

BRING THE KIDS
Art Classes Available at Studios on the Park

Members of the public who regularly visit art galleries are accustomed to seeing paintings and sculptures displayed in a somewhat antiseptic ambiance. For obvious reasons, they usually don't include the kids on such visits.

That scenario can change when adults and their children walk through the doors of Studios on the Park in downtown Paso Robles. While they will see art and sculptures displayed, they will discover that Studios on the Park has much more to offer.

Families will see artists – painters, weavers, jewelry makers, photographers – at work in their own studios. The public is encouraged to talk to the artists, ask questions and if desired, sign up for an art class. Studios founder Anne Laddon says,

“I’m hoping that the classroom opportunity will be one of the main areas in which we will be able to integrate the student population in the community and the art loving population of the community. One of our missions has always been to offer classes for adults and children. I can just imagine a Saturday morning class for young painters traipsing into the lobby and into the classroom spaces, all those darling little faces and little budding artists. I’d very much like us to sponsor student arts exhibits so that those young artists can surround themselves with professionals as I once did and feel that inspiration.”

Educators have long known that the arts provide unique ways of reaching students who may not access knowledge as readily through language and mathematics alone. The arts represent a form of thinking that involves imagination and judgment. Research has shown that learning the arts can strengthen problem solving and creative thinking. It can nurture growth in self-confidence and self control.

Natalie Schaefer, Executive Director of the Children's Museum, states:.

“Certainly as a child is developing, they are little sponges. They are continually taking in new information and observations and then applying them to their lives. To be able to excite a child about art gives them a greater understanding of how history and science play a role in their lives. It even helps them develop their motor skills.”

For Flamson School art educator, Jeanne Aird, the classes in art bestow many opportunities on her students.

“I think the arts do a lot to raise a student’s self esteem. To make something and be able to say ‘I made it’ does a lot for a student. They feel stronger about themselves and the stronger they feel, the more likely they’re going to be able to resist the temptations of peer pressure to get into trouble. The arts are an excellent avenue for allowing them t to express themselves in a safe way.”

From birth, children seek to make sense of their world. They are constantly experimenting, solving problems, and testing their conclusions in order to gain knowledge. At home, children are encouraged to take risks without fear of failure. For example, children accomplish the complex task of learning to talk naturally, because they are surrounded by people who are using language meaningfully.

Children become literate in much the same way they learn to speak. They learn because they want to participate and make sense of the world and language around them. Making and correcting their own mistakes becomes part of the learning process. They add to their knowledge base by relying on what they know and using that information to make connections with new information.

Research has shown that an education rich in the arts and humanities develops skills that are increasingly crucial to productivity and competitiveness of the nations’ workforce. Such an education augments the ability to think creatively, communicate effectively and work collaboratively and to deal with ambiguity and complexity.

Jeanne Aird continues:

“It also enhances their critical thinking skills. They need to exercise that left side of the brain. In art classes, they get to do that. In our world, we’re going to need people to be very creative problem solvers. Students need to exercise that part of the brain to allow them to think in an open ended way and become ready to solve some of the problems we’re going to have in this world. The arts give the students an outlet to do that more than other subjects do. In math there is one right answer. I can give a test and I’ll get 30 right answers that are all different.”

The vision for classes at Studios on the Park also includes opportunities for adults as Anne Laddon explains:

“I can imagine people who all their lives have wanted to study art and have been afraid to do so. Perhaps, now because they have been able to watch someone making a painting or making a ceramic item, they are inspired to finally take that class, finally develop their creative side.”

Studios on the Park, Inc. is a non profit organization dedicated to providing a creative, educational and transformational experience to enhance the understanding and appreciation of the visual arts. It has a commitment to make the creative process available to the public and offers its visitors a unique open studio environment. Studios features artists working in a variety of media. It offers educational programs for children and adults and quality exhibitions by regional , national and international artists

For more information:

www.studiosonthepark

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