

# Essential Learning...In The Arts

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ARTS EDUCATION  
COLLABORATIVE

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## Pine-Richland Student a National Poetry Competition Finalist

As a gifted/enrichment teacher for Pine-Richland School District, Deborah Newcomer has always had an interest in writing and the environmental sciences. This year Deborah met with a group of five 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at Richland Elementary to spend time writing, learning about the process of writing, and sharing with each other what they had written. As a part of the learning process for this group, they spent time in the school-created environmental teaching areas that include gardens, a woodland trail, and a pond.

Deborah has a real interest in interdisciplinary learning for her students which sparked her interest in attending a workshop this past fall entitled *River of Words: Art & Poetry for Our Watershed*. River of Words is a national initiative that focuses on connecting students to their watershed through art and poetry. This initiative is now a regional collaboration between the Arts Education Collaborative, Carnegie Museum of Art, RiverQuest, and 3 Rivers Wet Weather and has been offered two times so far to raving reviews.

Each year the national initiative, in partnership with The Library of Congress for the Book, conducts an international poetry competition where students age 5-19 from all around the world can submit poetry. Sarah Libby, a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at Richland Elementary and one of Deborah's writing group members, had her poem "Jack Frost" selected as one of 100 national finalists from tens of thousands of entries (Sarah and her parents graciously allowed us to reprint her poem in this month's newsletter). All of the submitted poems are judged by US Poet Laureate Robert Haas, children's book author and illustrator Thacher Hurd, and writer Pamela Michael.

Sarah will be recognized on Monday, May 12 at the awards ceremony for the River of Words Poetry Competition which is held each year at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. In addition, the poem will be published in the 2008 anthology, *River of Words: The Natural World as Viewed by Young People*. Sarah's teacher and family couldn't be more excited about this opportunity to recognize Sarah's hard work and creative writing skills.

### Jack Frost by Sarah Libby

A thin warm  
Blanket  
Of fall  
Is still wrapped  
Around me  
While  
The  
Icy cold hands  
Of Jack Frost  
Nip at my  
Hands  
And then  
Slap me in the face

## 2008 Regional Arts Education Day a Success!

The evaluations are in and are still being tallied. But, the preliminary results are clearly stating that this year's Regional Arts Education Day was another success. We really couldn't have done it without the support of our partners, financial underwriters, volunteers, steering committee, leadership academy members, and all of you! The following is a list of folks that we would like to specifically thank: The Heinz Endowments, The Grable Foundation, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, Alumni of the AEC Leadership Academy for presenting and hosting the afternoon breakout sessions, Dr. Robert Rosen and his television production students, Glenn Bailey, Jr, Kendria Perry, Michele Scureman, and Andrea Shockling.

## Focus on Leadership

by Elizabeth Kripp, AEC Program Associate



Amy Keller, LA '06  
Quaker Valley School District

Educational leadership continues to be a hot topic these days. Those who attended the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Regional Arts Education Day on April 28<sup>th</sup> were able to hear from some arts educators who have put their leadership skills into action.

Nine members of the AEC Leadership Academy were featured that day. The intent was twofold. The audience would be informed about some of the fine work that has been done recently to advance arts education, and Leadership Academy members would showcase the unique leadership skills that they used to make things happen. That seemed appropriate as we wrap up the 5<sup>th</sup> year of this very successful initiative.

Nina Unitas, assistant principal from Canon McMillan School district, was a member of a response panel that reflected on the keynote address given by playwright, Edward Albee. The former visual arts teacher addressed the issues that were raised with an administrative perspective. Reflecting on the experience,

Nina, a member of the 2003 Leadership Academy, said, "The AEC has done such a wonderful job in bringing arts educators, the cultural arts community, funders, artists and advocates together to celebrate their successes and plan for the future at Regional Arts Education Day.

This year was particularly meaningful because Leadership Academy members had prominent places on the agenda."



