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**On the Cover:** Teens Turf and Ben learned quickly from instructors and were happy to jump in and work on mosaics for the Feather River Mosaic Mural Project.

**Photo by:** Photographer Isabel Ruiz is a California photographer but will travel wherever love abounds. She does weddings, graduations and family photography. @byisabelruiz. [byisabelruizphotography.squarespace.com/portfolio](https://byisabelruizphotography.squarespace.com/portfolio)

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## NORTH STATE PARENT

### VOLUME 32 ISSUE 2 JANUARY 2025



## DEAR READERS

Welcome to our annual January issue dedicated to the arts and teens. For so many children, the arts are a vital component of a true educational experience. Whether singing, acting, dancing, drawing, sculpting, playing a musical instrument or creating in a variety of mediums, art often helps children express themselves and gain valuable perspectives to better interpret the world.

For children who learn in different ways, integrating arts into academic curriculum can help them understand and absorb challenging subjects, as explained in our article "Breathing Art into Learning at Redding School of the Arts" on page 11.

We encourage everyone who wants to see arts education for children in the North State grow and thrive to join us in supporting the arts in our schools. Attend live performances of your children and those of friends and family. Volunteer to help with art projects or theatrical, dance or musical performances in your local schools or other public venues. Your support is essential for arts education to thrive!

For parents looking for opportunities for their children to develop their musical talents, check out our [Music Teachers Directory](#) for private music teachers near you. If your child loves to dance, review our helpful [Dance Directory](#) for dance teachers and studios and musical theater training in your area.

Donate to your local arts council or county-wide art affiliate. Consult our [family calendar](#) for art openings, dance and theatre performances and other art related happenings.

All of us at North State Parent magazine wish you and yours a peaceful, prosperous and joyfully art-filled new year.

*Pamela Stacey Joann Kate*

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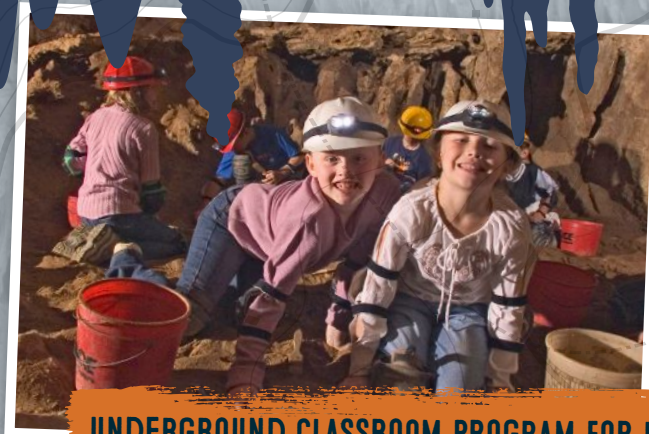


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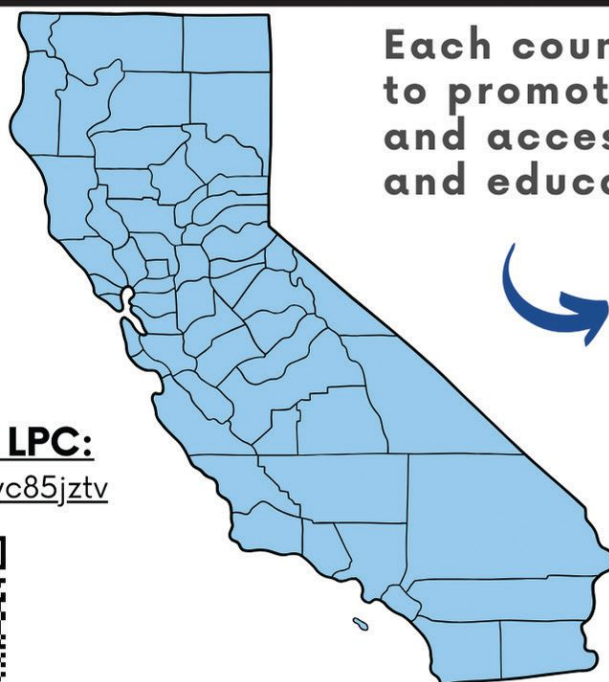
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# Yoshie Muratani

The mission of our be the change column is to feature community members from the North State who are actively making a difference in community life. If you would like to nominate someone who is making a difference, please write to [pn@northstateparent.com](mailto:pn@northstateparent.com).



Yoshie Muratani will never forget the exact moment she truly fell in love with music. As the daughter of an operatic singer in the Hyōgo prefecture of Japan, Yoshie had been steeped in music since birth. She listened to her mother sing, started playing cello when she was eight years old and discovered the concept of harmony as she and her friends sang on their bus ride home from school.

#### EARLY MUSICAL EXPERIENCE LEADS TO RICH MUSICAL CAREER

But the magical moment happened as she played trombone during middle school summer music camp. “One day we were playing a very beautiful brass section harmony,” she recalls. “And then it hit. It felt so good, so fun. I could almost see how the sound was blending. It was so beautiful I started to cry. That’s when I decided to become a musician.”

Yoshie did indeed become a musician. She was one of 10 winners of the prestigious Rohm Music Foundation scholarship in Japan and earned a master’s degree in cello before moving to the United States. She now teaches cello

privately in Redding and through The Music Connection in Chico. She also conducts the Butte MTAC (Music Teachers’ Association of California) Youth Orchestra, which involves approximately 30 students between the ages of six and 18.

#### ORCHESTRA CHALLENGES STUDENTS TO LEARN NEW ROLES

To Yoshie, the beauty of music comes not just from individual mastery, but from making music with others. “Learning to play music by yourself is challenging enough,” she says. “As you play in a group, you need to be aware of your role in the group and your relationship to what other people are doing.”

As their skills progress, orchestra students begin to recognize how they need one another to portray the full story of the music. “Many instruments play one note at a time, unlike a piano, which can play many notes at the same time,” Yoshie explains. “When musicians play together, each may play an important note that decides the character of a chord or the direction of the music. Musicians are like actors; they need to understand the part they’re playing because they have active participation.” 7▶



Yoshie Muratani teaches orchestra students to work together, playing important notes as characters, each part contributing to the story of the music. Photos by Isabel Ruiz.

