

Pittsburgh Center for Arts and Media Artists in Schools & Communities

Pittsburgh Center for Arts & Media (PCA&M) is committed to the artist and the advancement of artistic excellence in visual arts – specifically film, video, photography, digital media, and fine and creative arts and crafts; the provision of equipment and facilities for artists; the conduct of instructional programs; and the stimulation of public understanding and awareness through exhibitions, demonstrations, and sales.

Artists in Schools & Communities at PCA&M is dedicated to bringing high quality arts services to thousands of participants at schools, nonprofit service agencies, community organizations, and communities working with both children and adults in Allegheny, Beaver, Greene, and Washington counties through our partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Our programs place trained, knowledgeable, and practicing artists into school and community settings where they can share the benefits of the creative process.

PCA&M places great emphasis on recruiting professional, trained, practicing artists to work in our programs as part of the partnership mission. Artists are accepted into the program based on the quality of their artwork, their familiarity with best practices in arts in education and community artmaking, and their abilities as communicators/educators/facilitators.

Our Teaching Artists (TAs) are skilled at all facets of the working artist's life: producing high-quality artwork, planning dynamic residencies, partnering with organizations and individuals, documenting both process and product, designing and implementing appropriate residency budgets, completing paperwork in a timely fashion, and all other myriad details of an artist's work. Focused attention is given to the various components of the collaborative process, from brainstorming to interactive group management to presentation of a vibrant finished product, all of which contribute greatly to the quality of the participants' experiences.

Our many years of experience working in education have provided us with insights into how to develop and evaluate programs designed to inspire, encourage, motivate, and assess individual students while building and fostering positive group dynamics. Our goals within all the programs in which we participate are to work closely with each student to facilitate the discovery of hidden talents and develop new strengths while working with teachers and administrators to recognize the value of the arts to youth development. We believe that learning through the arts is essential for optimum development of students in all grade levels; the arts provide infinite opportunities for creative ideas to take hold and elicit unique (sometimes unanticipated) outcomes for all participants: students, teachers, administrators, and artists alike!

We are very enthusiastic about working with schools and community sites as we know so well how in-depth experiences in the arts impact children's lives for the better capacity. Our teaching methods incorporate exploration, enjoyment, excitement, rigor, and even play* for both students and Teaching Artists! While the arts provide many opportunities for "success," there is also an inherent "risk" to some degree of perceived "failure" due to unrealistically high expectations directly connected to the finished products. Our TAs place great emphasis on both process and product, setting students up for success by providing clear, sequential instruction, high quality materials, and an infinite amount of patience that encourages questions, taking creative risks, and learning from mistakes.

** "The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves." Carl Jung*