

# SCHOOL DAYS

## Music to their ears: Grant will boost arts instruction in CVUSD

By Dawn Megli  
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Elementary school students in Conejo Valley Unified School District will receive expanded arts education this year with the help of a \$35,000 grant from TOArts.

Over the summer, TOArts, the nonprofit arm of the Bank of America Performing Arts Center, launched a new grant program, AccessArts, to provide funding

for art education in Ventura County elementary schools.

CVUSD is the recipient of TOArts' first grant, which will support the district's long-standing Focus on the Arts program in grades TK-5 for the 2020-21 school year. The Conejo Schools Foundation will provide up to \$20,000 in additional funding.

The program, an eight-month series of 30 weekly lessons, was designed to be offered through digital platforms during remote

learning, but Lou Lichtl, assistant superintendent of instructional services, said at the Oct. 6 school board meeting that lessons could be easily "morphed" into an in-person classroom experience.

"We'll extend this for the whole school year regardless of what our teaching and learning model is," he said.

This year's Focus on the Arts theme is "Safe Apart and Connected by Art."

Weekly art instruction began

Oct. 6 and will run through the end of May. Niki Chopra Richardson from TOArts said early lessons will include creating sugar skulls to commemorate Dia de Los Muertos and decorating pumpkins in the style of Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, who is known as the "princess of polka dots."

As the year progresses, lessons will focus on the performing arts.

Focus on the Arts will reach nearly 7,000 students in the district's elementary schools as well

as the SHINE home-school program, TOArts said in a statement.

The CVUSD board approved the grant with a 4-0 vote at the Oct. 6 meeting. Board president Cindy Goldberg, who is the executive director of CSF, recused herself. Student trustee Addie Craig, a Westlake High School senior, offered an honorary yes vote.

In a statement, Leanne Neilson, board chair of TOArts, said the foundation believes in the power of the arts to inspire performers and audiences, aid in the discovery of new perspectives and strengthen bonds between people through shared experiences.

"The introduction of AccessArts is a manifestation of that belief and one that is in direct alignment with our mission to broaden access and exposure to the performing arts for current and future generations," she said.

Neilson said the grant will allow CVUSD to significantly enhance its arts curriculum with more resources and materials.

Superintendent Mark McLaughlin said the grant is especially meaningful given the challenges presented by COVID-19 and what he described as an "unprecedented school year." He called Focus on the Arts an "exceptional component" of what the district has to offer.

TOArts intends to offer similar grants to other Ventura County school districts in the coming years, the organization said. After the 2020-21 school year, TOArts will announce the requirements and deadlines for other districts to apply for AccessArts grants.



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# REAL ESTATE

## Gated Mediterranean villa in Santa Rosa Valley is on nearly 4 acres

■ Includes equestrian area and stand-alone shop

This gated, solar-powered Mediterranean villa overlooks the Santa Rosa Valley and the mountains beyond.

The private oasis is on nearly 4 usable acres with lush landscaping.

The entertainer's home offers an outdoor kitchen with a wood-burning fireplace, sitting and dining areas, views and a resort-style pool and spa. The property includes an equestrian area with room for stables.

A drive leads to the double-door entry. The dining room has a view of the mountains.

The step-down formal living room has a fireplace.



The large kitchen has a cooking island and granite countertops. The great room has a fire-

place. There is a sunny breakfast room as well as large patios and views out every window.

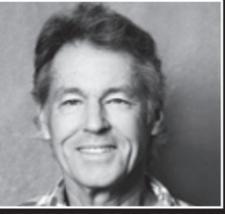
An executive office has built-in cabinetry. Downstairs is a guest room with a full bath.

Upstairs is the elegant master suite with a bath and views from the privacy of the shower and soaking bath. A large balcony provides a private retreat.

The three-car garage fea-

tures multiple cabinets. The 1,600-square-foot stand-alone "shop" includes a half bath and could be built out as an accessory dwelling unit.

For more information, call Jan Bigotti of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Realty at (805) 377-4912.



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