#### Performances

**Sunday, February 16th**

NSS Side-by-side performance at Laxson Auditorium - Advanced Orchestra

**Saturday, March 8th**

Dream Big Festival at Oroville State Theater

**Monday May 19th**

The End of Year Concert at Bidwell Presbyterian Church



Yoshie helps students understand the emotional language of each piece they play. Photo by Isabel Ruiz.



EMOTIONAL NUANCE OF MUSIC INSPIRES STUDENTS

Practicing this musical awareness of others helps students develop emotional awareness as well. “Music is all about empathy,” Yoshie says. “Music portrays an emotional landscape; it’s an emotional language. In the beginning when I let students hear music, they often say it is happy or sad, but it’s so much more nuanced. What kind of happiness? Is it a peaceful happiness or jumping-up-and-down excitement?” Recognizing the emotions their individual notes contribute to the orchestra overall, Yoshie observes, inspires her students to rise to the challenge.

NEUROLOGICAL DISORDER LEADS TO MUSICAL REVELATIONS

Yoshie’s journey has involved adapting to the mysterious paralysis of her left hand, eventually diagnosed as a neurological disorder called focal dystonia. “In a way, it has been a blessing in disguise,” she says. The condition drew her to study different brain neurology and different kinds of healing and increased her growth mindset. “When I was playing with only one finger, since I was not able to move my other fingers, I might not play a note right,” she says. “I realized if I get stuck with those past mistakes, I will make other mistakes. I need to focus on where I’m going.”

CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM YOSHIE’S POSITIVE, ENCOURAGING APPROACH PAIRED WITH HIGH STANDARDS

Cheryl Ghica, who takes her three grandchildren to orchestra practices, describes Yoshie’s gentle, positive manner. Cheryl says her granddaughter especially struggled with the fear of making mistakes but has grown as a musician because of the way Yoshie encourages her and helps her look forward instead of back. “Yoshie is very patient, but she has high standards too. She helps students progress at their own pace and challenges them just enough,” Cheryl says.

Vianna Renaud, a City of Chico arts commissioner and a fellow musician and music educator, met Yoshie two years ago at the MTAC Butte County summer Music Academy. She admires “the value Yoshie places on collaborative work for both her students and colleagues,” such as through MTAC Youth Orchestra’s annual performance with the North State Symphony. This event joins students and professionals onstage under the baton of music director Scott Seaton. Vianna says Yoshie has “a way of fully focusing on you and truly listening; she is authentic, transparent and encourages her students to give their very best.”

Citing the Suzuki method of music education, Yoshie values creating “an environment of music.” While not every youth will play an instrument, creating a musical environment involves not just musicians, but audiences. Yoshie’s friend Natasha Lydon and her two sons have attended recent MTAC orchestra performances and Natasha’s description of their audience experience highlights Yoshie’s passion for and influence on music in the North State. “My kids feel moved by the power of the music Yoshie helps create,” Natasha says. “It penetrates your soul, feeling the love that is created by her work. Yoshie has changed the lives of every person I know that has worked with her. She is a joy, a power and a healer.” ■



Jenna Christophersen is a Chico native who fell in love with writing as she wrote her first words as a student at McManus Elementary School.

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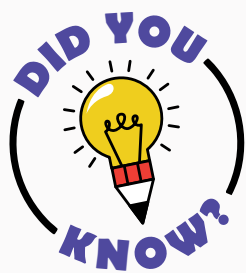
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- “Gathering of Wings” Banquet, Silent Auction & Keynote Speaker at Bell Memorial Union, Chico State. Sat, Jan 25, 5:30-9:30pm. (registration required)
- “Birds, Birds, & More Birds” Exhibit, Museum of Northern California Art (monca). Fri, Jan 24, 5-8pm Free Art Reception, Jan 16-Mar 16 Exhibit.

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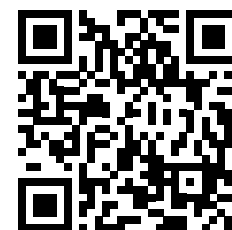


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# Youth Artistic Effort Is Spilling Out of Brushstrokes Studio and Beautifying Oroville’s River Town

John Lennon astutely stated, “Every child is an artist until he’s told he’s not an artist.” Providing art instruction for children can stop negative messages midstream and the Oroville community is working hard to keep artistic potential flowing. The Artists of River Town at Brushstrokes Studio and Gallery, a non-profit organization supporting local artists and schools, are tapping into creativity through a monumental undertaking—the Feather River Mosaic Mural Project.

### Magnificent River Story Told Through Community Art

Leanna Lunsford, art instructor and regional representative for the Rainforest Art Project, a partner in the mosaic project, says the Feather River Mosaic Murals are telling “the story of the magnificent river from its headwaters high in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountains, through its dramatic journey all the way to its confluence with the Sacramento River.” This story is being told through sixty 6 ft x 18 inch, beautifully crafted mosaic panels showcasing the flora and fauna of the Feather River. Volunteers at the studio and students at local schools, including many at Prospect High School, have imagined and sketched out the various mural subjects—spiders, dragonflies, salmon, frogs, sky, water and plants.

Once completed, these murals are hung alongside Table Mountain Boulevard and participants feel a sense of satisfaction when passing by their contributions 10►



The mosaic project has been a special way for Amanda to bond with her daughter, Kiley.

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Prospect High School students have provided inspiration for many of the murals' themes.

## Youth Artistic Effort is Spilling out of Brushstrokes Studio

along the roadway. Dan Evers, Bill Lagrone and David Tamori first dreamed up the mural project when they saw new apartments going in along the boulevard—which meant new retaining walls. The men thought, “why not make the walls beautiful by hanging mosaics there?”

