



Tools For Tomorrow

CREATIVE CLUBS & THEATRE PROGRAMS

To Reach, Teach and Inspire Children through the ARTS



A Look Back: Artists, Writers, Musicians, and Performers
2022–2026

TOOLS FOR TOMORROW | MISSION & VISION

Tools For Tomorrow is a free, after-school arts literacy program integrating the Visual Arts, Creative Writing, Music Appreciation, and Theatre for children ages six to eleven.

Tools For Tomorrow offers hands-on creative experiences that encourage children's social-emotional development through artistic self-expression. We nurture children's positive self-esteem by helping them discover their inherent creativity.

Tools For Tomorrow believes the arts have the power to transform a child's life. By encouraging innovative thinking, fostering creative self-discovery, and promoting collaborative learning, we give children "tools for tomorrow" that will help them grow, thrive, and succeed.

The Creative Club lets artists shine! Students paint, draw, write, act, listen to music, and have fun.

The Theatre Program teaches the art of performance. Students learn theatre games, storytelling, movement, songs, and short skits.

"Be somebody who makes everybody feel like somebody."

– Brad Montague



STAFF

Andrea Hecht

Executive Director

Emily Culhan

Program Director

Sara Waters

Program Coordinator & Graphic Designer

Emily Cheley

Development & Events Coordinator

Carol Curie

Accounting & Human Resources



A MESSAGE FROM **THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Tools For Tomorrow partners with schools and community organizations to bring meaningful arts education to elementary school children who might not otherwise have access. We are proud to be a trusted, collaborative partner—easy to work with, financially sound, and supported by dedicated donors, board members, volunteers, teaching artists, and staff who believe deeply in the power of the arts.

Our programs are designed to meet children where they are and inspire them to explore their creativity. In recent years, we have strengthened our curriculum and invested in our Teaching Artists through professional training, classroom management support, and mentorship from a retired educator. Together, our teachers form a supportive community, sharing ideas and successes to better serve students.



Every child deserves the chance to discover their voice, build confidence, and imagine new possibilities. Through the dedication of our entire TFT community, we are creating safe, inspiring spaces where children can thrive—and we look forward to growing our impact together.

Andrea Hecht, Executive Director

A MESSAGE FROM **THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

I am thrilled to present this retrospective celebrating the achievements of our Tools For Tomorrow students. Our Teaching Artists have nurtured an extraordinary group of young artists, writers, musicians, and performers whose creativity continues to inspire us.

TFT's professionally designed curriculum integrates children's books into lessons, provides enriching field trips, and supports staff through ongoing professional development. In 2025, we expanded our reach by launching a new program for 1st and 2nd grade students, allowing even more children to experience the power of the arts. Each student also receives a free art kit to continue creating at home.

Our programs encourage children to think creatively and understand that making art is a process. With a strong focus on students' social and emotional well-being, our Teaching Artists create an environment where young artists feel safe to take risks, express themselves, and grow.

It is a privilege to work alongside colleagues, Teaching Artists, and volunteers who are passionately committed to fostering children's creativity. I hope you enjoy experiencing the remarkable talents of the children in our community.



Emily Culhan, Program Director



“Even if you just change one life, you’ve changed the world forever.”

– Mike Satterfield



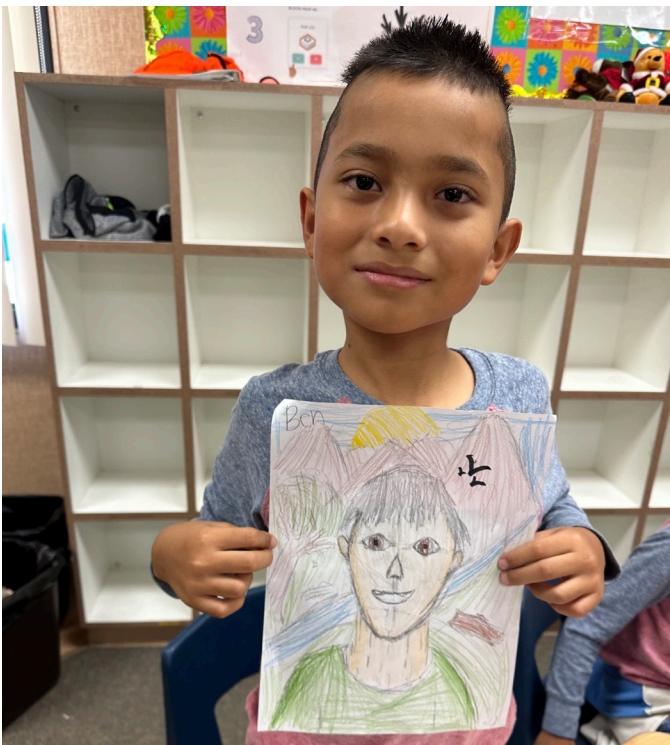
“I am most excited about art because I can express myself.”

– Luna, Grade 3



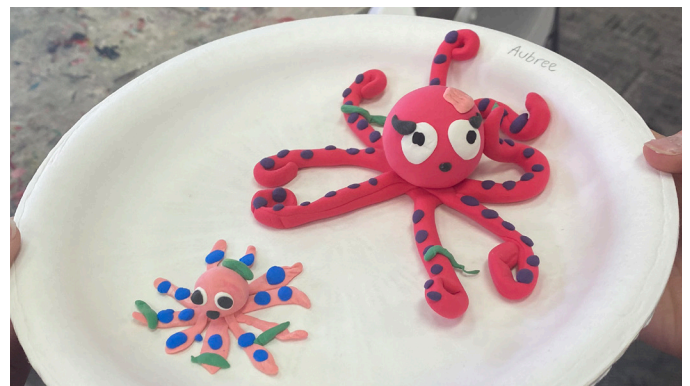
CREATIVE CLUB | VISUAL ARTS

Students learn how to express themselves artistically and develop creative thinking skills.