Dan Stys, LA '06  
Pittsburgh Public Schools

The afternoon sessions were presented by the following LA members: Roslyn Stulga (2003), Paul Lennartz and Monica McElwain (2004), Mariann Fox (2005) and Dan Stys, Linda Turner, Cindy West and Amy Keller (2006).

Each of these educators told stories of setting and achieving goals within the context of four themes that highlight the important role that the arts play as part of a comprehensive education. They didn't hold back. As part of their presentations, they included tales of running into roadblocks and then maneuvering through those challenges by modifying their goals or implementing appropriate situational leadership skills. When asked about her reaction to this experience, Mariann Fox replied, "I



Mariann Fox, LA '05  
Mt. Lebanon School District

tried to emphasize that the Leadership Academy taught us the skills necessary to lead change or to be agents of change. That expanded into talking about how one little idea snowballs into greater things and taking advantage of the unforeseen opportunities that come along the way."

The sessions were very well received by the audience. Comments such as "excellent breakout sessions" and "wish I could have attended all the sessions" were included on many evaluations at the end of the day. And the presenters also had good things to say. Monica McElwain reports, "Having had some practice with leadership, I felt more comfortable than I thought I would...speaking and telling my story." According to Dan Stys, "It meant so much that I would be given the chance to pass along some information about my action plan...also having an opportunity to meet and work with the many gifted people that attended." It was a powerful day indeed!

# Edward Albee Speaks at Regional Arts Education Day

Introduction by  
Dr. Sarah Tambucci,  
Director, AEC



*Students from the Master's in Arts Management Program (MAM) at the Heinz School at Carnegie Mellon University*

*attended the Regional Arts Education Day keynote address by internationally renowned playwright Edward Albee and were asked to respond to his presentation. The following is a reflection by Jara Dorsey.*

When I first began following the performing arts, I had familiarized myself with the name Edward Albee. In high school, when I thought it was the "chic" thing to do by watching "old" movies (meaning movies from the 1950's and 60's), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was one of them, as Elizabeth Taylor was high on my chic radar. Most of it was lost on me in high school, since I don't believe I fully grasped the nuances among the language and abusive nature within George and Martha's relationship. Instead, I reveled in the fact I thought I was so mature. As I got older, I drifted away from following theater and theater history closely, but I would occasionally come across his plays on Broadway.

However, knowing how much his contributions have meant to the Broadway world and the arts at large, I was pleased to be able to see him in person and hear him speak. He made several salient points that I agreed with. I think what I enjoyed most about his delivery is that his speech was much like his writing, though I could tell he was toning it down for the children in the audience. First, I very much liked his idea of classical music being pumped into children in kindergarten, before they have to study it. Though I'm not a fan of either Bach or Mozart as he is (pump kids full of Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff, or Debussy, and then we can talk), I'd like to think that we should be at a place in our society where children of all backgrounds are being fed classical music early on and not just the preppy ones whose parents think a Baby Einstein DVD (that has horrible pseudo-music-box-like versions of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*) will make their children geniuses. But I digress.

Overall, what really resounded with me are two points. The first is that he believes that the current education system doesn't teach arts or civics well. Because our children aren't being taught how to examine themselves in society, nor are taught how they can best make effective change to have their voices heard, what kind of citizens are we hoping to produce? As he said, "We are educating students toward an empire, not a culture." I thought this was very astute, and I'd like to read up on the book he referenced (*America as a Civilization*) that illustrates this point of view. The second and even more important point is when he likened our current political and educational environment to that of Communist Russia and their commissars of culture, and how they censored artistic expression and what people could view, see, or hear. I truly believe that the current climate is in the middle of this "semantic collapse" his colleague hypothesized.