### MOSAICS PROVIDE CHILDREN ART TRAINING, LEGACY TO REMEMBER

“The Feather River Wall on Table Mountain Boulevard is unique in both the scale and the number of kids who have participated,” Dan says. “At nearly two years into the project, we have had over a thousand participants—which must be some kind of record. Through this involvement, youngsters become proud stakeholders in their community while building their skills and confidence. Mosaics are a wonderful medium because they are extremely colorful and durable while giving many children the opportunity to participate. They will tell their kids and grandkids about their contribution to the beautification of Oroville and of their role in paying homage to one of the world’s most dramatic and spectacular rivers.”

### BRUSHSTROKE STUDIO WELCOMES AND INSPIRES YOUNG ARTISTS

Amanda Gregory and daughter, Kiley, have enjoyed working on the project and Amanda echoes Dan’s words about the satisfaction of seeing something she and her daughter helped create. Amanda adds, “The studio provides a great opportunity to meet and work with people of all ages. It has been rewarding watching Kiley, who is normally shy, visit with older artists and then sit with little ones. I love watching her connect with new people and even dragging her friends along with her to the studio. Brushstrokes is a very inspiring and welcoming space.”

Completing the murals is giving budding artists like Kiley confidence. “One misconception is that art is sheer talent,” says David, Artists of River Town Studio president and volunteer instructor for the project. “I like to say that art comes from persistence. We are made to be creators but we have to put that into practice—we have to practice creating. The other volunteers and I love to help youth overcome their fears of art and then learn to be deliberate in practicing their art form.” As a visual art instructor at Oroville High School for 38 years, David knows the importance of repeated exposure to the arts.

### CREATING MURALS BRINGS COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF ALL ABILITIES TOGETHER

Brushstrokes Studio is fortunate to have help from the Kennedy Center’s program “Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child” to provide that repeated exposure for local children. The Kennedy Center’s goal is to assist communities in developing and implementing a plan for expanded arts education in their schools.

Through the help of many donors, the studio offers a variety of classes throughout the year as well as open hours for the mural project—every Saturday from 11am to 2pm. With plenty of eager teachers, good lighting, ample space and warm hospitality, the Brushstrokes Studio has a beautiful thing going in downtown Oroville.

“When you have a vision, you attract others,” David says. “In this case art is the vehicle of attraction and we are so glad to be drawing in the area youth. We hope all ages and abilities will keep coming to help with our murals. Don’t worry about perfection when it comes to art. That is an illusion. Diligence is what matters with these murals and all the people working together—now that’s perfection.”

Find out more by visiting Brushstrokes Studio, 1967 Montgomery St, Oroville or calling 530-538-2508 ■



Oroville teen Caitlin has worked regularly on the mural project for years.

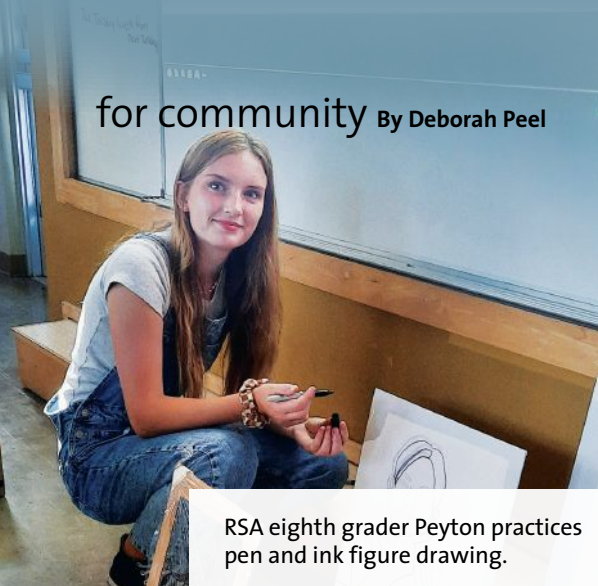


Mural project leaders Leanna Lunsford and David Tamori warmly invite the public to “come create” each Saturday.



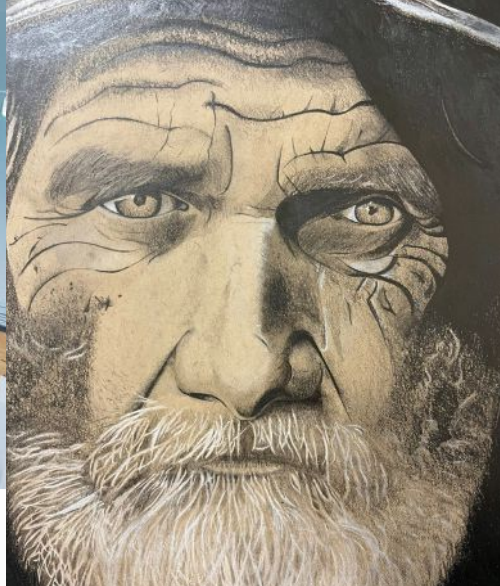
Kate Hiller agrees that diligence is key for any art form, including her writing. She loves the quote from an unknown author “If I only wrote when I felt like it, I would only have a haiku.”





for community By Deborah Peel

RSA eighth grader Peyton practices pen and ink figure drawing.



RSA has provided Mathias Hechavarria the opportunity to develop his talent in portraiture, evident in the stunning pencil portrait he recently drew of a weathered fisherman.

# Breathing Art into Learning at **Redding School of the Arts**

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There is a unique school in Redding, California where students are moving and grooving and acting, creating images of life, nature and the imagination with brush strokes or graphite, and translating the world through the lens of a camera. At Redding School of the Arts (RSA), art is embraced as a balance to academics from kindergarten through high school graduation. It provides an educational environment for students who live and breathe the arts, a school where they are given opportunities to explore the visual and performing arts every day. Three art teachers, Cassandra Plummer (high school), Erika Warmington (middle school) and Richard Cherveney (elementary school) collaborate with each other and work alongside other teachers to bring the worlds of academics and the arts together.

## STUDENTS EXPLORE MANY FACETS OF ART AT RSA

RSA opened its doors in 1999 as a California charter school committed to a learning environment where education and the arts connect. Starting as a K-8 school, it now extends to high school graduation. An integral part of the RSA experience is the joyful connections students make with each other, artists connecting with artists, growing friendships and celebrating what makes them special as artistic individuals.