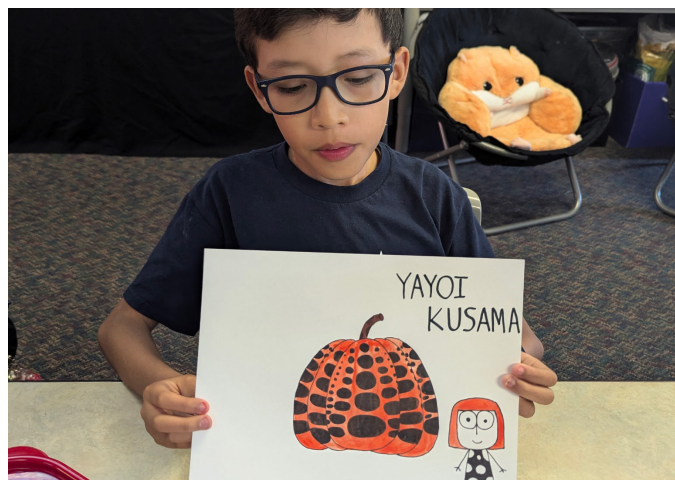
"Every child is an artist."

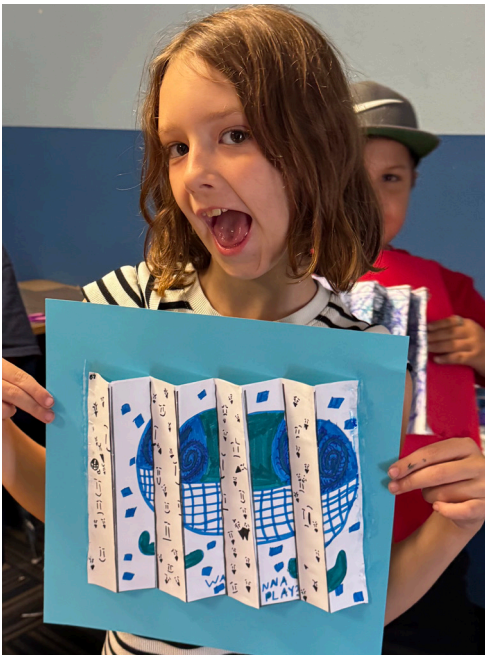
– Pablo Picasso





Carefully selected children's books are used in Creative Club classes. Picture books present complex topics in relatable ways and combine storytelling with engaging illustrations.

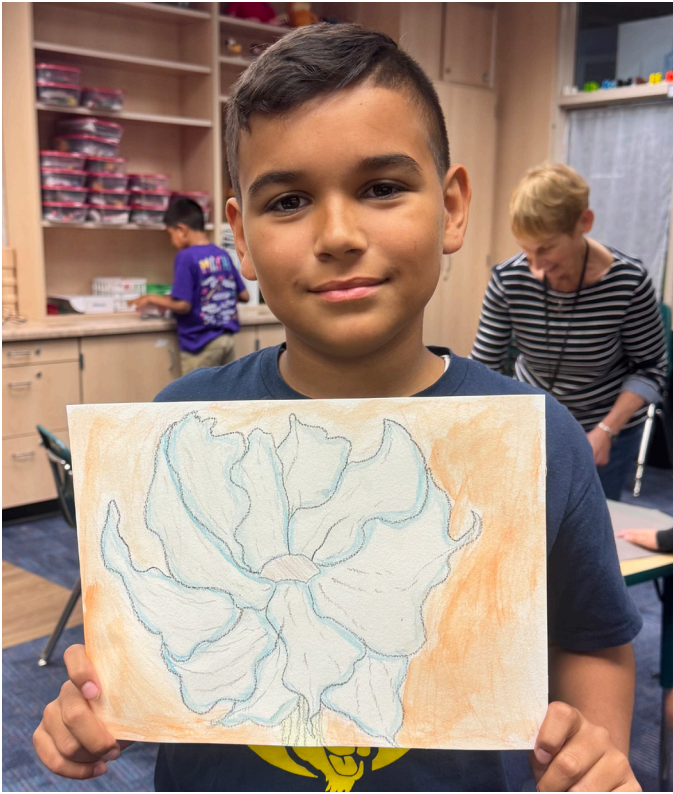




"I learned to not give up."

- Alexander, Grade 3





Students learn about master artists and their artworks, broadening worldviews, building empathy, and finding inspiration for their own creative expression.



