

Student Programs

This is one of the most valuable programs these children will ever experience.

–Tish Birk, Fourth Grade Teacher, Norwood Elementary School

Inner-City Arts programs provide critical support for children most at risk of academic failure: those with limited English language proficiency living in high-poverty areas.

- Our student-centered, literacy-based, research-driven core curriculum provides hands-on instruction in the visual and performing arts in a real studio environment.
- Studio classes at all grade levels emphasize language development and analytical, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, measurably improving overall academic performance.
- Instructional day, intersession, after school and weekend classes are taught by teaching artists committed to meeting the needs of every child through experiential learning.

All Inner-City Arts classes are created with sequential, grade appropriate lessons, and meet State of California Content Standards in the Visual and Performing Arts.

Through our school and community partners, students come to Inner-City Arts during the school day, during their intersession weeks, after school and on weekends

- Any school in the Los Angeles Unified School District is eligible to participate in our programs; principals are regularly invited to our campus to learn about our core curriculum and new developments in programming. Currently 55 schools bring their students to Inner-City Arts.
- As a member of the Los Angeles Unified School District Arts Community Partnership Network (ACPN), Inner-City Arts works with individual schools to support classroom goals for students identified as English Learners. Services to ACPN schools include bringing students to our campus for arts instruction, teacher training and workshops for parents.

- Programming dedicated to the needs of middle school students in grades 6-8, and those transitioning to middle school, is provided through targeted partnerships with school districts, principals and teachers.
- Social service providers bring students to Inner-City Arts for after-school learning.
- A two-semester animation class offers high school students the opportunity to work with instructors from the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts)

Our Core Curriculum: Instructional Day Programs

Elementary and middle school students are brought to our campus during the instructional school day for studio classes in Visual Arts, Dance, Drama, Music, Ceramics and Animation. Twice a week, for seven-week sessions, students and their classroom teachers work with an Inner-City Arts teaching artist, focusing on a specific area of the performing or visual arts. Culminating events, including performances and exhibitions, mark the end of each session and provide an opportunity for students to share their accomplishments with parents, families and each other.

Research and observation, both formal and informal, are integral to the development of Inner-City Arts programming. In partnership with evaluators from UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and Indiana University, assessment of programs is ongoing.

Instructional day programs have been supported, in part, by grants from the U.S. Department of Education since 1992. Our programs are also funded by the Los Angeles Unified School District, the State of California and foundation grants.

Visual Arts

Every student is encouraged to discover his or her own creative expression in a safe and supportive studio environment. Emphasis is placed on the elements and principles of visual arts, including line, shape, color, texture, space, rhythm, balance, contrast and focus. Children have the opportunity to paint, draw and sculpt. They create portraits, still lifes and abstract compositions. Art critiques that emphasize observation and interpretation build general language skills, and help students develop a vocabulary for the visual arts and a non-judgmental way to discuss their work with their peers.

Dance

Exploring their world through movement, children discover the joy of self-expression individually and in groups. Students learn how to communicate through movement, by exploring, improvising, and experimenting. Incorporating all the elements of dance – space, time, energy, movement and shape – children create dances from their imaginations, from traditional forms and as a vehicle for expressing their own stories. By identifying and describing their own movement choices and those of their peers, they are empowered to connect their kinesthetic, visual and verbal worlds.

Drama

Children become aware of their five senses as well as the use of their bodies and imaginations as a form of expression in drama classes. Through storytelling and improvisational games they learn to be brave, daring and expressive. Through improvisation, students are introduced to concepts of drama including character creation, scene creation, pantomime, blocking, frozen images and emotions. Students work independently, in small groups and as a large group to develop various levels of community and ensemble. Students are encouraged to use their creative voices and critical-thinking skills to create original scene work.

Music

Offering instrumental and vocal instruction, our music program provides learning and performance opportunities that foster the student's personal and artistic development through activities designed for discovery, learning, skill mastery, sharing, teamwork, and growth. Through vocal instruction, students experience the brilliance of the music, and are provided with the opportunity to develop their ear. Through singing and playing percussion instruments, students learn about singing with appropriate tone, quality, posture, diction and breathing, and connect with different cultures through song. Through drumming, students learn knowledge of basic hand movements to be able to play any type of drum. In group work, students gain an understanding of the fundamentals of rhythm, learn rhythms from around the world and the connections of these rhythms to the history and geography of the countries from which they emanate.

The World Music Ensemble and the Inner-City Arts Chorus both allow students to experience the magic of performance.