Visual and Performing Arts teacher Richard Cherveney has been working with students from kindergarten through eighth grade on the fundamentals of fine arts for the last five years and joined the RSA teaching staff this year. In addition to teaching visual and performing art for grades K-4, he teaches three electives:

exploratives in various mediums (grades 4-5), design (grades 6-8), and prop building and stage craft (grades 6-8). His years of working in the arts have confirmed Richard's belief that, "We learn math, science and language arts so that we can become better artists, artists who then see the world, reflect on it and respond to it with truth, goodness and beauty."

Visual Arts teacher Erika Warmington teaches third through eighth graders, developing lessons to meet her students at all different levels. She says, "I feel it is important to expose young students to a wide variety of media because it allows them to find something they can enjoy doing in the arts. It can give them a safe place to express themselves and be more aware of multiple perspectives and understanding of ideas." Her classes offer students a variety of art 12 ►

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Young RSA students Mackenzie and Kenneth learn to express their artistic talents through a wide variety of media.

Redding School of the Arts High School facility will soon be getting a much-needed expansion. The high school started with four modular classrooms just south of RSA’s main campus. With the growing student body, plans to build a permanent new facility are in the works. In the meantime, RSA planned to expand over the summer by installing some modular structures but were unable to locate additional modular classrooms that met the city’s permit requirements. Then US-Offsite in Redding stepped up to help! They have engineered and built some modular facilities that will meet RSA’s current temporary needs and can be moved to the permanent campus when that project is completed. The modular expansion project a little more than 4,000 square feet with three classrooms, a dance studio, restrooms and an office. The new modular buildings should be installed sometime this winter.

RSA is a free public charter school, and anyone living in Shasta County can apply. Applications are available at [rsarts.org](https://rsarts.org), and all applications received before March 3, 2025 will be included in a lottery for enrollment which will take place on Tuesday, March 11.

Breathing Art into Learning at Redding School of the Arts

experiences including printmaking, sewing, felting, digital art, painting and 3D projects. She teaches the elements of arts using various mediums (grades 3-8), the principles of design using digital and other mediums (grades 6-8) and stage craft and set design (grades 6-8).

BLENDING CORE STUDIES WITH ART BOOSTS LEARNING, COMPREHENSION, RETENTION

High school students at RSA can benefit from small class sizes in math, English, history, social studies and science. From K-8 grades, RSA students may be immersed in a Mandarin language program, but by high school Mandarin is offered to teens as a language class just like French and Spanish along with culinary arts, music, theater and visual arts. Students are singing, dancing, acting and designing theater props and promotional posters for theater productions. They may be considering the life of bugs in science class and learning to draw them in art class. Teachers work together to stimulate learning, understanding that a student struggling in math or science may excel in art. Purposely blending those domains can help the student thrive by involving all senses in the learning process to better understand and integrate academic subjects.

RSA STUDENTS’ ARTISTIC TALENTS BLOSSOM THROUGH DEEPER STUDY IN HIGH SCHOOL

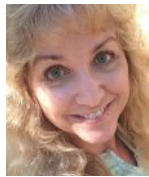
As the RSA high school art teacher, Cassandra Plummer takes students on a deep dive into the visual arts, progressing through drawing, painting, ceramics (the studio has 10 ceramic wheels), sculpture, photography (cameras and iPads provided), print making and digital arts using Adobe and Procreate illustration and editing programs. Student abilities range from beginner to advanced and getting to know her students allows Cassandra to customize a visual arts program that helps them explore and

create one-of-a-kind works of art. One of her students uses his exceptional eye for detail to create highly realistic drawings. Others are producing drawings that can be mistaken for a photograph. A student strong in character illustration is building Pixar-style animation drawings. Some very advanced students are taking college classes in glassblowing, watercolor and figure drawing.

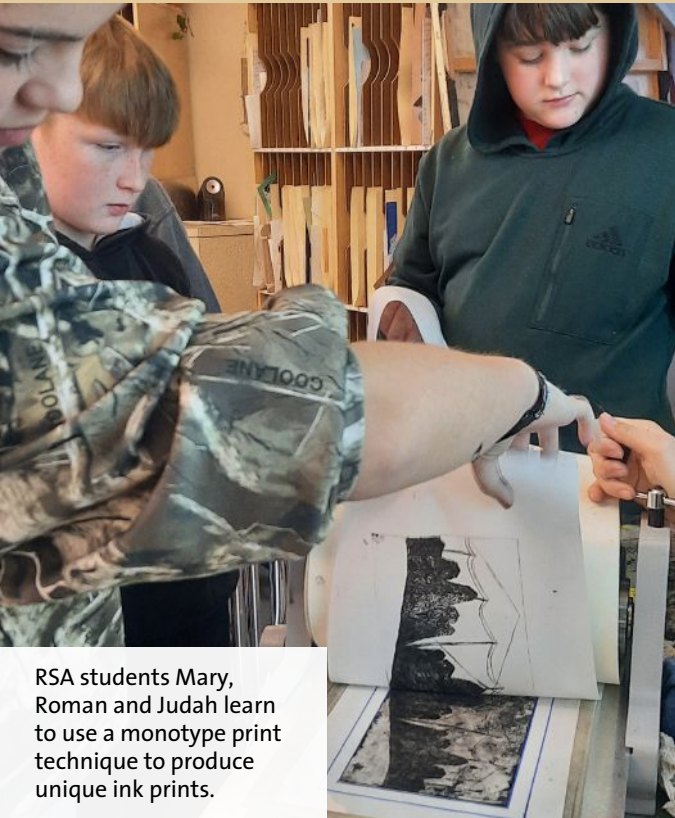
For students that are just beginning in the arts, Cassandra takes them through a step-by-step process to help them see as an artist. Each student takes baby steps through a project until they proudly complete it. She urges them not to give up, but to follow her lead, believing it is a life lesson for them to build skills, one-by-one, to see what they can achieve.