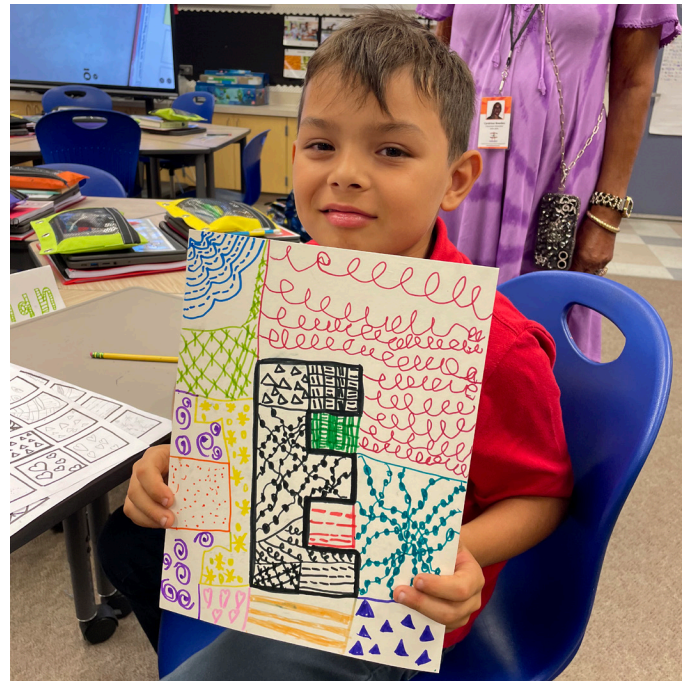
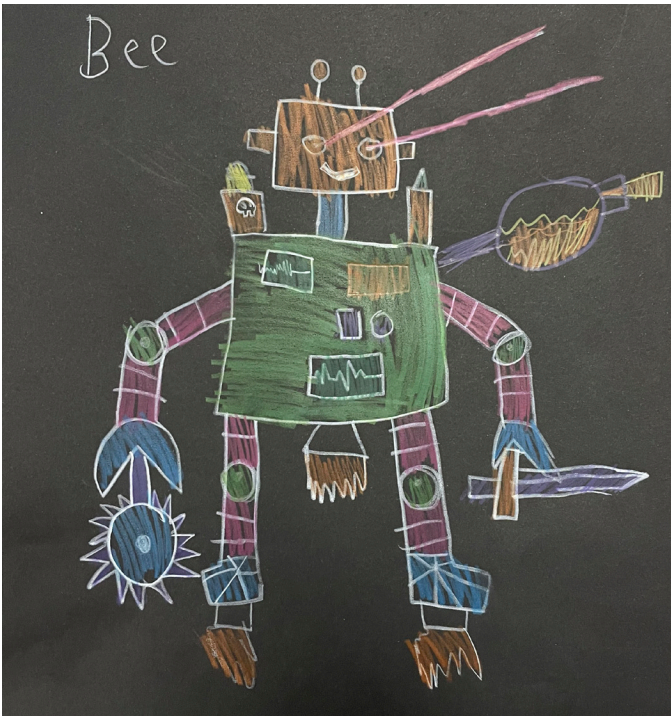


Young artists are exposed to a variety of materials that are used to create art. Every child gets a full set of art supplies that they get to keep. Special materials like gel printing, model magic for sculpture, paint markers, and more are also used in Creative Club.



“My favorite project was collage because I love all the shapes and any way you look at it, it is always something.”

– Aubrey, Grade 3



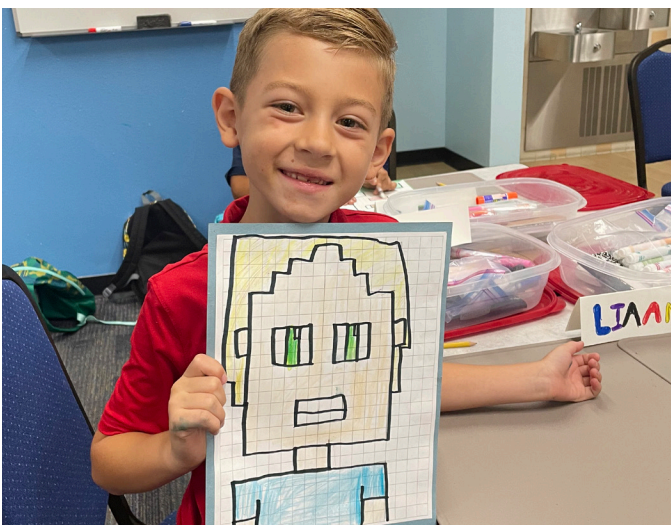
“I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn’t say any other way – things I had no words for.”

– Georgia O’Keeffe



“Art is beautiful no matter what the style is. You can always be creative.”

– Francisco, Grade 4





Special field trips give our Creative Club students the opportunity to experience the arts in our community. We have visited Desert X, Sunnylands, and the Herb Alpert Gallery of Art.



“All art, period, whether it’s acting, poetry, sculpture, painting, music... it’s all about the feeling, right? You can walk by a dozen good paintings, but a great one will stop you in your tracks.”

– Herb Alpert





Thought for the Day Journal Prompt:

***If you could talk to your future self,
what would you ask?***

Am I rich and famous? Do I live in a 10-story house with two elevators, 112 rooms, and 100 bathrooms, with Michael B. Jordan as my husband?

Jayla, grade 4

Would I be a baseball player?

Troy, grade 3

Do I have a kid? Do I have my dream job?

Jasmine, grade 5

Will I be a famous artist in the future?

Sonia, grade 4

Are people going to Mars?

Michael, grade 4

Would my mom be alive when I am 34?

