



## SASI one year later: what it takes to bring the arts to every child

By **Elyse Cogan**, Associate Director of Programs

A lack of funding is not the only reason so few New York City public middle school students have access to a quality arts education. Key staff turnover; shortage of passionate, qualified and committed arts teachers; high stakes testing; scheduling challenges; and shifting mandates from the Department of Education play into this complex equation.

Although remarkable progress in restoring arts education has been made in the New York City public schools over the past 10 years, many schools and many students—perhaps hundreds of thousands—still do not have access to a quality arts education. Middle schools tend to be the hardest hit. The New York City Department of Education's Office of Arts and Special Projects has reported that middle schools are losing both arts teachers and art programs.

This leaves schools with no licensed arts specialists and principals anxious about test scores, leaving little time to learn about the arts and recognize the positive role it can play in student achievement and other alternative learning. Research indicates that



A student at MS 223 shows off her work

participation in the arts can positively impact a child's success in school. The arts have been shown to foster literacy and math skills, as well as *Continued on page 4 >*

## arts education as opportunity: an interview with deputy chancellor **Dr. Marcia Lyles**

By **Kira Raffel**, Director of Public Engagement

New York City Schools Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning **Dr. Marcia Lyles** has risen through the ranks of the New York City Department of Education to become the chief official in charge of curriculum and teaching policies. A life-long New Yorker, Dr. Lyles is one of the few high-ranking DOE officials to have gone through the public school system both as a student and educator. She has lived or worked in every borough and has been a teacher, assistant principal, program administrator, and district and regional superintendent. On January 9, 2008, I visited the NYC DOE headquarters at the Tweed Courthouse in downtown

Manhattan for a precious few minutes with this busy new deputy chancellor to discuss the state, role, and future of arts education in our schools.

### THE VISIT TO TWEED

As the former education policy analyst for Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, walking in to the central New York City Department of Education office otherwise known as Tweed was something I had done many times before for Panel for Educational Policy or legislative meetings. In those instances I had been ushered in and out of the assigned meeting room with little notice of the day-to-day goings-on at Tweed. But as I entered the *Continued on page 6 >*



## A MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR JILL BRAUFMAN

Dear Friends of Arts Education,

As we continue our work as a leading advocate for quality arts education in our city's public schools, The Center for Arts Education is seeing graduates of its programs become exemplars and supporters of its goals.

Inspired by their life-changing experiences in **CAE's Career Development Program**, its graduates are becoming the next generation of activists. In addition to their work on the CDP Alumni Council, many have become strong advocates for arts in schools within the arts and education communities.

The program's school and workplace mentors have emerged as some of our strongest partners to date. They are reaching beyond the program to new areas of youth development in the creative industries, and are utilizing the best practices they've learned through CDP's extensive programs for the professional development of educators.

CAE is also reaching beyond its traditional borders with the **School Arts Support Initiative**, an exciting experiment helping schools with little or no arts learning become not only arts rich, but models for other schools. We have also been documenting the ways in which our popular **Parents As Arts Partners programs** have taken on lives of their own and become integral parts of school cultures.

You can read about all of these facets of our development in this issue of the newsletter. And there is still more ahead. In the coming school year, CAE will introduce **new versions of its popular Parent Guides** for older students, and it will continue to develop new relationships with decision makers and other stakeholders who can help CAE advance its agenda.

While the environment for arts education is shifting daily, CAE is finding ways to ensure that, someday soon, **every New York City public school student will receive a well-rounded education that includes the arts.**

We look forward to your continued support and interest in our progress.

Best,

—Jill

## did you know?

What do Tony Bennett, Heather Graham and Ed Koch have in common? They are all featured in the CAE Celebrity Yearbook online! Visit [www.cae-nyc.org](http://www.cae-nyc.org).

# from intern to mentor: a closer look at CDP alumnus **Antonio Thompson**

By **Clea Conner**, Marketing Associate

In November 2007, the Career Development Program (CDP) launched the first-ever Alumni Council dedicated to fostering and strengthening connections between CDP graduates and current interns. The council is already reconnecting graduates from previous classes with new opportunities. Alumni **Antonio Thompson** is one of CDP's most active members, and he has a lot in store for CDP.