It is up to us as practitioners, educators, and supporters of the arts to stand up for our ability to retain our voices, and to reinforce that the arts are a vital part to keeping our society accountable, conscientious, progressive, and humane. This can only happen if we are educating our children to be creative, free thinkers, which no subject does better than the arts. Mr. Albee delivered this point well, and I just wish that any one of the presidential candidates were there to hear what he had to say. I do wish, though, that he had recognized the kind of society we are in now, and what we can do to work with the environment instead of fighting so hard against it. Then again, isn't that what the arts are about?

## In The News...

### Two Area School Districts Named to 'Best Communities for Music Education' List

North Allegheny and Quaker Valley School Districts were recently named by the NAMM Foundation as "best communities for music education" and encourages lifelong participation in making music. The designated programs exemplify community commitment to include music education as part of a quality education for all children. Twenty-nine of the fifty U.S. states are represented on the annual survey and seven Pennsylvania school districts are on the list of 110. For more information, visit <http://www.namm.org/press-room/news/news-releases/2008April29a>.

## Opportunities & Offerings

### Carnegie Museum of Art

**What:** 2008 Carnegie International: Teacher Open House

**Where:** Carnegie Museum of Art

**When:** Wednesday, May 14, 4-8 pm

Experience this planet's most intriguing art right here at Carnegie Museum of Art during an exclusive open-house for teachers on May 14 for the Carnegie International. Douglas Fogle, exhibition curator, will share his insights, and you will have the opportunity to tour *Life on Mars* and to share your feedback with Museum staff. Enjoy wine and appetizers, and receive Act 48 credit for helping us develop interdisciplinary connections to your curriculum. \$10 admission; advance registration required. For more information or to register, call Carnegie Museum of Art's group visits office at 412.622.3288 or visit [http://blog.cmoa.org/schools\\_teachers/special-events.php](http://blog.cmoa.org/schools_teachers/special-events.php).

### August Wilson Center for African American Culture

**What:** Hip Hop Dance Workshop

**Where:** Homewood Brushton YMCA  
7140 Bennett St, PGH, PA 15208

**When:** Thursday, May 15, 2008 4-6pm

Join us for an amazing dance experience with Illstyle and Peace Productions at the Homewood YMCA! Illstyle & Peace Productions master class workshops are fun and challenging classes, which introduce you to various dance styles such as B-Boying/B-Girling, hip-hop, modern, jazz, African, and more.

Master choreographer Brandon "Peace" Albright will define the basic movements and techniques, teach them to the students, and develop them into combinations for practice. The class will teach participants how to develop strength, stamina, balance, and flexibility needed for these styles of dance. Please wear loose fitting clothing, dance shoes, and bring bottled water.

Pre-registration is required. To register, contact Bekezela Mguni, Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator, at 412.258.2665 or [BMguni@AugustWilsonCenter.org](mailto:BMguni@AugustWilsonCenter.org).

### Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

**What:** Teacher Residency Program

**Where:** Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

**Due Date:** Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Come to the Children's Museum this summer for a week-long residency with a colleague. Collaboratively research and develop interdisciplinary activities for your classrooms across academic disciplines, with all the Museum's resources available to assist you along the way! Focus on creative problem-solving and open-ended, hands-on opportunities for your students to learn through their experiences. Work closely with our Education staff to prototype your projects and develop a collaborative action plan to implement in the fall.

This course has been approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for 3 continuing education credits per participating teacher! At the completion of your residency, you'll have an interdisciplinary unit ready to go for the school year, and all teacher pairs are eligible for a free field trip for their students.

Applications for five one-week collaborative residencies are available for download at [www.pittsburghkids.org](http://www.pittsburghkids.org). The cost for this residency is \$300 per teacher pair, which includes all materials, facility access, and course credit. Teachers must apply as a collaborative pair; interdisciplinary teams will be given preference. Contact the Education staff with questions at 412.322.5058 x205 or email [ashockling@pittsburghkids.org](mailto:ashockling@pittsburghkids.org).

### Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

**What:** Summer Camps and Classes

**Where:** Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

A great place for your kids this summer, with our highly qualified instructors at a beautiful campus in Mellon Park. Sign up for just the weeks of Art Camps that you want!