Nayomi, grade 3

***“I learned it’s okay to make
mistakes.”***

– Cali, Grade 2

***“Think and wonder,
wonder and think.”***

– Dr. Seuss

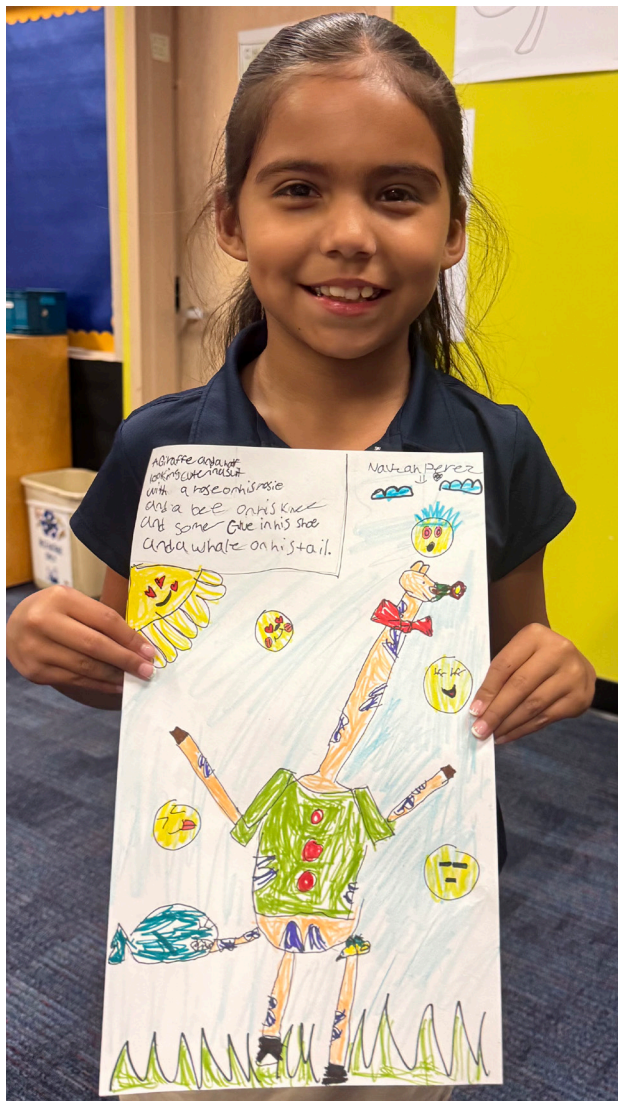


CREATIVE CLUB | WRITING

Students develop an understanding of language and words as art, while also having the opportunity to write creatively.

Cinquain Poem by Isla

Mother
 Hard-working, caring
 Loving, smiling, hard working
 Gives the best hugs and is the best Mom
 Bright



"NEVER GIVE UP!"

- Daniel, Grade 4



Poetry is the foundation of the writing experience in the Creative Club. Poetry uses words to create images in the reader's mind and students learn how to visualize what they read. Students listen and respond to famous poems, as well as learn how to write their own. Children create their own illustrations using language as their inspiration.

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.”

– Aesop



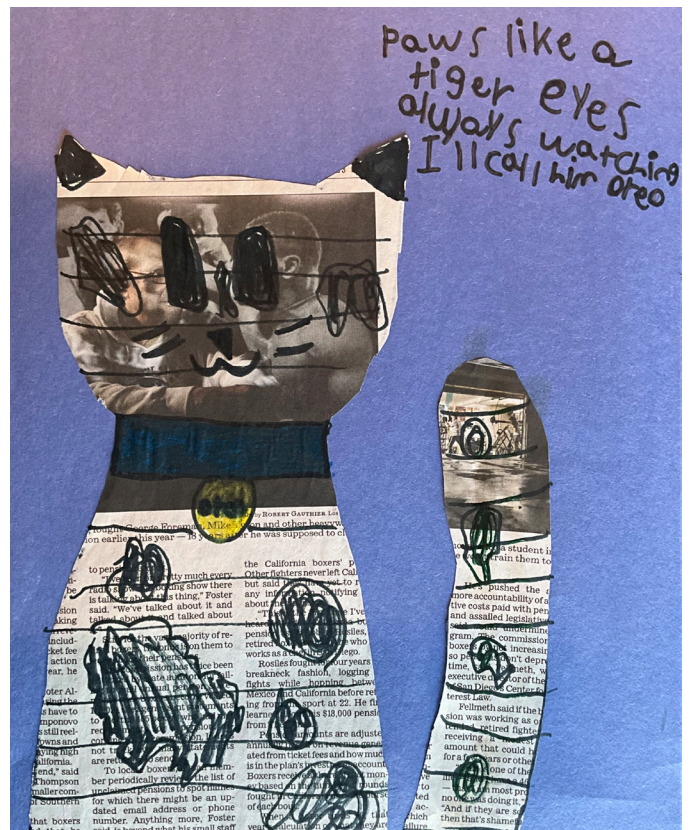
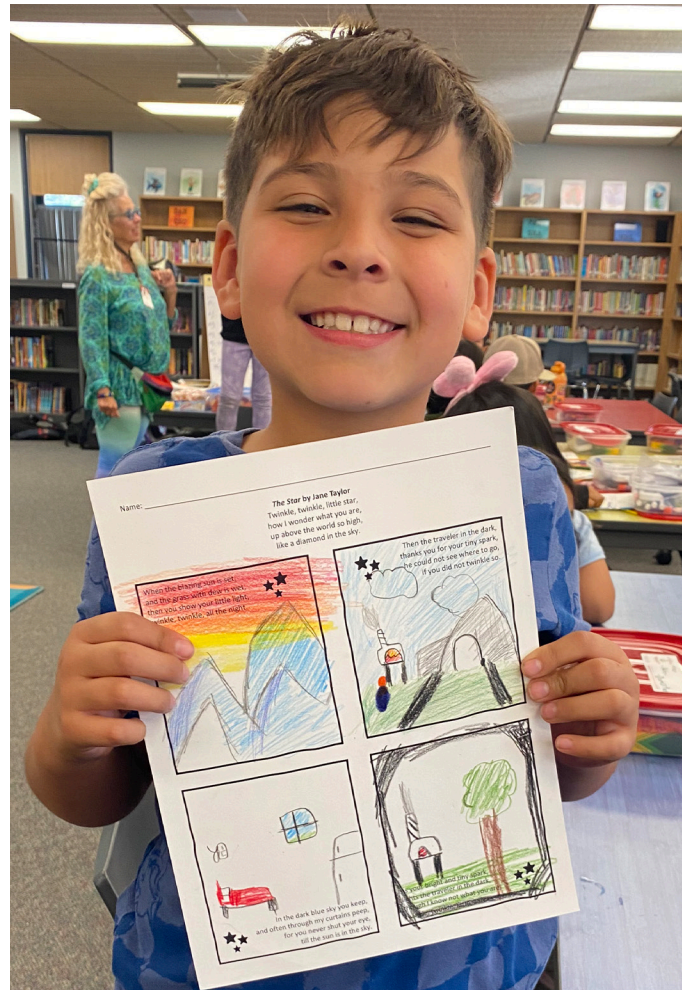
I AM by Melody