A graduate of CDP's inaugural class of 2000 and one of the founding members of the CDP Alumni Council, Thompson began his career with a passion for music performance. At only 25 years old, Thompson is working as an educational grant writer for Teachers College Innovations at Teachers College, Columbia University; has already earned a BFA in music performance and an MA in performing arts administration; and is working on his EdD in music education. He is also deputy director of the Brooklyn Music and Arts Program (home of the popular Brooklyn Steppers Marching Band), sits on the board of directors for an up-and-coming nonprofit organization, teaches a high school marching band at Walt Whitman High School, and freelances with trumpet gigs throughout New York City.

## **THOMPSON'S JOURNEY THROUGH CDP**

The internship Thompson landed through CDP was unlike anything he ever expected. After completing boot camp, Thompson was offered an internship at the prestigious Jazz at Lincoln Center in the marketing department. His new position introduced him to many famous performers and musicians, including jazz legend Wynton Marsalis. One serendipitous meeting in the marketing department led to a fortuitous practice session with Marsalis. It was an experience Thompson will never forget. "Working in the marketing department as a musician fused my passion for music with a professional skill set. Playing trumpet alongside Mr. Marsalis taught me the essence of work: it is both inspiring and frightening to fathom the time it takes to perfect any skill."

Thompson's internship experience provided insight into how things work behind the scenes. He learned to embrace challenges and accept mistakes. "One time I was making some follow-up phone calls for an event, and I accidentally left a message for the wrong person on a different number. It turned out to be actress Angela Bassett! It took several months for me to be able to laugh at my mistake, but I have accepted the fact that you can't control everything."

After graduating from the program in 2000, he didn't waste any time applying to college and seeking new opportunities. "CDP gave me the full picture of what it takes to become successful." After being accepted to New York University for



Antonio Thompson and NYC Councilman Robert Jackson

Music Performance, he began to conceptualize the different career paths he could take.

## **GIVING BACK TO CAE**

Throughout his many endeavors, Thompson has maintained a close working relationship with The Center for Arts Education. He is a beacon for alumni and current interns, has become a mentor for fellow graduates and has even captured the attention of CAE administrators. For this reason, he was nominated to present the first Center for Arts Education Arts Smart Award to New York City Councilman Robert Jackson.

In his presentation, he mentioned why he wants to give back to CDP. "The program has changed my life by connecting me with the people and places I didn't have access to as a high school student. It gave me the confidence to pursue a career in the arts, something most people discourage students from doing."

## **THOMPSON'S PLANS FOR THE CDP ALUMNI COUNCIL**

Thompson has been instrumental in founding the first CDP Alumni Council. "It is a way for me to give back and serve as a mentor for other highly motivated and enthusiastic emerging leaders. I hope we can break the barrier for future classes to enter the creative industries with fewer challenges and more connections."

Equipped with a creative mind for marketing and a passion for development, he already has a blueprint in mind for the Alumni Council. Thompson would like to create an alumni MySpace page to offer more *Continued on page 7 >*

# SASI one year later

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strengthen verbal and non-verbal communication, critical thinking, intercultural understandings, team building, and leadership skills.

## SASI: AN EXPERIMENT IN HOPE

In response to the schools seeking to establish or maintain high quality arts education programs, The Center for Arts Education (CAE) is collaborating with the New York Times Company Foundation (NYTF) and the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) on a bold pilot program called the School Arts Support Initiative (SASI). Each of the three partners brings a unique expertise to this collaboration and a history of successful partnerships with public schools. The new grant program provides three New York City public middle schools that currently offer little or no arts education \$45,000 each in funding, along with additional in-kind professional support services over two full academic years (2007–2009).

The overarching goal of this innovative grant is to help these underserved middle schools demonstrate how a comprehensive arts education program can be achieved. The three schools may also serve as a model for school improvement and student achievement. The three partners will work with these schools to enable them to design programs, engage appropriate arts partners and subsequently implement outstanding arts education opportunities for their students, in compliance with the New York City Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts and the New York State Learning Standard.

## ONGOING CHALLENGES FOR PRINCIPALS

Even with the implementation of the SASI grant, these grantees are facing issues unique to their schools in accomplishing the goal of quality arts education programming. Principal Patricia King, who took over MS 267 K in 2006, a school that had no arts programming, has focused on raising test scores with both scheduling and staffing issues as obstacles. For this first year of the SASI grant MS 267 K has implemented sixth grade drama classes and an after school drama club taught by an English Language Arts teacher who has been encouraged by this grant to become a licensed theater teacher.

In March they will begin a visual arts residency. “The challenges have been budgetary and personnel constraints,” says Principal King. “It’s all about starting from scratch. I understand how important it is to do things incrementally. It’s best, with all that is required, to start small and then grow.”