Cassandra’s goal is to provide an RSA education that helps prepare teens who love the arts for a career in the arts. She’s excited about the introduction of new Career Technical Pathways courses designed to help teenagers understand how to connect art with industry, identifying the pathway to not just a job, but an art career that they love.

Families interested in pursuing a spot for their child at Redding School of the Arts may apply for enrollment. Applications are entered into an annual lottery system and a select number of hopeful families are called to confirm enrollment. To learn more, visit [rsarts.org](https://rsarts.org) or call 530-247-6933. ■



Deborah Peel is a writer, blogger, content marketer, mother and lover of big trees and isolated mountain tops. When she isn’t turning pages on a book adventure, she’s an avid hiker and a dog person.



RSA students Mary, Roman and Judah learn to use a monotype print technique to produce unique ink prints.



RSA teachers work closely with students to prepare them for a career in the arts.



# Dance & Musical Theatre Directory

## for Upper California

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### BUTTE COUNTY

**Chico Creek Dance;** Chico. Our mission is to cultivate a lifelong appreciation for dance through professional training that will inspire the next generation with a quality education and exceptional artistry that connects with the community through our meaningful and inclusive dance program. With over 40 years of established classical ballet training and instruction in Butte County we bring an entire spectrum of dance classes including tap, hip-hop, musical theatre, jazz, tumbling and adult classes and much more. We have something for everyone! Join us as we inspire the dancers of the future. [chicocreekdance.com](http://chicocreekdance.com). 1144 W. 1st St, Chico. (530)893-9028.

**Healthy Steps: The Lebed Method;** Chico. Whether you are getting back into shape or just want a gentle exercise program, Healthy Steps is a safe and accessible way to reach your goals and gain strength and balance with exercises to meet your fitness level. Zoom classes available. Classes also offered at The Lakeside Pavillion and Enloe Regional Cancer Centre. [healthysteps-maryjo.com](http://healthysteps-maryjo.com). (530)228-4753.

**In Motion Fitness;** Chico. Classes include Pilates, Zumba, yoga, step and swim exercise classes. Kids in Motion program for children of all ages, includes childcare. [inmotionfitness.com](http://inmotionfitness.com). 1293 E. 1st Ave. (530)343-5678.

**Kinetics Academy of Dance & Gymnastics;** Chico. Classes in gymnastics, aerial arts, adult classes and many styles of dance for all ages and all skill levels. At Kinetics, students are instructed by highly creative, skilled and innovative instructors in classes offering quality instruction and a caring, inclusive environment. Our goal is to create a comfortable and enjoyable classroom environment and community for all. Performance opportunities. Also offers birthday parties and summer camps. Ages 18 months & up to adults. [kineticsacademyofdance.com](http://kineticsacademyofdance.com). 627 Broadway St., Suite. 100, Chico. (530) 345-2505.

**Northern California Ballet;** Paradise. Classes include pre-ballet and classical ballet. Performance opportunities. Ages 4 & up. North California School and Ballet Company. [northerncaliforniaballet.com](http://northerncaliforniaballet.com) 5794 Clark Rd. (530) 872-1719.

**Northern California Ballet School;** Oroville. This women-owned business offers a unique education experience that is focused on the individual student. We're dedicated to providing the best training possible in a fun and encouraging environment. [classicalballetdance.com](http://classicalballetdance.com). 2015 Challenger Ave., Suite B. [wingturtl@mac.com](mailto:wingturtl@mac.com). (530) 680-5308.

**North State Ballet;** Chico. Our goal is to develop excellence and nurture the whole individual through professional instruction in the beauty and technique of classical ballet. For more details about our offerings for every grade level visit [northstateballet.com](http://northstateballet.com). (530)774-2364.

### SHASTA COUNTY

**Dance Depot;** Redding. Dancing is the rhythm of the soul expressed in movement, beauty, art, and creativity. COME DANCE WITH US! Classes for 12 month-adult, beginner-advanced. Ballet, tap, Broadway jazz, acrobatics, hip-hop, lyrical and Mommy or Daddy & ME. Performance & Competition opportunities. Join our Dance Family. "Teaching dance is what we love doing best!" 2225 Larkspur Ln. [dancedepotfamily.com](http://dancedepotfamily.com). (530)275-9618.

**Redding City Ballet.** Redding City Ballet was founded in 1997. Now a non-profit, the company mission is to present classical, contemporary and innovative concert dance to a broad audience and to increase accessibility to the arts for the schools of the North State area through educational outreach programs, lectures and performances. RCB began its Chance 2 Dance scholarship program in 2022, providing ballet training and performance opportunities for area children lacking the means to pursue quality training. In 2023, RCB opened its own School of Dance, offering classes in classical and contemporary ballet. [reddingcityballet.org](http://reddingcityballet.org). 530-709-1205.

**Redding Performing Arts Center Theatre Education;** Redding. We offer semester-long theatre programs for a variety of age groups from kindergarten through high school. Our courses are designed for beginners and experienced young actors. We foster a nurturing and supportive classroom environment where students are asked to take risks and step outside their comfort zones. Improvisation, audition technique and beginning scene work are used to expand students' acting and character development skills. Through rehearsal and performance of plays and musicals, students establish their own work within the larger framework of storytelling and develop skills to tell stories that are meaningful, connected and worth telling. This experience and exposure to storytelling through theater is designed to foster a life-long appreciation for the arts and develop life skills that extend beyond the classroom. RPAC Kinder (5 and 6 year olds), RPAC Kids (1st – 4th Grades), Youth Theatre (5th – 8th Grades), Performance Theatre (9th – 12th Grade), Technical Theatre (8th – 12th Grade). For complete information visit [reddingpac.com](http://reddingpac.com).