I AM a beautiful girl.
 I wonder what it feels like to be an adult.
 I hear rain outside.
 I see the ocean waves.
 I want a house cat.
 I AM a beautiful girl.
 I pretend to be in a show.
 I feel like I'm vibing.
 I touch my bed.
 I worry about kidnapers.
 I cry when I'm hurt.
 I AM a beautiful girl.
 I understand that I can't have everything.
 I say *Monkey*.
 I dream to have infinity dollars.
 I try to do my homework correctly.
 I hope to have a good night.
 I AM a beautiful girl.



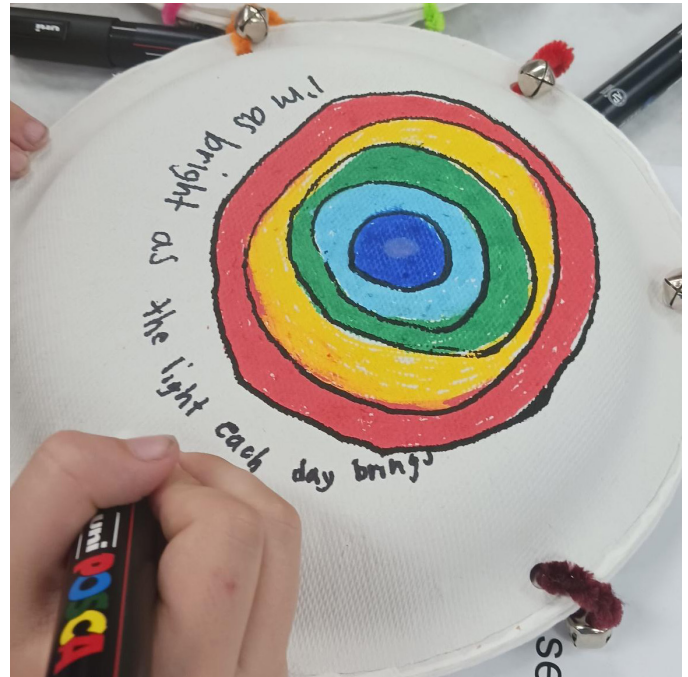
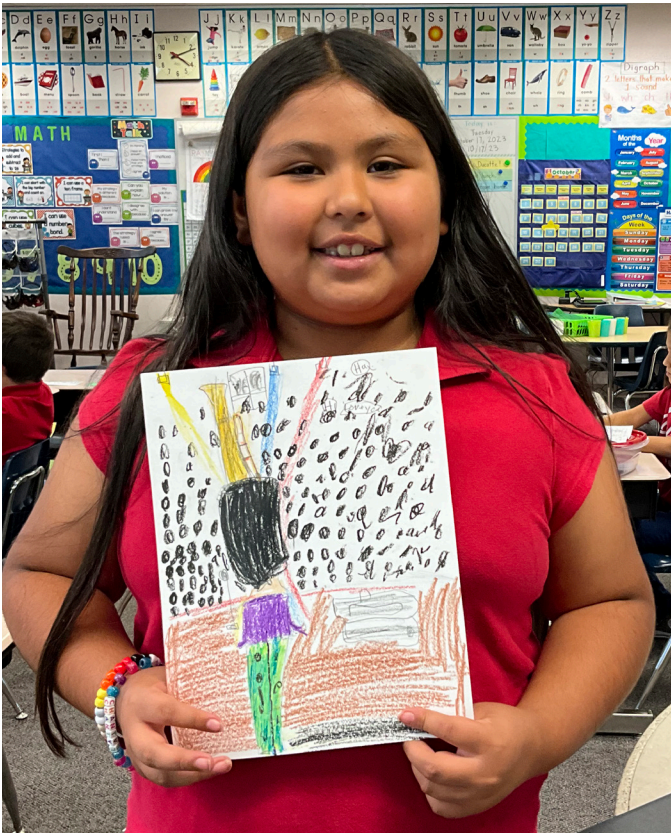


Name Poem by Leslie
 My real name is Leslie.
 Yesterday my name was fantastic.
 Today my name is wonderful.
 Tomorrow my name is caring.
 Secretly I know my name is kind.
 In my dream my name is cheerful.