Founding Principal Ramon Gonzalez of MS 223 X has had more time to focus on raising test scores and he has done just that. With student’s math and literacy scores safely climbing, he can now put his full energies into thinking

about arts. “I didn’t have a vision for the arts; it was just plug them in,” said Gonzalez. “The arts weren’t taught sequentially to develop skills; it was just art for arts sake. But the challenge was making the time to plan. You still need funding to do the planning but without the time to plan we didn’t have a vision of where we were going. Also, we were inundated with getting kids to develop academic skills in terms of math and literacy. We are now at a more comfortable place where we are not worried about whether a kid is going to pass a test, so we can focus on embellishing the experience of our kids.” To this end, MS 223 X is holding its second arts retreat to allow comfortable space for teacher planning time and in its pilot year of SASI has begun integrating four arts forms—drama, dance, digital music, and comic book writing—into the sixth grade curriculum.

Many of these challenges are also faced by Principal Emmanuel Lubin of JHS 231 Q who, because of budget constraints when he first came to the school in 2006, had to scale down the school’s arts programming. He feels it’s important for the staff to have onsite professional development to begin understanding how to integrate the arts into the core subject areas.

All three schools are facing real, common problems in the system and while funding helps, it will not be a quick fix. The grantees also participate in planning sessions with SASI coaches that will help to develop tools and strategies in different aspects of arts education programming such as, but not limited to, establishing program goals, partnering with arts organizations, refining budgets, and arts evaluation and assessment. Three times a year there are cross-site gatherings of the participating schools bringing opportunities for grantees to come together and share their work. And there

Principal Ramon Gonzales



are visits to exemplary schools that have successful arts education programming to participate in peer-to-peer exchange.

### STEPS TOWARD SYSTEMIC CHANGE

One of the most necessary tools to sustain these programs takes time to develop—learning how to become “educated consumers” of arts services. To partner with arts organizations and to develop lasting relationships is vital for these partnerships to flourish and grow. Principal Gonzalez admits, “This is all new to us. We still need more experience trou-

bleshooting, looking for the perfect artist or the right arts specialist who will join in our vision and grow with us.”

SASI will not only work with these schools to implement quality arts education programming but is also examining the wider implications. To this end, the project has engaged Dr. Fran Schwartz, who will use protocols of quasi-experimental ethnographic research to study the three schools over the two-year grant period.

Dr. Carol Fineberg, arts and education consultant for the New York Times Company Foundation, likes to think of this project as the big “what if.” “What if an arts poor school could be transformed? In so many funded programs, the schools and arts partners struggle to maintain what they have. With Dr. Schwartz’s research we will have a real chance to look at the before and after effects on students and teachers, and examine the potential change of the school culture. We will see more clearly than usual how arts can play a significant role in student achievement and school improvement. This is a great contribution to those who need more proof of the value in the arts in schools.”

In trying to understand the needs of middle schools in developing quality arts education programming, SASI and its lessons learned will help to create an adaptable approach to share with other underserved public schools in New York City and beyond. **cae**



New arts classes in action

## THE PARTICIPATING SASI SCHOOLS:

### MS 267 K:

#### **Math, Science and Technology Institute**

Principal: Patricia King; Assistant Principal: Lynette White. Enrollment: 461; Staff: 46. MS 267 K is located in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, serves grades six through eight, and has a diverse population of students from Nigeria, Bangladesh, and Puerto Rico. MS 267 K also has five self-contained special education classes, including learning disabilities, emotional, and social issues.

### JHS 231 Q:

#### **Magnetech 2000/Tri-Community Junior High School**

Principal: Emmanuel Lubin; Assistant Principal: Paul Statile. Enrollment: 900; Staff: 55. Magnetech is located in Springfield Garden, Queens and currently serves students in grades seven and eight. The school community includes families of African-American and Afro-Caribbean descent of lower-middle and middle income.

### MS 223 X:

#### **The Laboratory School of Finance and Technology**

Principal: Ramon Gonzalez; Assistant Principal: Tyenka Harrington. Enrollment: 450; Staff: 40. MS 223 X is located in the South Bronx and has limited cultural and economic resources in the vicinity of the school. The school’s community includes Latino students and the African Diaspora. The majority of the students are from low-income families.



