The Children's Creative Project (CCP) is proud to serve as the nonprofit arts program of the Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO). CCP is a unique program that brings together young people and professional artists, enabling students to develop artistic perception and creative expression, and an understanding of artists, the creative process, and historical and cultural arts heritage. Through vital partnerships with schools, community groups and other nonprofits, CCP reaches 70,000-80,000 students annually both during the school day as well as after-school. This number includes TK-12 students in more than 80 schools in Santa Barbara County, and students from San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties, as well.

The CCP supports individual schools and school districts in creating programs that meet their needs and budgets



through various arts and culture programming. Core programs include artist workshops through the Resident Artist Division (RAD) in which artists provide sequential, participatory lessons in dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts, providing opportunities for creative expression, skill development, and joyful discovery. These workshops address the arts content standards for California public schools and can also integrate the arts with other academic subject areas. Another core program is the Touring Artist Program which features multicultural performances

presented by professional touring artists at school sites and at local historic venues. These performances provide critical access to cultural programming that many students would not otherwise have experienced. We believe that every student in every grade in every neighborhood deserves equitable access to high-quality arts experiences.

## SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PARTNERSHIPS

A key strength of CCP lies in its collaborative approach. By partnering with local school districts to develop arts education plans, and meeting a broad spectrum of goals, CCP ensures that its impact is not only widespread but also tailored to the unique needs of the communities it supports. This collaborative model allows for a creative and sustainable integration of arts education into the curriculum.

Examples of collaborative work with school districts include site and district specific arts plans that provide lessons in dance,

media arts, music, theatre and visual arts. Some district-wide partnerships include Carpinteria Unified School District, Goleta Union School District, Santa Maria Bonita School District, and San Luis Coastal Unified School District. Specialty programs with other districts include a pre-school dance program at Santa Barbara Unified School District, and a robust after-school arts program at Manzanita Charter School in the Lompoc Union School District. All RAD workshops strive to provide professional instruction that meets the California Arts Standards adopted by the State Board of Education in 2019.



### **SING! PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS**

One of the many well-loved collaborations is the *Sing!* Program in partnership with the Music Academy of the West (MAW). MAW is among the nation's most prestigious academies which provides summer school and festivals for young, gifted, classically-trained musicians. The MAW is certainly a leader in music education which is why their *Sing!* initiative is so remarkable. This program is a free, after-school choral program for students ages seven to twelve that reaches multiple schools. Students learn about music and culture, singing in at least five languages. They gain confidence by performing at preeminent venues, and perform with world-renowned orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra and others.



### **KIDS AT THE BOWL PARTNERSHIPS**

Another proud collaboration highlight is a free annual student performance known as, "Kids at the Bowl." Children's Creative Project partners with the Santa Barbara Bowl in producing a free performance for up to 3,000 students at the beautiful and historic Santa Barbara Bowl amphitheater. In October 2023, the partnership returned after a four-year hiatus to present LADAMA, a Latin alternative music ensemble consisting of 24 women musicians and activists.

### **SALUTE TO TEACHERS AND SANTA BARBARA BOWL PERFORMING ARTS TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

A Salute to Teachers is Santa Barbara County's premier teacher recognition event. Supported by committed business partners, honorees are celebrated at an annual gala. Highlighted distinctions include three Distinguished New Educators and three Mentors, the Santa Barbara Bowl Performing Arts Teacher of

the Year, and the Santa Barbara County of the Year. The 2024 Santa Barbara Bowl Performing Arts Teacher of the Year is Elena Carlson, a Drama Director and Art Teacher for Righetti High School in the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District.

### **LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

Recognizing that educators play a pivotal role in shaping a child's educational journey, SBCEO and CCP place a strong emphasis on professional development for teachers. In 2023, CCP collaborated with the Dance Education Laboratory based at the 92Y in New York City, a prominent advocate for dance education in K-12 schools, to do professional development training with partner schools in Santa Barbara Unified School District. This investment in teacher development ensures the sustainability and success of the program by fostering a culture of creativity within the school community. Together, SBCEO and the CCP envision a future where arts education is not just an accessory to, but an integral part of every child's education. By nurturing creativity and fostering a love for the arts from an early age, the program aspires to empower future generations with the skills and mindset needed to navigate an ever-evolving world.