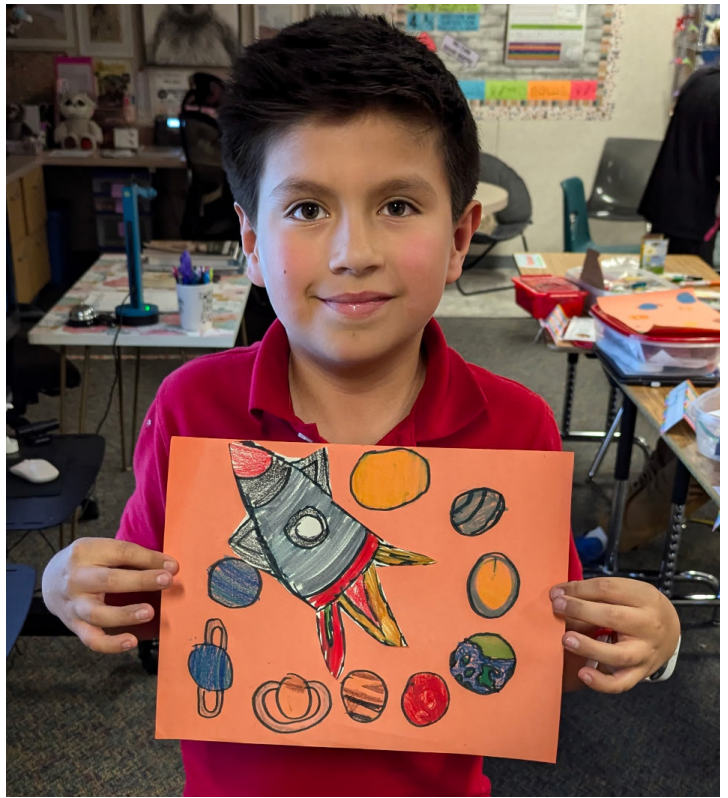
CREATIVE CLUB | MUSIC

Students develop an appreciation of music through listening, discussion, and by creating art in response to musical compositions.



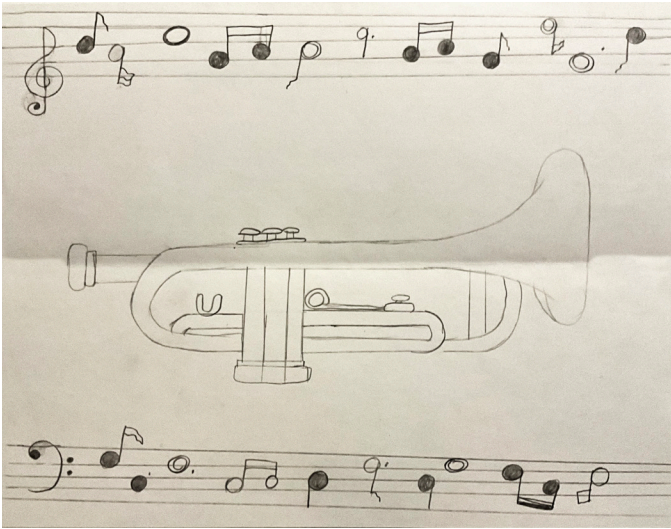
Boomwhackers are a unique and fun musical instrument that any student can pick up and learn to play in minutes. Boomwhackers also allow students to play together as a group, promoting teamwork and collaboration.



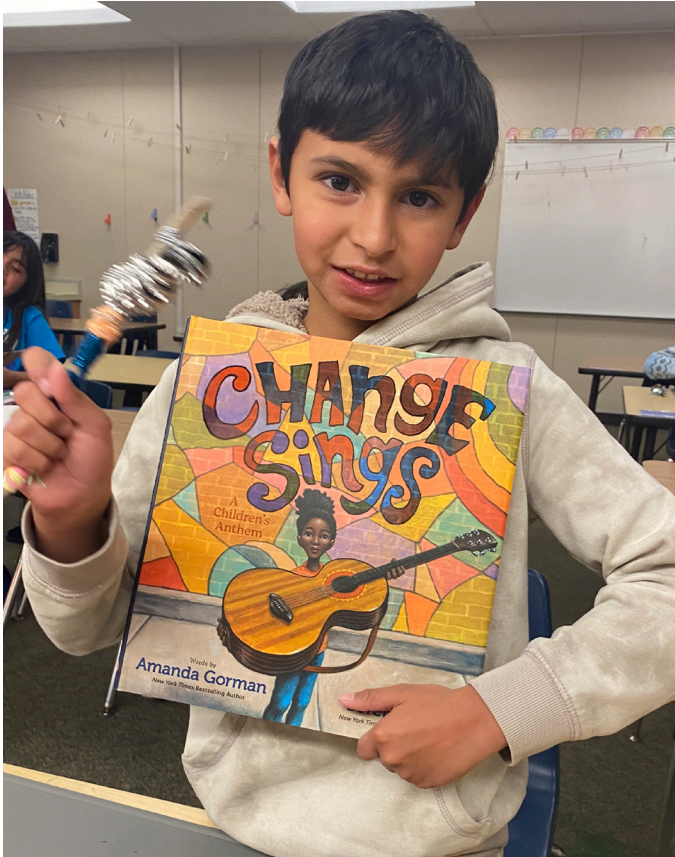


Music stimulates children's creativity while also helping them to relax and feel calm. Students learn about famous composers and musicians such as The Beatles, Ludwig van Beethoven, Gustav Holst, and Franz Schubert. They create works of art that have been inspired by the music that they listen to.