MS 223 Literacy Coach Rose Greco

# interview with **Dr. Marcia Lyles**

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Chancellor’s Office expecting to see a corner office marked off for Dr. Lyles, I was greeted by two familiar faces —Chief Family Engagement Officer Martine Guerrier and her Chief of Staff Melissa Harris. Though excited to see each other, we spoke in low tones so as not to disturb the dozens of people—including Dr. Lyles—sharing the bullpen. It was surprising to see NYC DOE staff of all levels sitting in the same open area with absolutely no sense of hierarchy.

Harris showed me to the spacious conference room where I would wait for Dr. Lyles. Countless meetings were already taking place around me—the openness was again astounding. At the table next to me was Chief Accountability Officer James Liebman speaking with a staffer. Guerrier was meeting with a parent just a few seats away. I couldn’t help but feel like I was back in the student lounge in my old high school, where multiple study groups buzzed about simultaneously.

I had worked with Dr. Lyles on a few occasions during my days with the Brooklyn Borough President’s office. We met to discuss progress in Region 8 and other issues. Dr. Lyles struck me then as a serious woman who had the heavy weight of a struggling region on her shoulders. The Dr. Lyles I found now seemed to have a new lightness and optimism about her and was genuinely happy to meet with me. What could have been interpreted as a rushed and distracted atmosphere was in fact welcoming. Unfazed by all the groups around us, Dr. Lyles and I spoke frankly about arts education in the context of equity, her chief concern.

## **DR. LYLES JOINS THE CHORUS**

Her dedication to equity stems from her own experience in the NYC public school system and the disparity in expectations from one school to the next. A smart and savvy student, Dr. Lyles was constantly skipping class at Benjamin Franklin High School in Harlem school while remaining a top student. It took one mistake for her aunt to find out about these absences and transfer her to Jamaica High School in Queens, over an hour away. Suddenly she was challenged in a new way because, as she recounts, high expectations were made clear. For example, students at Benjamin Franklin were only required to complete one

semester in the arts in order to graduate. That one semester was a patchwork of teasers—a few weeks of visual art, a few weeks of music, some theater thrown in, etc. At Jamaica High, however, young Marcia was surprised to learn her arts credits did not transfer. The cursory level of instruction at her previous school was not sufficient to fulfill Jamaica’s requirement for instruction in a single discipline taught thoroughly and sequentially. So the future deputy chancellor found herself in chorus, but refused to give me a sampling of her repertoire.

Having experienced such a disparate range of expectations between schools, Dr. Lyles does not believe these chasms still exist systemically. “We have a stronger sense of equity

and an understanding of the need for a well-rounded education, a complete education,” she said, adding that there is an expectation for all students to receive quality arts instruction and that the arts are not something that can be relegated to learning only at home. Her

reference to arts education as part of a well-rounded, complete education was especially encouraging: it is an imperative we at CAE base our work on!

## **THE IMPACT OF ARTS EDUCATION**

We also discussed the place of arts education in the day of a child who brings to school a host of external issues or is severely instructionally behind. The arts give students “more opportunities for success, satisfaction, and accomplishment,” she stated, reaffirming her stance on its essential place in education. “The arts aren’t fluffy. They engage students on a different level. Some principals understand that more than others.”

It became very clear that Dr. Lyles has used the arts to help her understand what motivates each child and therefore enable success. As a teaching student, in standing before the Board of Examiners to acquire her teaching license, she presented ideas for integrating arts into English classes through things like screenplay analysis and playwriting. The Board questioner assumed she had an arts background but

It became very clear that Dr. Lyles has used the arts to help her understand what motivates each child and therefore enable success.

she was quick to correct him and explain that, while she does not consider herself very artistic, she knows how to reach a child and give him or her reasons to come to school.

This instinct for creative ways of achieving success with students was fostered under her superintendent mentor, Dr. Arthur Greenberg, who currently serves on CAE's board. She recalls working with him in that way one recalls a favorite teacher. "He was an expert on human nature and leadership. He always managed to bring ideas out of me and I find that to be the most powerful way of teaching."

### IDENTIFYING ARTS OPPORTUNITIES

With Dr. Lyles's understanding of the importance of arts education, naturally I wondered what her plans were to enhance and support it. "I just got the applications for the National Endowment for the Humanities yesterday!" she enthused, referring to the new "Picturing America" initiative which uses art as a catalyst for the study of American History for K-12 curriculum. Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein had gotten wind of the program and sent it to Dr. Lyles for serious consideration and she is already at work applying on behalf of 1,400 schools. Dr. Lyles is also working with a recording industry organization to build links between some of the City's Career and Technical Education schools to expose students to some of the behind-the-scenes jobs, much like CAE's Career Development Program model. Dr. Lyles also sees opportunities for partnership with CAE, especially in identifying which schools and students are being served and which are not.

