

# Art News

## Sussex Avenue Renew School

### **Principal's words**

Because of the innovation at our school, Sussex Renew was asked to receive a check for \$5,000 on behalf of Newark Public Schools. Thank you NJ Devils for your generosity and support of the arts in schools.



*Picture of Principal Gearhart receiving the donation from New Jersey Devils.*

### **The Visual Arts**

#### *A Note About Curriculum:*

A rigorous curriculum is an essential component of Principal Gearhart's school vision at Sussex Avenue Renew, and the art program has responded to that vision. Collaboration, discussion, and analysis are part and parcel of the teaching staff at Sussex Renew. Teachers frequently schedule meetings to discuss and analyze data in order to redirect teaching and create cross content learning opportunities in the classroom. The arts are also used as a vehicle to reinforce curriculum knowledge in other areas of learning

such as Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science.

### **Music Making**

The music program at Sussex Renew, led by the amazing Mr. Eveland, is growing just a little more each day. That is, the number of instruments and other resources available is increasing! We have gone from having ZERO instruments on the first day, to having twenty guitars, over fifty concert band instruments and a drum set! Just about every other day, fourth graders sit and learn guitar, progressing at their own rate. Some students are close to learning their first song, "Aiko, Aiko!" In the upcoming weeks Mr. Eveland plans to incorporate some of the concert band instruments into an afterschool ensemble for the fourth grade and select students throughout the school. What matters most is that the students are being exposed and really trying to "dive in" to music in their first year. Everyone is looking forward to great things to come!

### **Lights, Camera, Drama!**

The Social Action Theater Afterschool Program is alive and thriving! We spent our first week back from winter break honing up our improvisational skills, telling One-Word Stories; guessing Where Am I, then joining in; dramatizing BUSTOP and SIMPLE MACHINES; acting out nursery rhymes and fairy tales; all gearing up for our intensive upcoming delve into

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contemporary scenes and monologues. Stay Tuned!

Students decided that the social action issues we are currently exploring are: violence in our community, bullying, drugs, crime, gangs, guns, obesity, and global warming. We are also proud how hard we worked on preparing a musical performance piece about tolerance and respect for our inclusive Sussex Avenue Holiday Performance. Even with our amplification challenges and some stage fright, the students loved performing and sharing their vision of equitable social action up on stage! We can't wait to do it again...

FOCUS drama club teacher Mr. John "Witt" Wittenbauer has been busy writing a short play that mirrors the first couple of Expeditionary Learning units about the warring Iroquois nations that came together in peace. The play's setting is a school where two students similar to the historical key figures are the leads and are victims of bullying. The play is an anti-bully/anti-gang piece. Mr. Witt is committed to this project because he believes it is an important message for our school community and his ensemble is doing its best to generate buzz for the 7-8am FOCUS drama club. The group has grown from two members to nine! Stay tuned!

### **Notes About Renew the Arts**

For the 2013-14 school year, Sussex Avenue Renew School was selected as part of the Renew the Arts program. Renew the Arts is a district initiative to help Newark Public Schools develop the arts. As part of that initiative, our school has been given access to important resources and trainings for art teachers. One of the benefits of this initiative includes the creation of a first-ever ceramic art class at Sussex Avenue Renew!

### **Art Partners**

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Sussex Ave Renew School Art Program builds strong links with community arts organizations such as:

- The Newark Museum, planning and participating in field trip, artist workshops and art exhibitions. Sussex Avenue Renew School was selected to participate in the artist in Residency (AIR) program at the Newark Museum.
- The Paul Robeson Gallery at Newark Rutgers University another partner working together doing field trips, workshops and artist talks.
- Sussex Avenue Renew School is working the Mural program at Newark and Yendor Productions is collaborating in a plan to create a series of murals around the school.
- My Block, My Family, Our Village is the community organization that works in our neighborhood has been a great partner working together with the art program. They helped make possible a field trip to a Newark farm for my HR's best attendance record in September.

### **In Their Own Words**

In a recently well-crafted analysis produced in Ms. Melissa Marflak's afterschool tutoring program, seventh-grade Vice President of the Student Council, Kenia Rivas, considers the positive impact the arts can have in student performance. In response to the article "Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement" Ms.Rivas points out, "students need art education because it helps them improve in ...other subjects and also reach their goals. Art is a place where students who don't do well in other subjects can really shine. Involvement in the arts has been shown to increase academic performance in all the

subject areas, not just in art but in many things like math, science, and also English.” Ms. Rivas also argues that the arts inspires students to aspire higher. “The arts can help motivate students to learn...For example students who did not want to stay in high school remained in high school because they participated in the art program.” Ms. Rivas reminds her audience that the arts are not just confined to the conventional art classroom, but extends to other facets of academic study.

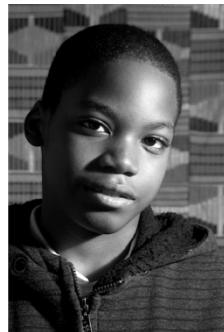
“Art is not just painting and drawing it is also a place to express your emotion in drama, music, and many other different types of art. Art is a very important part of improving many subjects and motivating students to learn.”

## **Artists in Residency**

The Newark Museum's Artist-in-Residence Program is designed to introduce students to new art forms by assigning a teaching artist to a specific school for nine in-school sessions, and a visit to the Newark Museum. At the end of the residency, the students will exhibit their work at the Newark Museum with other schools participating in the program. This fall and winter Mr. Mansa K. Mussa, a visual artist who has been teaching in Newark for the past thirty-four years, has been working with Sussex Avenue School art teacher Mr. Nelson Alvarez on a project entitled: “Celebrating Your Life and Times.” Students from Ms. Bonilla's class have been exploring the mediums of drawing, portraiture with digital cameras, and collage. The inspiration for their work is a portrait painting in the collection of the Newark Museum. The subject is Willie Gee, a little boy who was painted in oil by artist Robert Henri in 1904. Students are working on creating version's of the image using their own photographic portraits. Their artwork will be on exhibit at the Newark Museum on Thursday, February 6, 2014 from 4:00 - 6:00pm.



*Pictures of students participating in the AIR program.*



## **Save the Date!**

The Art Program will play a major role in the following future events:

- Art Auction Sunday, February 23, 2014 at Ahavas Sholom, 145 Broadway from 1:00-4:00pm

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- Career Day at Sussex Renew Friday, March 21, 2014

## **New Spaces**

The Sussex Avenue Renew School has opened a brand new space for art exhibitions in the P-Wing Corridor.



*Pictures of the new exhibition space.*

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