

ARTS EDUCATION OVERVIEW

COCA's **Arts in Education Newsletter** is sent monthly to over 4,400 arts and non-arts educators, administrators, and others interested in arts education. It focuses on topics such as funding opportunities for teachers and schools, curriculum development, new resources and products, meeting and event reminders, and news at the local, state and national levels. COCA staff does research and compiles opportunities from dozens of sources every month. COCA also offers low-cost advertising in this newsletter for businesses wishing to reach educators.

COCA developed, initiated, and promotes the annual **Arts Education Grant Program** for local arts teachers. The grant is privately funded, and the goal is to remove financial barriers for arts educators to access resources and arts experiences for their students, materials and equipment for their classrooms, and arts specific professional development opportunities for their own continuing education.

COCA for the Classroom is a comprehensive directory that lists nearly 100 supplemental arts programs available to teachers and students in Tallahassee, Leon County, and the surrounding areas. This web-based directory allows teachers to easily enhance their regular classroom programming through cultural partnerships in the region. Listings are sortable by grade level, type of program (field trip, in-class workshop, performance, residency, etc.) category (visual arts, music, dance, theater, etc.), and cost (if any). Directory listings also include how programs address state standards and other testing requirements.

COCA for Kids is a comprehensive listing of hundreds of arts experiences that occur outside of the school day. This guide features more than 100 providers and is used by parents, grandparents, and caregivers who are looking for after school and weekend classes, individual lessons, camps, birthday parties, and other activities appropriate for children who are interested in art and culture.

COCA offers **one-to-one and group consulting** in all aspects of arts education. COCA staff meets individually with teachers, individual artists or organizations developing school programming, and others to advise on curriculum planning, lesson plan development, funding opportunities, grant writing, artist residencies, student art exhibits and performance opportunities, and contacts that may be able to offer further assistance. COCA assists teachers with logistics and hands-on work of special events/exhibits/programs.

COCA's **Help for Educators** webpage is updated regularly and contains information of interest to arts educators and arts advocates including links to local, state and national arts education resources, information about outreach opportunities, student exhibition information, a listing of 25 recurring funding opportunities, and much more.

For more than 20 years, COCA has produced the annual **Winter Festival Youth Art Exhibition** for K-12 grade students to display their artwork. Typically, the exhibit features 85-100 pieces of elementary, middle, and high school art submitted by art teachers. The entries represent 40-45 different area public, private and home schools. Through this exhibition, teachers and students gain insight and inspiration by viewing artworks from other schools, often coming away with topics for discussion which can be used to promote cross curricular studies as well as new ideas for the art classroom.

In 2014, COCA partnered with Raa Middle School to develop a **Mentoring in the Arts Program**. Local visual artists, musicians, dancers, and theater professionals are sought to provide mentoring to middle school arts students in Raa's Magnet Program. This program helps students develop communication and social skills, positive relationships with adults, as well as a life-long love of the arts. Through wide promotion efforts, COCA recruits volunteers for this program and continues to develop content and refine logistical details with Raa's mentor/magnet coordinator. COCA's former Education Manager was the first official arts mentor in this program. (Paused due to Covid-19, looking into starting the program back up)

During the school year, the Education Manager **meets monthly** with arts teachers of various disciplines to assess needs, listen to challenges, and suggest solutions by facilitating relationships and serving as a liaison with schools, public agencies, private organizations, and community groups regarding cultural initiatives, arts and heritage programs and events.

COCA provides cultural content in the form of **monthly arts education articles** to the *Tallahassee Democrat*. These articles are published in the School and Family section.

COCA has been given administrative access to the **Leon County Schools website** and we publish art in education content there regularly.

Periodically, COCA documents arts education programming in action through our **Behind the Scenes** series on Facebook and Instagram. These posts feature photographs of students in the process of learning and making art in the classroom, backstage, during an artist's workshop, or through collaborative efforts with local cultural organizations. In addition, COCA has started the **Artful Education social media series** that documents similar content with a focus on finished work.

COCA welcomes **interns** from FAMU, FSU, and TCC who are interested in learning more about working in the arts. Interns are graduate students, undergraduates, and occasionally high school students. COCA interns are given meaningful work and develop skills by contributing to actual programming and projects, learning through hands on and real world situations.

COCA regularly hosts continuing education through **Professional Development Workshops** on a wide range of topics of interest to artists and arts organizations. Workshops are often free or very low-cost to COCA members, and modestly priced to the general public. Previous workshop topics have included Conflict Resolution, Cultural Tourism, Fundraising, Intellectual Property for Artists, the Business of Visual and Performing Arts, Liability Insurance for Cultural Events, and many others.

The Education Manager is often asked to represent COCA by serving in an **advisory capacity** on committees of community organizations and by participating in local arts education events as a juror, judge, grant panelist, guest lecturer, and workshop leader.