For Dr. Lyles, education is about equity, high expectations, and evidence in every school that students are engaged in thinking about their futures. She points to arts education as a key component in getting children to see things differently and thereby widening their opportunities for the future.

While our time together may have been short, I came away from our meeting feeling optimistic about the future. While CAE may not always perfectly align with some of the ideas coming from Tweed, we are all working to ensure the best possible education for New York City children and I am confident that there remains lots of promise for making the arts part of every child's education in the near future. **cae**

## a closer look at **Antonio Thompson**

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Antonio Thompson

networking opportunities, a newsletter to connect alumni across the country, a scholarship fund for CDP interns and alumni, and professional workshops with networking events. "I'm excited about the prospect of an alumni council since CDP has had a huge impact on so many lives, including mine. I see countless ways this can continue to help graduates thrive in NYC's creative industries." **cae**

### did you know:

You could become a worksite mentor for students like Antonio? Visit [www.cae-nyc.org](http://www.cae-nyc.org) for opportunities.

# the power of mentoring: up close with **Carol Sun**—artist, teacher and mentor

By **Dianna DiPalma**, Associate Program Director, Career Development

As a New York City public school graduate whose career path led her to a 20-plus year career in the design industry, then back to the classroom as an arts educator, **Carol Sun** embodies the full spectrum of arts education. Her accomplishments are a result of her extraordinary talent, tenacity, and hard work, as well as the encouragement and wisdom of several key players in her life whom she refers to as her mentors. I have had the pleasure of getting to know Sun this year through her participation in CAE's Career Development Program, which connects students and educators to the arts and arts-related industries of New York City through school-to-work activities. Recently, we sat down to discuss her own career development as an artist and our shared philosophy on the power of mentoring.

## IN THE BEGINNING . . .

"I think a person chooses someone to be their mentor or there is some implicit understanding in their relationship that is very respectful and very serious," Sun recalled. It was Sun's mother who served as her first mentor and role model. Growing up in the Bronx in the 1960s, Sun remembers observing her mother, one of the first women to attend Yale's graduate program in architecture, and how meticulous she was in her work. "She is an extraordinary draftsman and artist," recalls Sun. When Sun applied to the High School of Music and Art, known today as Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School, Sun's mother helped her to prepare her portfolio for admission. In regards to her mother's support and encouragement of Sun's artistic pursuits, Sun comments, "For her generation and her situation coming out of China, the idea that you would become an artist would seem very frivolous . . . to a great extent, I think she's always lived a certain part of her aspirations through me."

## AT COOPER UNION

After graduating from high school at the top of her class, Sun was accepted into the prestigious downtown art school, Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. As Sun notes, "Cooper Union was the most challenging educational experience that I ever had because the stakes are so high there and it's such a small community." It was a humbling period in Sun's life as she was forced to re-learn her artistic process and discard old habits. It was also during this period that Sun was very much on her own in both in an extremely competitive academic environment and at home as her parents were going through a divorce.

Cooper Union in the 1970s, as described by Sun, was predominantly male and very sexist. Of the female professors that Sun came across, few were interested in adopting any

younger women artists. The climate was one where everyone had to fend for themselves. Sun relates her commitment to mentoring as a result of this period of adversity.

Despite the circumstances, Sun was able to find a mentor in artist and professor Niki Logis, who was not Sun's teacher at the time but who provided Sun with the guidance and push that she was seeking. When describing Logis's qualities as a mentor, Sun states, "She was brutally honest and she listened to me when I was upset. She was there and would see me go through my growing pains and she'd tease me or say, 'sit down . . . stop complaining . . . do your work.' She was very caring." Logis mentored Sun through compassion but also by pushing her to try harder and achieve her potential. Sun would return to this approach later in life when she found herself in the role of mentor and teacher to other aspiring artists.

## ON TEACHING AND MENTORING

After working as a commercial designer for 20 years, Sun began her teaching career in museum education at the Whitney Museum. She then taught at post-secondary institutions, including Parsons School of Design and even her alma mater, Cooper Union. In 2003, Sun returned to her old stomping ground in the Bronx to teach at the New Visions-sponsored Bronx High School of Visual Arts. As Sun puts it, "Art was something I wanted to use to change people's lives in a positive way."