**The Redding Arts Project – School of Theatre and Dance.** Established in 1993. Offers performing arts education in disciplines such as ballet, tap, contemporary, hip-hop, jazz, folk, and musical theatre. The RAP is the official training school of Redding Ballet Theatre, which produces the annual The Nutcracker proudly directed by Diana Christensen in the North State since 2012. In collaboration with Redding Theatre Company, our summer theatre academy stages captivating shows such as Newsies, Mary Poppins, High School Musical, Peter Pan, and more! All ages and levels are invited to join our vibrant arts community, guided by a dedicated staff fostering creativity and passion in the performing arts. Visit our website for all class offerings and more information on auditions and shows! The Redding Arts Project – School of Theatre and Dance 1726 Market Street [www.thereddingartsproject.com](http://www.thereddingartsproject.com) (530) 245-1019.



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## SISKIYOU COUNTY

**Idance Studio;** Fort Jones. Classes in hip-hop, acro dance, ballet, jazz, tap, contemporary, musical theater, yoga & more. All ages. [idancestudiosv.com](http://idancestudiosv.com). 11921 North State Hwy 3, Fort Jones. (541)210-0082.

**Mt. Shasta Dance;** McCloud & Mount Shasta. Learn the smooth & Latin dances and how to lead or follow in a fun, supportive environment. All levels can develop techniques for stronger skills. Solo dancers are welcome. Regular dance events in McCloud & Mount Shasta. All ages. [Mtshastadance.com](http://Mtshastadance.com). (530)853-4147 or (415)215-2652.

**Shasta Studios School of Theatrical Dance;** Mount Shasta. Offers dance for all ages, including tap, jazz, ballet & lyrical. Also offers voice lessons, children's theater classes, summer camp and performance opportunities. [Shastastudios.net](http://Shastastudios.net). Studio 1. 108 Old McCloud Rd. Studio 2. 629 Alder St. (530)235-6222.

**Jefferson Center for the Arts;** Mount Shasta. JCA is Mount Shasta's premier non-profit arts education venue incorporating the natural beauty of the area for the purpose of improving social, economic and cultural assets. The JCA is a regional hub for live music, theater and visual arts for local residents and tourists alike. The gardens of the JCA are growing to host a permaculture learning center, arts playground and local nature trail. [jeffersoncenterforthearts.com](http://jeffersoncenterforthearts.com). 1124 Pine Grove Dr. (530)918-8383.

## TEHAMA COUNTY

**Ignite Your Flare: Dance & Acrobatics;** Red Bluff. Build confidence & character with Flare! We want to ignite your Flare for dance & acrobatics. Offers professional instruction in acro (Acrobatics Arts Certified), ballet, pointe, jazz, hip-hop, tap, lyrical, dance tech & conditioning, parent & child. We have a traveling competition team and dance camps & intensives. Ages are 1.5 (walking) – adult. [igniteyourflare.com](http://igniteyourflare.com). 446 & 450 Walnut St. (530)225-4180.

**Jubilee Performing Arts Co.;** Red Bluff. A Christian musical theater program that offers tap, Broadway, hip-hop, ballet, pre-dance, voice and theater classes. [Jubileepac.square.site](http://Jubileepac.square.site) 1325 Schwab Street. (530)366-4786.

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# { UNIQUELY US }

## REFLECTIONS OF A SPECIAL NEEDS PARENT

### BY JENNIFER ARNOLD

Adults with special needs enjoy camaraderie and positive social interactions through a wide variety of fun Out and About activities. Photos provided by Out and About



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## Out and About Shasta County Fosters Independence and Inclusion for Disabled Adults

For parents and caregivers of adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities, finding activities in their community that fit their needs can be difficult. While there are plenty of programs for younger children, many options often disappear once they reach adulthood, leaving a big gap in support and opportunities. One North State nonprofit, Out and About Shasta County, gives disabled adults a chance to explore local events and resources and enjoy group activities to help them build independence and a sense of belonging.

### Out and About actively champions a mission of inclusion

Out and About Shasta County started over 20 years ago when a group of parents came together, recognizing the need for more opportunities for their adult children to engage with the community. Today, there are between 25 and 30 active participants. “Most of the consumers live at home with their family,” explains board member Darlene Emerton.

The program makes it easy for participants to get out and enjoy community events by providing transportation, but it's about more than just getting from point A to point B. Out and About staff help participants navigate social situations, offering guidance on things like social cues, communication and behavior in different settings. They also work on personal goals tailored to each individual's needs, whether that's building confidence, improving life skills or just having fun and feeling included.

### Engaging in the community through recreation and volunteering

Out and About Shasta County revolves around an activity calendar meticulously curated by Executive Director Pamela Copeland to include events across Shasta County. From trips to the YMCA, libraries and movie theaters to attending local plays, concerts and ballets, participants can choose activities that resonate with their interests. Consumers can also participate in bowling, crafting, mini golf, sports events and dances.

Along with recreational activities, Out and About also encourages participants to volunteer as another way to get involved in their local area. During the holidays, “we ring the bell for the Salvation Army at Christmas and also give back to the community in many other ways,” Darlene says.

Each client and their family receives a copy of the calendar, and they can choose which activities they want to participate in. “We try to do the best we can

for all of our individuals, all the time,” Darlene emphasizes. Events are scheduled primarily from Tuesday to Saturday, with occasional Sunday and Monday activities depending on the availability of events.

### Inclusion fosters understanding and acceptance

When people with disabilities and differences are active in their communities, it's a win for everyone. Inclusion breaks down stereotypes, encourages people to look beyond labels and fosters understanding and acceptance. It also gives individuals with disabilities the chance to grow, learn new skills and feel a real sense of belonging. These experiences don't just make a difference for them—they make the whole community stronger.

Parents and caregivers of adults with disabilities often have a hard time finding people they trust to care for their loved ones and their unique needs. Out and About offers a safe and enriching environment for their participants and peace of mind for their primary caregivers. It also provides a chance for caregivers to build a support network with others who understand their journey. According to Darlene, this sense of community is at the heart of what makes Out and About so special, as she describes the tight-knit group of caregivers who will “jump in to volunteer” if needed to ensure the participants get the experiences they deserve.

