

Artsonia- More than just an Art Gallery

As an artist and teacher of the visual arts, I recognize the importance of making real-world connections to the arts in the classroom. Teaching for Artistic Behavior has taught me how to structure learning and support students as creative individuals with a story to share. It has also taught me the importance of validating their early attempts not just as student work but as actual artist works. How to share these accomplishments with others and show what sets us apart from traditional art rooms was the next challenge. Fortunately Artsonia, an online art gallery for student work, has been working with teachers to make it easier to accomplish publishing this artwork.

While giving students the tools and technology to publish work is very much in line with 21 century lifelong learning goals there's a much more personal side to Artsonia which touches on the cultural and community side of art making. Students who send their art out into the "worlds largest student art gallery" are able to share work not only with anyone who visits our school page but with parents, grandparents and friends who are able to encourage, comment and support their growth and accomplishments as young artists.

A by-product of this support results in awards generated by Artsonia for the number of people who have commented on artworks, the number of works they've published and how many "fans" of their artwork they have. While Teaching For Artistic Behavior supports a child's intrinsic desire to make art, the encouragement these awards create supplies students with a reaffirmation that what they are doing is important and meaningful work and that it brings people happiness outside the walls of school. This extrinsic motivation of the shared experience by students and the public has driven art production and discussions on craftsmanship and quality to new levels in the art room. Students are more conscious of the work they create and while some desire only to get awards there are many who realize that their work says something about who they are, their efforts and the stories they are sharing about and of themselves.

While the sharing and reflection is what I love about Artsonia, the company has also helped generate money for the art room by offering a variety of goods that a student's artwork can be displayed on. From canvass and coffee mugs to magnets and necklaces there is a variety of ways to continue your support of your child's art by also supporting the place it's made. To date we've raised almost \$200 for art room supplies from the purchases made on Artsonia. This passive form of fundraising is a complement to the student who comes with an idea in their head and love for exploring the many ways art is learned and created in our studio.

I encourage everyone to visit our schools Artsonia page, look at the work, read the artists statements and leave a comment for your artists. Currently, only grades 3-5 are using Artsonia, but may expand to our lower grades and teach them how to upload work too.

If your child is participating in Artsonia I encourage you to support your young artist by activating your Artsonia account so you can view, share, leave comments or make a purchase.

Thank for your continued support of the work we do and my efforts to help your children grow and learn as artists so they can find their strengths, and share their ideas with the world.

Mr. Sherogan

Please visit our Artsonia page at www.artsonia.com and search Meriwether Lewis Elementary in the school search box.