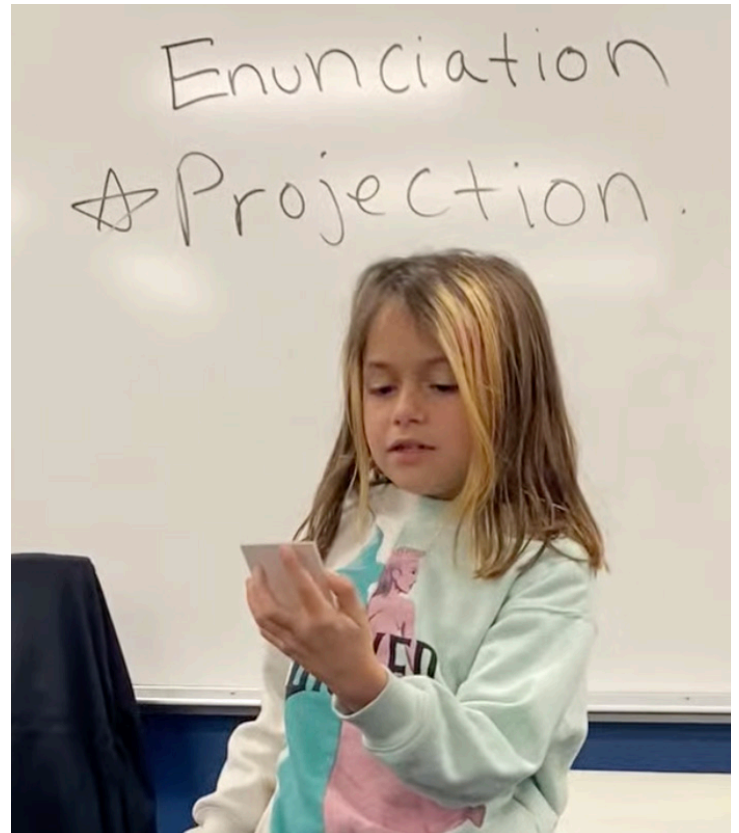


Students in the Creative Club have the opportunity to create musical instruments, such as tambourines, drums, and monochord boxes, and then play them. They use these to explore beat, rhythm, and tempo.



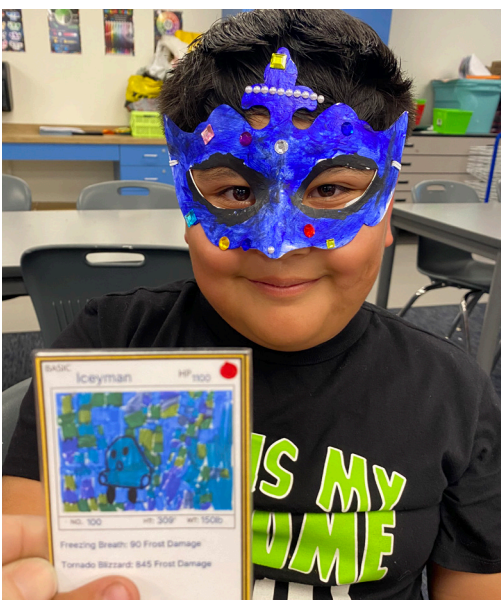
“My favorite project was Change Sings and the tambourine because it was fun to make a musical instrument by hand.”

– Angel, Grade 3



“Acting is behaving truthfully under imaginary circumstances.”

– Sanford Meisner

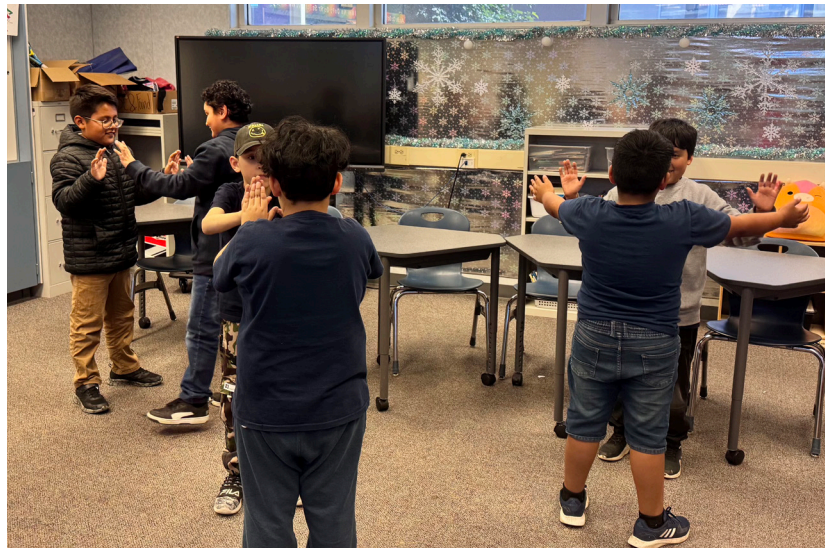


CREATIVE CLUB | THEATRE

Students learn to express themselves through theatre games that help them understand that collaboration and communication are important parts of acting.



In the *Human Knot*, students learn about cooperation and communication. Working as a group, they try to untangle their hands and form a circle.



In *Mirror, Mirror*, students practice observation and response. They face their partner and copy each other's movements exactly as they slowly move their arms and bodies.



In *The Given Box*, students work collaboratively to assign roles and create a short scene to act out based on five given elements.