### Get involved in Out and About

Participants of Out and About Shasta County must be clients of the Far Northern Regional Center. The process starts by contacting a service coordinator, who will help determine eligibility and facilitate enrollment. For more information or to get involved, visit the [website](#) or reach out to [Far Northern Regional Center](#) to begin the process of joining this impactful program. ■



Shasta County author Jennifer Arnold is the mom of four, two of whom have been diagnosed with multiple special needs. She hopes to raise awareness of many issues that parents of special needs children face on a regular basis.



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# Opportunities for Teens to Get Involved with Art and Artists

Exciting opportunities for teens to get involved with the arts abound in the North State. Here is just a sample of the extraordinary arts activities available in our region designed to engage teens and offer openings to express themselves and develop their artistic talents.



Kiley finds Brushstrokes Studio and Gallery in Oroville the perfect place to get creative.

## BUTTE COUNTY

### CHICO ART CENTER

Chico Art Center actively supports local and regional artists, artistic activity and the continuing placement of visual art in the community, thereby enriching the quality of life for community members of all ages. Teens who become members, (student membership is \$20/year), can enter art pieces in art shows throughout the year. There are also opportunities to participate in special art projects, making pieces for specific shows. (530) 895-8726.

### INSPIRE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Inspire School of Arts & Sciences is a tuition-free, award-winning, 9-12 public charter high school in Chico, offering a balanced curriculum of challenging academic courses and deep, rich performing arts, and fine arts and science/engineering programs, providing a creative, connected, learning environment.

To find out more about this exceptional school, consider attending Inspire's 15th Annual Performing Arts Gala 2025 – Be the light for others to see by. Students and staff will showcase their classwork and extracurricular activities, including performance work in music, theater, dance, film and more. The event features two performances Saturday, January 11 at 1pm & 6pm. \$10 Inspire students & children 13 and under. \$12 Inspire alumni & other students. \$15 General Admission. [Click here](#) for more information and tickets.

### MOSAIC MURALS

Teens can try their hand at creating mosaics for the Feather River Mosaic Mural Project, Saturdays from 11-2 at Brushstrokes Studio and Gallery, 1967 Montgomery St, Oroville. Read our article on this beautiful and inspiring art project on page 9 of this issue. Brushstrokes studio has open hours and instruction available in a variety of art forms. Call for (530)538-2508 for more information.

## SHASTA COUNTY

### CASCADE THEATRE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering as a cast member at the historic Cascade Theatre in Redding is an invaluable opportunity for teens passionate about the arts to immerse themselves in a vibrant cultural environment. This historic venue regularly hosts a diverse array of musical and theatrical productions, providing a dynamic platform for young volunteers to engage with the performing arts up close.

For teens with creative inclinations, the Cascade Theatre offers more than just a chance to observe; it presents an opportunity to contribute to the artistic process, whether through assisting behind the scenes, helping with set designs or supporting performers and directors. This hands-on experience fosters a deeper understanding of the intricacies involved in bringing a production to life, from technical aspects to creative decision-making.

Volunteering at the Cascade offers teens a chance to connect with like-minded individuals and professionals in the arts community, sparking mentorships and friendships that inspire future educational and professional career pursuits, nurturing teens' creative passions, encouraging personal growth and inspiring a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

Contact Shirly Flynn, volunteer coordinator (530)243-8886 Ext 311. [Shirly@cascadetheatre.org](mailto:Shirly@cascadetheatre.org).

### SHASTA COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL JURIED ART COMPETITION

Each year, Shasta County Arts Council invites Shasta County high school students to submit new works of art for display in March at their art gallery, 1313 Market Street in Redding. A local artist is invited to jury the show, choosing pieces that will go on display at the gallery. Students submit two new two-dimensional or three-dimensional art pieces through their school art teacher or art class or through Shasta County Office of Education. Entry forms can be obtained by calling the arts council. (530)241-7320.

17 ►



## TURTLE BAY MUSEUM'S FAMOUS ARTISTS CHILDREN'S ART EXHIBITION

Turtle Bay Exploration Park offers the Famous Artists Portfolio Program, a valuable resource that brings art into local classrooms. The program includes 70 portfolios of art reproductions, complete with lesson plans that help students explore art, history and more while inspiring them with the works of great artists.

Each January, Turtle Bay Museum hosts the Famous Artists Children's Art Exhibition, showcasing the creativity of students influenced by the program. This year's exhibition features over 150 submissions under the theme "Make the Ordinary Extraordinary," celebrating diverse perspectives and imaginative creations. See the 2025 exhibition running Jan. 31 through April 30 at Turtle Bay Museum.



## SISKIYOU COUNTY

### JEFFERSON CENTER FOR THE ARTS CLASSES FOR TEENS

Jefferson Center for the Arts incorporates the natural beauty of the Mount Shasta with professional arts education to create a premier arts education venue where teens can learn to sing, dance, play the piano and have the opportunity to perform in theatrical productions. Visit the website for information on classes.

## TEHAMA COUNTY

### AFFORDABLE PRIVATE MUSIC LESSONS FOR TEENS

Sean Wilson, credentialed music teacher with a master's in education, offers private instruction in Red Bluff and wants to remove price barriers so teens can jump in and start learning an instrument. Students from all over the region, including as far away as Corning, come to take lessons from Sean. He gives away instruments or helps students find affordable used instruments. He teaches basic and intermediate guitar, introduction to piano, ukelele and drums. [facebook.com/mmschoolofrock](https://facebook.com/mmschoolofrock) [modernmusicredbluff@gmail.com](mailto:modernmusicredbluff@gmail.com). (530)586-0856.



## ALL ABOUT LOVE - ART FROM THE HEART FOR TEENAGERS

The Tehama County Arts Council offers teens opportunities to exhibit their art in monthly themed Gallery exhibits. The Council gives free sponsorships/ membership to all students 18 and younger and invites high school art classes to display their art in the annual Red Bluff Art Walk.

The next scheduled exhibit is It's All About Love-Art from the Heart. There will be open studio Saturday, Jan. 11 & 18 at the Tehama Arts Studio and Gallery, 328 Oak Street, Red Bluff, for teenagers to drop in and create art on canvases for that theme. Look for the time on the Tehama Arts Council's Facebook page. Instructions and supplies will be provided.