Sun's students have benefited greatly from her rich experiences in the arts industry. As one of her former students, Kendall, declared, "She knows everybody!" Her students also see her as a role model who came from the Bronx and was able to pursue a successful career as an artist.

Carol Sun



Having worked with such a range of creative personalities on a multitude of projects, Sun has developed useful skills in communication and project management, which come in handy in her classroom. She considers the art of teaching to exist in how she is able to engage her students and present the lessons. Sun also knows how to go after the resources she needs for her classroom. To date, Sun has applied for and received \$142,500 for her school, including a three-year grant from CAE. For these reasons, she serves as a mentor to her fellow educators.

For a select few of her students, Sun is also considered a mentor. As Sun reflects, “I think a teacher can become a

mentor, but it doesn’t mean that just because you’re someone’s teacher that you’re their mentor.”

I spoke with a few of Sun’s students who look to her as a mentor. Her student Matthew sums up his view of Sun as, “You know kung fu? She’s like your master. You look up to her. She’s there for you. She cares for you.” Another student, Damian, points out his role in the relationship by stating, “With all this help, you can’t just be lazy with it. If she gives you that first push, you gotta keep walking.” **cae**

## the art of teaching: learning life’s lessons through art

By **Kellie Burton**, *Publicity Associate*

The Hungerford School, a public school on Staten Island, serves a special needs population of approximately 250 students ages 12–21, many of whom are classified as medically fragile to severely and profoundly mentally challenged. This year, thanks to an ongoing partnership with New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and the dedication of educator **Gordon Sasaki**, Hungerford students learned important life lessons through participation in a series of art-viewing and art-making exercises.

Not many artists can say they have shown artwork at MoMA, but with the help of a Parents As Arts Partners (PAAP) grant from The Center for Arts Education, and the involvement of the parents, Hungerford students unveiled their final product, a 5’ x 15’ community mural, at MoMA’s Cullman Education and Research Building on November 9, 2007.

This month, read about Sasaki’s experience with the Hungerford students and his thoughts on the importance of integrating arts education into the lives of children of all abilities.

### **GORDON SASAKI ON ARTS EDUCATION**

Sasaki, a long-time educator at MoMA and faculty member at VSA Arts Institute, has spent nearly 20 years teaching the arts to students of all abilities, including those with special needs. A wheelchair user himself, Sasaki understands the important role the arts play in the development of observational, analytic and language skills, as well as self-esteem and confidence building.

“The arts are absolutely essential and fundamental to children with different learning abilities,” explained Sasaki. “Disability can interfere with the lives of individuals in radically different ways, impacting their ability to communicate with others, to retain information, and to naturally express



Student Afrim Kolar and Gordon Sasaki

themselves. These abilities are inherently supported and developed through the creative process.”

In both his own artwork and in his teaching approach, Sasaki incorporates multi-sensory and inclusive strategies to describe concepts of diversity, using art as a vehicle for transcendence and inspiration. *Continued on page 11* >





## dates to watch: cae summer 2008

### Careers in the Arts Summer Institute (CITASI)

August 11–13, 2008

CITASI is a three-day professional development summer institute for NYC public school educators, art teachers, school counselors, and administrators. Through CITASI, participants will be exposed to the many careers and career resources associated with the arts, allowing them to better assist students in exploring career options. Using role play, exercises, and group feedback, participants will gain the tools for effectively engaging their students in career exploration. CITASI encourages creative educators to expand the walls of the classroom and include worksites as outside centers of learning. To learn more, visit [www.cae-nyc.org](http://www.cae-nyc.org).

### CDP Culminating Event

June 9, 2008

Generously hosted by Con Edison, the event will mark the conclusion of another successful season of CDP, which places high school students in competitive internships in the creative industries. Participating work sites this term include Bloomingdale's, Brooklyn Philharmonic, GameLab, Rockwell Group, Silverstein Photography, Tribeca Film Festival and other top businesses around the City. For more information or to attend, contact us at 212-971-3300 x 350.

### did you know?

CAE has distributed 200,000 parent guides throughout New York City? This fall, look for grades 3-5 and 6-8! See page 15 for more info.

You can get ahead with our  
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Call 212-971-3300 x 312 today.

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(As of April 2008)

# the art of teaching

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“I teach from the position of personal experience, understanding how the arts are an integral component of not only what I do, but also who I am. Art has been and continues to be a vital tool for me to express and engage concerns I have regarding the awareness and understanding of disability and the commonalities we all share.”

