



Inner-City Arts

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Media Contacts: Joanna Brody
310 582-0085
Joanna@brody-pr.com

Jeff Hare
jeff.hare@dreamworks.com
(818) 695-6055

**DREAMWORKS ANIMATION LAUNCHES ANIMATION ACADEMY
AT INNER-CITY ARTS**

***\$500,000 Grant by The DreamWorks Animation Charitable Foundation Allows
Skid Row Artistic Haven to Expand Animation Education Program***

LOS ANGELES—In a town where budding filmmakers would do anything to get their reel into the right hands at a major movie studio, the upcoming screening of some short animated films for executives from DreamWorks Animation SKG, the studio that made the *Shrek* movies and the soon-to-be-released *King Fu Panda*, could be the stuff that dreams are made of.

But whether the filmmakers, fourth-grade students at the Title I El Sereno Elementary School, eventually see their name in credits on a DreamWorks movie or not, the visit by DreamWorks Animation SKG CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg to a special place on Skid Row on May 28 has already made a lot of dreams come true.

The place, a non-profit arts education center called Inner-City Arts, has been a one-acre oasis for thousands of students from nearby LAUSD public schools, who arrive weekly in buses to get free classes in visual and performing arts, including a fourteen-week animation class that taught the fourth-graders from El Sereno how to create their own short animated films.

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DreamWorks Animation Academy at Inner-City Arts, 2 – 2 - 2

And now, thanks to a \$500,000 grant from the DreamWorks Animation Charitable Foundation, the organization will be able to expand the animation program into the newly named DreamWorks Animation Academy at Inner-City Arts, allowing for more state-of-the-art equipment, additional staff, visiting artists, and an expanded Saturday program for high schoolers.

“Animation is one of the few art forms our students encounter in their everyday lives, so teaching them how to do it is empowering and helps them develop skills like collaboration, problem-solving and sequential thinking,” said Cynthia Harnisch, CEO of Inner-City Arts. “We are all thrilled at what the DreamWorks Animation Academy at Inner-City Arts will be able to do for our students.”

Animation students, whether high school students on Saturdays or younger students in grades 2-6 during the school day, learn the fundamentals of basic animation, Zoetropes, Flipbooks, hand and puppet animation, drawing on film and optical printing. Each class creates a collaborative animated film, which is screened at culminating festivals held at several venues including Inner-City Arts, REDCAT Theater at Disney Hall, with community partner California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia, and the students’ own schools.

The DreamWorks Animation Academy at Inner-City Arts is part of DreamWorks Animation’s commitment to providing arts education to the children of Los Angeles. “We want these kids to know how animation works, but, most importantly we want to motivate and inspire them to stay focused in school,” said Katzenberg.

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Inner-City Arts, founded in 1989 by community leaders after a round of severe arts education cuts in public schools, began offering an animation workshop to high school students and recent high school graduates on Saturdays, in partnership with CalArts, which provided students from its animation program as instructors. Ruben Esqueda, who attended the workshop, fell in love with the art form and continued studying it as a CalArts student. Today Esqueda is one of the animation instructors at Inner-City Arts and helped expand and develop the program to reach students in grades 2-6.

“Our statistics show that more than 95 percent of our high school animation students go on to attend college after graduating,” Harnisch said. “And 30 percent of the students remain in our program, even after graduation.”

This, along with recent UCLA study results linking arts education to improved scores on standardized tests, are music to the ears of city leaders like Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who is attending the May 28th event. For former animation students like Richard Escalante, a graduate of Roosevelt High School and recent graduate of CalArts; and Lupe Perez, who is now a student at Glendale Community College, Inner-City Arts provided a place to explore talents and create a roadmap for a promising future, Harnisch said.

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About Inner-City Arts

Inner-City Arts is a learning oasis in the heart of Skid Row where professional artists teach students in a real studio environment. Founded in 1989, Inner-City Arts works in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District to bring elementary and middle school students to its campus during the school day for instruction in the visual and performing arts. High school students participate in after-school and Saturday programs. Currently, Inner-City Arts serves 8,000 of the city's most at-risk students each year at no cost to the students. When the campus expansion is complete in October 2008, the program capacity will double. For more information, visit www.inner-cityarts.org.

About DreamWorks Animation SKG

DreamWorks Animation is principally devoted to developing and producing computer generated, or CG, animated feature films. With world-class creative talent, a strong and experienced management team and advanced CG filmmaking technology and techniques, DreamWorks Animation makes high quality CG animated films meant for a broad movie-going audience. The Company has theatrically released a total of fifteen animated feature films, including *Shrek*, *Shrek 2*, *Shark Tale*, *Madagascar*, *Over the Hedge*, *Shrek the Third* and *Bee Movie*. DreamWorks Animation's 2008 feature film releases include *Kung Fu Panda*, in theaters on June 6 and *Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa*, in theaters on November 7. *Monsters vs. Aliens*, the Company's first film produced in Ultimate 3D technology, is slated for a domestic release date of March 27, 2009.

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