Our summer adult class schedule is now online, including several new classes such as: Painting Miniatures with Brooke Rothshank; Woven Wire Jewelry with Adina DeRoy-Stouffer; Papermaking Workshop with Denise Anderson; and more. Online registration is now available at: <http://www.pittsburgharts.org/index.php>.

## Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

**What:** Artist Residency Projects

**Where:** Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

**When:** Sept. 1, 2008 - Aug. 31, 2009

Pittsburgh Center for the Arts is now accepting applications for Artist Residency Projects for September 1, 2008 through August 31, 2009. The Pittsburgh Center for the Arts' works to place practicing professional artists in schools, nonprofit service agencies, and community organizations throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. They are designed to have lasting benefits for all participants: students are fully immersed in an art form and see how it connects to life and learning, teachers are exposed to alternative ways of experiencing and sharing the creative process and what it brings to their classrooms, and administrators recognize the ways in which the arts fully engage students and impact their learning across the curriculum. We are the regional Arts in Education Partner with the PA Council on the Arts. Visit [http://www.pittsburgharts.org/community\\_index.php](http://www.pittsburgharts.org/community_index.php) for more information.

## Upcoming Events

### Manchester Craftsmen's Guild

**What:** All City Arts Showcase

**Where:** Manchester Craftsmen's Guild  
1815 Metropolitan St., North Shore

**When:** Friday, May 9, from 5:30 - 9 pm

Join us to celebrate the creative accomplishments of Pittsburgh Public High Schools' young artists. This FREE evening includes an awards presentation, refreshments and a performance by the high school honors choir and jazz ensemble. Questions? Contact Brittany Colatrella at [bcola@mcg-btc.org](mailto:bcola@mcg-btc.org) or 412.321.1773 x378. Or, visit [www.manchesterguild.org](http://www.manchesterguild.org).

Please submit your Upcoming Events & Opportunities to Dana at: [castod@artsedcollaborative.org](mailto:castod@artsedcollaborative.org)  
Due to limited space, submissions will run on a first come, first served basis.

## Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

**What:** PSO Community Engagement Concert;  
Daniel Meyer, Conductor

**Where:** Wilkinsburg High School Auditorium

**When:** Thursday, May 22, 7 pm

All ticket proceeds from the concert will stay in the Hill District Community, benefiting the arts program at the Hill House. Tickets prices are \$4 students (K-12), \$6 seniors (65+), \$8 adults; Groups of 10 or more seniors or students= \$1 off each ticket  
Call 412.392.4463 to purchase tickets or visit: [www.hillhouse.org](http://www.hillhouse.org).

## Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

**What:** PSO Community Engagement Concert;  
Daniel Meyer, Conductor

**Where:** Hill House - Kaufmann Auditorium  
1835 Centre Ave

**When:** Friday, May 23, 7 pm

All ticket proceeds from the concert will benefit the newly formed Wilkinsburg Public Schools elementary band program. Over the past four years, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's performances in Wilkinsburg have raised over \$45,000 that has been returned to the Wilkinsburg community for this cause. Tickets cost \$3 for students K-12, and \$7 for adults and seniors. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 412.871.2125.

## Pittsburgh Public Theater

**What:** family Series: *The Odd Couple*

**Where:** Pittsburgh Public Theater

**When:** Saturday, June 21, 2 pm

Have there ever been two more hilariously mismatched roommates than Oscar Madison and Felix Ungar? Mix equal parts finicky photographer and messy sportswriter with a colorful crew of card-playing cronies and a pair of British sisters, and the laughs are non-stop in this classic from the master of American comedy.

This Saturday afternoon performance features pre-show activities (starting at 12:30 pm) designed especially for families with children ages 12-17. Participating children will take home goodie bags containing toys, treats, and education pamphlets related to the show. Call the Box Office for information at 412.316.1600.

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