## WORKING WITH THE HUNGERFORD STUDENTS

This particular PAAP project took bold steps to create unquestioned access to inclusive arts learning that can help strengthen artistic, academic, and social skills for these students as well as their families. Many of the students at Hungerford are autistic and many are physically unable to verbalize their feelings. While working with the students in the PAAP workshops, Sasaki found that they were able to focus and maintain their attention for longer periods of time, proving that the arts can be a vital mode of communication for them. “Through art, the students were free to experiment and express themselves without consequence or shame—and this is so important, especially for students with disabilities.”

## SASAKI AS A ROLE MODEL

According to Sasaki, a huge social barrier in overall disability awareness is the lack of visibility of people with disabilities in roles of authority and leadership. “If my using a wheelchair in any way helps to break down these barriers and assists me in communicating with my students, then I will gladly accept the role.”

In the eyes of one Hungerford parent, Sasaki has been hugely influential in the lives of these children. “He is a wonderful role model for our students,” said parent coordi-

nator Janet Manolakos, who participated in the project with her daughter, Theresa, a Hungerford alumna. “Some of our students are in wheelchairs, some are verbal, some are not. It’s important for them to see and hear from someone who is successful in their chosen career path,” she said.

## PARENTS ARE THE LINK

Sasaki explained that although he sees himself as having a certain influence, parents are the most critical link in breaking down this lack of ability to communicate with the students. “These parents are familiar with their child’s mannerisms and they understand the subtle modes of communication that include body language and other physical behavior that would otherwise be virtually impossible for a new teacher to decipher or understand until they were thoroughly familiar with the student.”

## ARTS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

“The impact the arts can have couldn’t be more visible than during these workshops and the time I spent with these families,” said Sasaki. “Understanding that core learning is only enhanced through the creative process and that the arts are essential toward raising a fully integrated, globally viable adult, is a huge step forward in securing arts learning for all children.” **cae**



Hungerford MoMA mural

# reflections of a first year teacher in district 75: how music is changing the autism spectrum

By **Rob Kudyba**, CAE Director of Technology

After becoming a New York City Teaching Fellow last year, Brooklyn-based percussionist **Mark Manczuk** attended a New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Citywide Teacher's Career Fair. At the fair, he met the principal and assistant principal of PS 370 in Coney Island, a District 75 middle school for children with disabilities. Right then and there he was put to the test with an on-the-spot interview. He passed and was asked to come in to do a sample lesson and get a feel for the school and student body. Immediately after presenting, he was offered a position as the school's special education music teacher for children with autism.

Before embarking on a public school teaching career, Manczuk taught private music lessons to children of all ages, including those with special needs. One of his students with autism presented him with a new kind of challenge: teaching without relying on verbal communication. "It was challenging, worthwhile and especially fulfilling. I had to think outside the box and get creative with teaching, exploring new angles for communication," says Manczuk. He didn't think twice about embracing the challenge of working with autistic students across the spectrum, from mild to severe cases.

Outside the classroom, Manczuk is currently developing an instructional DVD for beginning drums that has been picked up for international distribution. He continues to perform with various music projects, including Area 44 and The Cal Payne Project, which fuse different musical genres with modern rock. In addition to his graduate studies at PACE University, Manczuk studies percussion privately with Dom Famularo and Ralph Peterson and takes tabla lessons with Misha Masud. He always brings his experiences into the classroom because "what inspires a person translates into inspiration for others."

## **MUSIC MAKES THE DIFFERENCE**

At PS 370K, music is integral to the learning process for children with autism. Students are not only graded on their academic performance, but on their social and behavioral skills. Participation in class activities is important, and Manczuk has found that music enables students to learn how to take turns, how to wait for others, and how to listen to one another.

Manczuk assigns daily homework in every class, which sometimes has nothing to do with keeping a perfect beat. "Music enables these students to work together and see how they play an important role in the greater whole," says

Manczuk. "They learn that playing a song involves all of these different moving parts, and that the parts have to move together."

## **STRUCTURE. ROUTINE. REPEAT: A TYPICAL MUSIC CLASS AT PS 370**

Manczuk has found that teaching children with autism requires a solid foundation based upon expected routines. Students have to take their seat and wait for everyone else to sit down. Rules are reviewed every day to reinforce learning and ensure they become a part of the fabric of the classroom culture. Once a routine is established, a culture emerges in the classroom and a community amongst the students follows. "Next thing you know a student is nudging another one to go because they are trying to support them," he says.

