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“ANY GIVEN CHILD” PROGRAMS BEGIN ARTS EXPERIENCES IN SACRAMENTO SCHOOLS

SACRAMENTO - Sacramento schools will have a new infusion of arts education experiences this year as the For Arts’ Sake Arts Education Recommendations begin to be implemented. SMAC recently announced the selection of seven artists who will provide a series of programs in the visual and performing arts for 36 classrooms in the Twin Rivers and Sacramento City Unified School Districts.

These “residencies” are part of the “Any Given Child” program, developed by the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington D.C. to bring access and equity to arts education during the school day for K-8 students. Premiered in Sacramento through Mayor Kevin Johnson’s ‘For Arts’ Sake’ Initiative and administered by the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, the program supplements district arts education and the efforts of local arts groups to connect young people to the arts in meaningful ways,

The residency artists were chosen through an open application process and reviewed by a panel of community and education experts. They will be providing 5-session residencies in 6 schools: Father Keith Kenny Elementary, Will C. Wood Middle, Washington Elementary, Oakdale Elementary, Orchard Elementary and Creative Connections Arts Academy. The residency artists for the pilot year are:

Vanessa Bautista, dance
Gail Dartez, theatre
Sue Anne Foster, visual arts
Kimberly Grace, visual arts
Jane Hastings, visual arts
Vince Horiuchi, dance
Heidi McLean, dance

K-8 schools in the two districts will also be offered an arts assembly or field trip experience this school year provided by local arts organizations chosen through a similar selection process to participate. The schools will select an assembly or field trip from the roster of arts organizations provided them. The arts organizations selected to participate this year are:

B Street Theatre
Camellia Symphony Orchestra
Crane Culture Theater
Crocker Art Museum
Day in the Life
Fairytale Town
Instituto Mazatlan Bellas Artes
InterAct
LAMECA
Mondavi Center Arts Education
River City Theatre
Sacramento Ballet
Sacramento Children's Chorus
Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission
Sacramento Opera
Sacramento Philharmonic
Sacramento Theatre Company
Sacramento Youth Symphony
Sons/Ancestors Players, Sac State

In addition to these project, the Any Given Child Spokesperson, Milton Bowens, will be offering preview assemblies to all the schools participating in the program, Bowens, a working artist known for his paintings that address issues of social injustice, will conduct a presentation that helps students get a sense of the life of an artist and provide interactive experiences that introduce basic arts elements and inspire creative expression.

Classroom teachers wishing to schedule a Milton Bowens assembly should contact Jenn Berbower at jenn.berbower@forartsake.org or 916 808 5073. Assemblies will be available through the end of the school year.

MILTON BOWENS

About the Artist

Born and raised in Oakland, Calif., Milton Bowens is the fifth boy of ten children. Milton's artistic promise began at the age of five with nothing more than a few pencils and cut up brown paper bags used as sketch paper, thanks to his mother's ingenuity of making the best of lean times. Milton never lost sight of his humble roots. Discreetly placed on many of his works of art is a slim strip of brown paper bag. Years later, Milton's formal art education took off while he attended the Renaissance Art School in Oakland during his junior and senior high school years. After graduating, Milton received a scholarship to the California College of Arts and Crafts. He completed one-year of study then enlisted in the United States Armed Forces and became an Illustrator. He received his Associates Degree in Commercial Art under the Army's College Education Assistance Program (ACE). Milton continued his art education at Austin Peay State University in Tennessee and at North Carolina's Fayetteville State University, while completing his military obligations. During this time, two of the military's most prestigious museums: The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum, Fort Bragg, North Carolina and The Don F. Pratt Memorial Museum, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, collected Milton's artwork.

After serving his tour of duty, Milton returned to the Bay Area, where he continued his education under the mentorship of Fine Artist David Bradford, head of the Art Department and instructor at Laney College (Oakland).

Inspired by great artists such as Jean Michel Basquiat, Robert Rauschenberg, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence and Andy Warhol, Milton changed his focus from illustration to fine art.

That shift proved crucial for Milton now considered a great artist in his own right and inspirational public speaker/community activist in the struggle to keep art a vital part of public education and a tool to help build self-esteem in youth. Milton works tirelessly to create thought-provoking exhibitions that will help restore a level of hope in communities desperately in need of inspiration.

Learn more at www.ForArtSake.org

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