In the *Spaghetti Game*, students learn how to commit to a role, using their body and voice to act out an emotion, only speaking the word "spaghetti."



“Acting is magical. Change your look and your attitude, and you can be anyone.”

– Alicia Witt



THEATRE TROUPE

The Theatre Troupe is a specialized program in which students learn the art of performance. Students have learned and performed plays and dances at their schools, for their families, and at the annual TFT Vision for the Future Award Gala.



“Sometimes you can have the smallest role in the smallest production and still have a big impact.”

– Neil Patrick Harris



HARRY S. TRUMAN ELEMENTARY

THE STEADFAST PLASTIC SOLDIER

*This adaptation of the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, **The Steadfast Tin Soldier**, tells the story of an odd assortment of toys that feel lost now that their owner has discovered video games.*



THE ISLAND

In this original play written by the Theatre Troupe students, a young girl sets out on an epic journey and meets unusual characters who teach her about trust, friendship, and having faith in herself.



RIO VISTA ELEMENTARY

THE TRUE STORY OF JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

In this hilarious adaptation of a classic story, Jack's mother sends him out to sell a toilet plunger so they can buy food. Jack meets and trades with favorite fairy-tale characters and even meets the Tooth Fairy and Santa Claus!



ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Alice is transported to Wonderland, and while trying to find her way home has a wondrous and bizarre adventure with strange and curious creatures. Her journey teaches her to question and speak up for herself.



TOOLS FOR TOMORROW | HISTORY

Tools For Tomorrow (TFT) was founded in 1999 by artist and author Rachel Druten with the vision that every elementary school child should have the opportunity to discover their unique talents through art, music, theatre, and creative writing in a nurturing environment that encourages kindness, responsibility, and success.

Rachel brought together a group of educational experts to launch the program in four schools in Desert Hot Springs, initially serving 200 students. Today, TFT reaches more than 1,200 students annually across the Palm Springs, Desert Sands, and Coachella Valley Unified School Districts.



Rachel Druten, Claire Smith

In 2013, Claire Smith founded the VISIONARIES, a group dedicated to raising awareness and supporting fundraising efforts. TFT expanded its programming in 2017 with the Theatre Troupe Program and, since 2022, has partnered with local school districts through the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program to bring its Creative Club to more schools.

Recent growth includes a summer program launched in 2023 at the Boys & Girls Club of Cathedral City, now a year-round program.

Over 27 years, TFT has served more than 24,000 children while continuing to expand curriculum, partnerships, and opportunities for young artists.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

– Nelson Mandela

TOOLS FOR TOMORROW | BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rachel Druten – Founder, Tools For Tomorrow
Claire Smith – Founder, VISIONARIES
Carolyn Izu Bergmann, DMD – President
Robin Nugent – Immediate Past President
Suzanne Fromkin – Vice President, Publicity
Judy Mathes – Secretary
Judith Antonio – Treasurer
Chris Metz – Strategic Planning
Terri Neuman – Parliamentarian
Noella Lansen – Program Oversight
Linda Rider – Membership Co-Chair

CJ Westrick-Bomar, Esq. – Membership Co-Chair
Mitchell Battersby – Member at Large
Louise Escoe – Member at Large
Walter Gendell – Member at Large
Diana Richards – Member at Large
Irma Smith – Member at Large
Joyce Bulifant – Advisor
Jean Carrus – Advisor
Janice Lyle, PhD – Advisor
James Reed – Chairman Emeritus

2022–2026 | TFT TEACHING ARTISTS

Tools For Tomorrow Teaching Artists work directly with students to deliver inspiring lessons that bring the arts to life.



Beth Anderson
Melanie Blue
Emmanuel Doublin
Zach Fleming-Boyles
Char Hecht
David Hirsch
Sande Hover

Jessica Macias
Janet Moore
Salvador Manzo Rodriguez
Pia Rose
Kieran Sala
Rose Salazar
Piper Scott

Giovanna Silva
Sharon Sommer
Kimberly Steinberg
Angel Venegas
Spencer Virtue
Sara Waters
Ravi Wilkie

TOOLS FOR TOMORROW | SCHOOL PARTNERS

Tools For Tomorrow has been fortunate to partner with the following schools. All Coachella Valley elementary schools are eligible.

Abraham Lincoln
Agua Caliente
Andrew Jackson
Bella Vista
Benjamin Franklin
Bubbling Wells
Cabot Yerxa
Cahuilla
Carrillo Ranch
Cathedral City
Coral Mountain Academy
Della S. Lindley
Dr. Reynaldo J. Carreon, Jr. Academy
George Washington Charter

Harry S. Truman
Herbert Hoover
James Madison
James Monroe
John F. Kennedy
Julius Corsini
Katherine Finchy
Landau
Martin Van Buren
Rancho Mirage
Richard Oliphant
Rio Vista
Ronald Reagan
Sunny Sands

Theodore Roosevelt
Two Bunch Palms
Vista del Monte



TOOLS FOR TOMORROW | COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Tools For Tomorrow collaborates with local organizations to bring the arts to our community.



Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Desert
Boys & Girls Club of Cathedral City
Boys & Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley
Boys & Girls Club of Palm Springs
Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert
Coachella Valley Unified School District
Desert Sands Unified School District
Desert X

Hanson House
Herb Alpert Gallery of Art
Idyllwild Summer Arts Academy
La Quinta Art Celebration
Olive Crest
Palm Springs Unified School District
Read With Me



To Reach, Teach and Inspire Children through the ARTS

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