



NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY APRIL 15, 2010

The Port Chester Council for the Arts, Port Chester, NY

What is NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY?

NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY (NASD) is one day in the school year for administrators and teachers to incorporate creative arts into the classroom by stimulating creative thinking, encouraging innovation, validating talent and heightening self-esteem. Schools may choose to teach classes through arts-based curricula or hold special activities such as a visiting artist workshop, a concert, a video presentation, a student art exhibit, a movie screening, a performance of a play or musical, or teachers and students can create their own unique arts activity. The day's activities can be as modest or as ambitious as schools wish and are able to make it.

Where and when did the first NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY take place?

The Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District was the first school system in the nation to participate in this pilot program. Launched on April 16, 2008, Port Chester's four elementary schools, middle school and high school all participated.

How much does it cost to participate?

NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY is free. There is no formal organization to join. There are no fees or added costs. The scope of school activities is limited only by the motivation and imagination of the schools and teachers.

What is the Port Chester Council for the Arts?

The Port Chester Council for the Arts is a not-for-profit community organization based in Port Chester, New York, 22 miles north of New York City. It has a heritage of innovation and a history of "firsts" in creating community and school arts programs since 1981. Some of these include Port Chester Schools' *Literacy Through the Arts* artist-in-residence program (1999-present), *Kinderart* (1987-present), *Castle Kids & Connections* arts-based childcare (1987-present) and the *After-School Arts Workshops* (1982-present). The PCCFA is committed to providing high quality, innovative programs that build and encourage cooperation and community through artistic experience, inspire appreciation of creative expression and new ways of thinking.

Why did the Port Chester Council for the Arts create NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY?

The Port Chester Council for the Arts passionately believes in the power of the arts to enrich the lives of individuals and society. **NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY** was created to provide children, through their school, with exposure to all kinds of creative and visual arts experiences that they may not have the opportunity to get elsewhere.

Why the arts? Shouldn't schools focus on more serious subjects?

Sadly, in times of budgetary constraint arts programs tend to be the first school programs cut, but the arts are tremendously important to American society. Arts in school should be about having fun, exploring different ways to learn, opening up the creativity in each child, and validating the talent and vision of children who may be interested in the arts as a career. Encouraging the arts is planting the seeds that create real careers and grow businesses. The American arts & entertainment industries generate trillions of dollars around the globe and create significant job opportunities for American artists... all of whom start out as children who like to write, draw, perform, create videos and build things.

How do schools and teachers participate?

All you need to do is decide to participate. What you do to create an arts experience for the children in your class or your school is limited only by your imagination. For ideas and resources, visit www.nationalartsintheschoolday.org.

- **If you are a teacher**, approach your principal about having your school or class participate. Tell them about **NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY** (direct them to the Web site for more information) and explain there are multiple ways to participate. Teachers can invite an artist to their classrooms, teach their class that day using an arts-based curriculum they create themselves or find on the NASD Web site, or the entire school or selected classes can participate by creating a special school-wide event that everyone can attend.
- **If you are a local artist or arts organization representative**, you can reach out to a teacher or the principal of the school you are interested in. Tell them about **NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY** (direct them to the Web site for more information); see if they would be interested in participating by describing the types of presentations or arts activities you can offer them.
- **If you are a parent who would like your school to participate**, you can reach out to a teacher or the principal at your child's school, tell them about **NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY** (direct them to the Web site for more information) and volunteer to reach out to local arts organizations to find interested artists. Additionally, contact the PTA and attend a meeting to talk about participating in **NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY**.

Where can I get ideas for teaching all classes with an arts focus on NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY at my school?

Visit www.nationalartsintheschoolday.org and click on "Participate in 2010" for free lesson plans, ideas for special arts-based school events, a list of resources, and other information about NASD. We encourage teachers and administrators to email us with their own ideas and programs so we can add them to the Web site. The Port Chester Council for the Arts has created an entire Web-based guide to the program that includes

detailed sample curricula and examples based on PCCFA expertise and proven success.

For example, in the first year of NASD teachers in grades K-5 led specially created lessons. Professional artists visited classrooms engaging children in art projects and presentations. For grades 6-12, teachers used unique curricula that empowered them to teach their subject matter through a connection to the arts. Teachers and students can work together to pick an arts focus for their class.

When is the next NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY?

On April 15, 2010 the third annual **NATIONAL ARTS IN THE SCHOOL DAY** will be celebrated throughout Westchester County, New York and surrounding counties. Interested parents and teachers in states outside of New York are also committed to participating in 2010.

Where can I learn more?

Visit www.nationalartsintheschoolday.org or call the Port Chester Council for the Arts at 914-939-3183.