Ceramics

In ceramics classes students gain an understanding of clay as an expressive medium while learning to express themselves creatively and use their imaginations. Students are engaged in a variety of projects, including slab structures, basic pinch and coil pots, and fantastical environments developed through imagination. Line, shape, color, space, texture, rhythm, balance and pattern are all introduced in this medium. Both individual expression and collaborative learning are stressed in our ceramics program. Through cooperative projects, students connect to themselves and each other, and gain the sense that they can try anything and feel successful.

DreamWorks Animation Academy at Inner-City Arts

Our innovative animation program, created in collaboration with the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) Community Arts Partnership (CAP) program, is now the DreamWorks Animation Academy at Inner-City Arts, in recognition of a generous grant from the DreamWorks Foundation.

A particularly compelling subject area for our students, and one of the art forms they encounter in their everyday lives, yet one in which they rarely receive instruction, animation has a unique ability to help children develop a skill set of significant value in today's world, including collaboration, problem-solving and sequential thinking. Multi-disciplinary in approach, the classes introduce basic animation techniques through the use of Language Arts as a way to stimulate creative thinking to develop ideas for projects in this art form. Students learn the fundamentals of basic animation, zoetropes, flipbooks, hand and puppet animation, drawing on film and optical printing. Each class creates an individual and a collaborative animated film, which is screened at culminating events held at various venues including Inner-City Arts, CalArts' REDCAT Theater and the students' own schools.

After-School Programs

Through collaboration with several community organizations, including Para los Niños, S.A.Y. Yes! Center for Youth Development, and Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles, Inner-City Arts provides after-school arts programming for 600 elementary and middle school students each year including classes and workshops, community art exhibitions, student performances and community gatherings that involve participants from varied school and social service community programs. In 2001, our after-school program was recognized with the Coming Up Taller Award, sponsored by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Early Arts Learning Initiative (EARLI Arts)

Established in 2004, EARLI Arts provides sequential, standards-aligned arts education for kindergarten-third grade students with limited English proficiency, who attend some of the Los Angeles Unified School District's poorest-performing schools. Developed for young students who may be challenged in traditional school settings, the EARLI initiative engages students in learning through the arts. In the EARLI program, students are creative thinkers and doers, constantly challenged to use their minds in a variety of ways. Their ideas, perceptions and thoughts are integrated into the arts curriculum. The arts-integrated learning environment offers students the freedom to explore creative experiences that develop all of a child's ways of knowing. Foundation funding for EARLI Arts includes on-going assessment, the results of which are used to strengthen and expand programming.

Arts in the Middle (AIM)

Arts in the Middle (AIM), a literacy-based program emphasizing creativity and engaged learning for students with very low levels of English language proficiency during the critical middle school years, was developed by Inner-City Arts staff in collaboration with the Los Angeles Unified School District and local District 4. Piloted with Harrison Middle School in 2002, the program currently serves students from Berendo Middle School, supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Targeting sixth-eighth graders who are failing to meet minimum standards for literacy, small groups of highly motivated students come to Inner-City Arts for intensive instruction during their intersession weeks, when they are not otherwise in school. Working in small groups with their language arts teacher and specially trained teaching artists, students explore drama, visual arts and language arts during their weeks at Inner-City Arts, strengthening their English language skills.

The AIM program includes a "pre-experience" component supporting the needs of fourth and fifth graders who have not yet met English-literacy standards required for enrollment in mainstream classes. An instructional day program designed as an essential component of the students' school-based curriculum, AIM classes for students preparing to transition to middle school are shaped to the needs of each group in support of their general academic goals.

On-going evaluations confirm the success of the AIM program as an effective intervention at a critical stage of student development. Workbooks and other materials developed at Inner-City Arts will make the core elements of this program

available to educators throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District and at schools around the country.

High School Program

In collaboration with CalArts' Community Arts Partnership (CAP), Inner-City Arts offers in-depth, hands-on instruction in animation for high school students. For this two-semester course, classes meet on Saturdays at Inner-City Arts and are taught by CalArts students and graduates, providing a critical bridge to higher education for our students who, if they continue on to college, are overwhelmingly the first in their family to do so—something that can alter an entire family's expectation of itself. Through animation, students are introduced to several concepts of particular value today, including sequential thinking and the collaborative nature of studio culture with its emphasis on creating, developing and realizing an idea. In this program, students learn basic animation, zoetropes, flip books, hand animation, computer animation, and drawing on film. Students create their own animated shorts, and participate in a 24-hour animation marathon weekend in which they produce both individual and collaborative films. Student work is screened in culminating festivals at Inner-City Arts, CalArts' REDCAT theater and other venues. All students receive DVDs of their work.