

Arts Council and partners ensure arts benefit everyone in South County

The Arts Council for Monterey County has been dedicated to improving the quality of life for all residents in the region through the arts since 1982. In the past few years, thanks to a growing number of partners throughout the region and beyond, their grants, programs and partnerships have brought the benefits of the arts to a growing number of children and families throughout South County.

Thanks to a new partnership with the Monterey Bay Aquarium and funding from the Harden Foundation, the Arts Council has brought professional artists Heidi McGurrin and Kittie Yates to Gonzales Unified School District for a unique residency program. Their students' work will be included in a special multimedia exhibition designed by Juan-Carlos Gonzales at the Dia Del Nino and Fiesta Del Mar festivals at the Aquarium later this year.

In early March, thanks to funding from the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, the Arts Council presented grant funds to four groups based in South County - The Stage Hands (community theater), SoMoCoCAT (workshops and training in video production and new media), Sol Treasures (after school art programs) and South County Strings (professional training for aspiring musicians).

Meanwhile, the Arts Council continues to work with funding partners like the Packard Foundation, the Community Foundation and



many community leaders and residents to help develop an art and culture center in Greenfield and an art and technology center in Soledad.

"The arts save lives. We know that participating in the arts helps relieve stress, creates important connections, and helps our children make better choices. A vital art sector builds a healthy community and a more successful economy. Our vision at the Arts Council is to create as many opportunities as we can with a special focus on those areas in the county with the least access. We may have a long way to go, but we have been thrilled by the response to our efforts so far!" notes past president and Vice President of Programs Michael Houston.

To get involved in these exciting projects or determine your eligibility for the next round of grant funding, visit the Arts Council at www.artsformontereycounty.org or call Executive Director Paulette Lynch at 622.9060.