For many of the non-verbal students, Manczuk uses the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), a form of augmentative and alternative communication that uses pictures instead of words to help children communicate, in combination with a portable digitized speech device such as TechTalk.

At the end of class, Manczuk usually shows students a video or music clip of a style they may have never heard. "Last week I showed them a video about Ella Fitzgerald, so the students got to hear the history of her music and the influence it has had on contemporary styles from pop to hip-hop."

## **LEARNING SOCIAL BEHAVIOR THROUGH THE ARTS**

Most children with autism have very little idea how to interact appropriately with their classmates. Manczuk starts every class by establishing one of the most important social skills: sharing. The class studies a new instrument every week, with which everyone gets a turn. If each student performs well with sharing, playing the instrument, listening and staying on task, then they are rewarded. Each student chooses their favorite instrument at the end of class and then plays whatever he or she wants on it—self-expression becomes a reward for good behavior. If a student does not share or stay on task, the opportunity for individual exploration is withheld until the class works together again.

## **AND THE REWARD GOES TO . . .**

Since September 2007, Manczuk has seen a huge improvement in many of his students. More students are willing to share during breakfast. They are more patient while waiting in line. Other teachers report students displaying more appropriate social behaviors, such as using a crosswalk instead of darting across the street. Students are

more aware of their surroundings and relate to them in a communicative manner. They ask for something instead of jumping up, running around, or shouting.

What is the most rewarding part of Manczuk's job?  
"Working with the students. It's all about them. When I walk through those doors, it's about my kids. It's about their best interests. I love to see the progress they make. I like to see their faces light up when they're coming into my classroom. I love to see them get excited when I introduce them to a new instrument. Those are the most worthwhile moments."

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ALTERNATE STATE ASSESSMENT**

Part of Manczuk's performance evaluation requirements involve the New York State Alternate State Assessment, a "datafolio-style" system of assessing progress in which students with severe cognitive disabilities demonstrate their performance toward fulfilling the required learning standards. To ensure his students meet all requirements, Manczuk keeps daily notes, takes photos and makes recordings to combine with direct observation. Working with other staff, he then compiles all findings into a portfolio, known as a "datafolio," which is submitted to the New York State Education Department for review.

### **PARENTS: THE KEY INGREDIENT**

Manczuk has found that parents have been the most helpful with providing him with insight into their child's strengths and weaknesses. The differentiation of each child's skills and abilities plays a key role when teaching students. Manczuk was quick to point out that there is still not enough parent involvement. "A few out of 50 is not enough. Parents are the key ingredient in a child's education. That means being there every day. If there are routines in

school, then those routines—or at least some of them—should go on at home."

What does Manczuk recommend for parents? "If students are bringing home assignments, parents need to be involved. Participate in parent-teacher conferences. Be available and ask questions instead of making assumptions."

As a teacher in his first year in the New York City public schools, Manczuk has witnessed both the opportunities and limitations of the system. "It's very easy to get caught up in what goes on every day, how a school is run, how the Department of Education does things, and how you're supposed to do things." Then there are state requirements and parental expectations. The amount of paperwork demanded by the New York City Department of Education is daunting as well. "It makes for a lot of changing hands and a lot of inefficiency. It affects the staff, occasionally at the expense of communication and collaboration."

For teachers, Manczuk advises to really get to know your students. "It is essential to understanding them, their situation and how you can best teach them. That puts you in a position to serve them to their best interests. One of my professors once said to me, 'There are some days you just have to close your doors and teach.'" Those are the days Manczuk takes the paperwork home instead of taking time out of the school day to work on it.

### **CAE EXPLORES ARTS AND AUTISM**

The Center for Arts Education launched a program in March 2008 at PS 37 in Staten Island to provide training for teaching artists that are working with students with autism. Through a series of seminars, teaching artists work with teachers, therapists, and CAE's experts to explore teaching and learning techniques for students with special needs.

Still in its pilot phase, the Teaching Artist Training Institute is bridging communication and arts education with the belief that students with autism learn better through the arts. As demonstrated by the progress Manczuk has made with his students, arts education is important to all students, and for students with autism it is an absolute necessity. It is not even about developing skills. Arts education provides an alternative method of communication and self-expression and enhances students' ability to learn. **cae**



Mark Manczuk





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The Center for Arts Education 225 West 34th Street, Suite 1112, New York, NY 10122

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