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## **MARCH IS NATIONAL ARTS EDUCATION MONTH**

### **ARTS COUNCIL SANTA CRUZ COUNTY'S PROGRAMS PROVIDE SERVICE AND SUPPORT TO LOCAL STUDENTS, FAMILIES**

**SANTA CRUZ, CA — Feb. 25, 2016** — March is National Art in Education Month and the Arts Council Santa Cruz County is proud to be a leading regional resource for arts education, touching the lives of thousands of students.

Mariposa's Art is an after-school program that educates high school students on art concepts and teaching skills. Those students then become after-school art teachers for elementary school students. The Arts Council also supports SPECTRA Teaching Artists in schools, Artist Teacher Partnerships (art teachers and classroom teachers working together to integrate art education into other subjects), and Family Arts Nights, which engage the whole family with first-hand artful experiences and transform parents and grandparents into arts education advocates.

Combined, these programs provide art education programming to over 14,000 students county-wide.

"Arts education teaches skills students need to be prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century work force and reinforces the belief that students should receive an education that includes activities that engage them in a fun and holistic way so they are able to learn through seeing, doing, and being. This leads to a richer understanding of themselves and world around them." – Sarah Brothers Bot, Arts Education Manager at Arts Council Santa Cruz County

Federal core curriculum standards have recently incorporated the Arts into the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), now known as STEAM. Yet, many schools in the region receive Title 1 funds, have among the lowest possible rating in California's Academic Performance Index, and lack sufficient funding for arts education during the regular school day. Schools are striving to provide quality education and meet proficiency standards, while having few enrichment resources to support large blocks of children with exacerbated need.

Support locally and nation-wide continues to gain traction for programs like that of Mariposa's Art. A recent New York Times article, "A Philanthropist Drills Down to Discover Why Programs Work," highlights Susan Crown's focus on programs success being tied to those that foster skills like grit, empathy and perseverance are determinates of future success. Arts Council Santa Cruz County's sees these important life skills developed

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through the Mariposa's Art program. Arts Council's Mariposa's Art program has been serving students in Pajaro Valley for over two decades.

The Arts Council Santa Cruz County steps into the gap by providing arts education and supporting programs that already exist in local schools.

Reflecting back on his experience as a Mariposa's Art alumni from 2008-2009, Gerardo Narez says: "Through my experience as a Mariposa's Art student teacher, I became more flexible, learned time management and patience. In college, I applied to be an R.A., and my experience with Mariposa's Art really helped me excel in the position." This quote mirrors the sentiment from all the students interviewed, as they referenced increased confidence, ease at talking with people, responsibility and patience.

### **About Arts Council Santa Cruz County**

Arts Council Santa Cruz County's mission is to promote, connect, and invest in the arts in order to stimulate creativity and vibrancy in Santa Cruz County. Through Open Studios, artists connect with their neighbors and art appreciators; through projects like Ebb & Flow River Arts Project, the community comes together to enliven public spaces; through SPECTRA and Mariposa's Art, students experience art in schools; and through the Grants program, critical support is provided to artists and organizations that make our home colorful, vibrant, and extraordinary. Learn more at [artscouncilsc.org](http://artscouncilsc.org).

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