The All About Love-Art from The Heart show will open with a reception, Friday, February 14, 5-8pm in the Tehama Arts Gallery. The young artists are invited to represent their art and meet attendees. The drop-off date for all art is Monday, February 10, 4-6pm at the Tehama Arts Gallery. For more information call (530)278-5691 or email [tcacarts@gmail.com](mailto:tcacarts@gmail.com). ■





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# THIS IS TEHAMA



The ancient word “Tehama” once meant a place where rivers could be crossed. With our county’s rich currents of history, happenings and hope, this is our crossing place today — where we meet to celebrate our beautiful Tehama County.

## CORNING BALLET FOLKLORICO Dancing For Culture, Family And Community

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A free, fun, flexible, physical, educational activity that all your children can do together? This sounds like the dream of any busy parent. Tehama County is fortunate to have that dream come true, as a rich, cultural experience for the whole family, in Corning’s Ballet Folklórico. “Who doesn’t like to stomp and dance and dress up in colorful costumes?” asks Angel Montoya, director of the program.

### “Dance of the People” creates community

“Folklórico dance, like the English term ‘folk dance’, means dances of the people,” according to Vanderbilt Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies. Angel agrees that the dance is for the people and for the community: “I took over Corning Ballet Folklórico from Abuelita Ester in 2009 with the main intent to bless individuals living in senior facilities. Over the years it has been very rewarding to also dance for free at local community events. Right now, we do about 12 performances per year.”

### Representing many cultures, Folklórico encourages unique interpretations

“We have 49 active dancers from several counties, ages of two to 25,” Angel says. “We meet Mondays for 30 minutes at Olive Park on South Street in Corning or, when the weather is bad, St. Andrew’s invites our group to use their space. Our wide age range means that parents can participate with their children. Something else that people might not know is that we have many different nationalities represented in our group, not only Hispanic and Latino. This is what is nice about folk dancing - it can take on its own unique flair from its local region.”

### Folklórico dance celebrates powerful stories of life

Originally a combination of Aztec and Spanish influences, folklórico dance embodies a rich history of religious traditions and times of celebration or sorrow by telling stories of victory, defeat, death, birth, sowing and harvest. The combination of the Aztec and Spanish cultures,

through many years, has developed into what we know today as the Hispanic and Latino culture. “Our biggest annual celebrations are for the Day of the Dead,” Angel says. “This is a very important season for our culture—we are remembering our loved ones who have passed, including beloved animals, and our dancers dance with their whole hearts.”

### Folklórico dance engages the whole family

Gisel Montoya, Angel’s daughter, has helped fuel the passion of Corning Ballet Folklórico by choreographing many of their dances—including the very somber “La Llorona” and the more upbeat “El Guaco.” Gisel, a dancer, as well as the main dance teacher, says all the dancers “work hard to tell these stories, common to our culture, with deep emotion for a powerful experience.” Gisel serves as a full-time Behavioral Health counselor in Chico and she says there is a crossover with her role at Corning Ballet Folklórico when it comes to the importance of family involvement. “It is wonderful to see the whole family get 19 ▶



Children and adults of all ages enjoy dressing in colorful costumes, learning fun traditional folk dances and performing with Corning Folklórico Ballet. Photos provided by Corning Folklórico Ballet.



Corning Ballet Folklórico: Dancing for Culture, Family and Community

involved, whether in the dancing or simply coming to watch practices and performances. We have grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins—everybody shows up to watch and they are so proud of their dancers. Kids gain confidence when their loved ones come to performances and it makes them feel loved.”

Montoya family carries on Corning Folklórico tradition

Angel is so thankful for her daughter Gisel’s involvement, especially after suffering a heart attack recently. Angel explains, “This would not be possible without my family and the donations of our community.” Araceli Gutierrez, with Latino Outreach of Tehama, is a huge supporter of the Folklórico and she says, “We love helping Gisel and Angel with their free community events. They are donating their time so everything our organization gives goes toward the cost of skirts, shirts, hair accessories, snacks and whatever else they need for their group. Corning is a small town with a big percentage being Hispanic and/or Latino. By contributions, children have an opportunity to participate in an activity where they feel accepted and comfortable. The Corning Ballet Folklórico is so valuable in their efforts to educate the community about our Hispanic and/or Latino heritage.”

Angel and Gisel invite the public to watch practices or events or even join in. “We have room for new people and we welcome those with all abilities and challenges,” Angel says. “In this day and age, it is nice to have a free activity that doesn’t divide or exhaust families. We hope Corning Ballet Folklórico can, instead, enrich family life.”

Check the Corning Ballet Folklórico [Facebook page](#) for more information or call Angel (530) 356-9739. ■



Folklórico Ballet spreads the joy of dance throughout the Corning community.



Gissel Montoya (left) started dancing when she was 9 and is now a valued Folklórico Ballet teacher. Gissel’s brother DeAngelo (center) started dancing at age 3, her sister DayVany (right) started dancing at age 2 and both her siblings have been part of Folklórico ballet since 2009.



If Kate Hiller could do a parenting do-over she would have loved to see all three of her children stomping and dancing with Corning Ballet Folklórico.



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# SISKIYOU COUNTY NEWS

## INNOVATIVE ARTS PROGRAMMING ENHANCES SISKIYOU COUNTY K-12 EDUCATION

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**“A**rt has an incredible ability to engage children to want to be in school. Students look forward to it, to expressing themselves. It’s hands on, it’s creative, it’s fun,” says Andrea Marchyok, arts education specialist, Siskiyou County Office of Education. “It helps retain students all the way through school. Schools with strong arts programs have higher graduation rates.”

### ARTS EDUCATION CONVEYS LIFETIME BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

A multitude of studies have shown that participation in arts activities contributes to children’s social-emotional nervous system regulation. “The arts help us to identify and process our feelings,” Andrea says. “Having access to music and arts has been found to be very healing, especially for those who may be neurodivergent.” Andrea believes learning about artists, understanding the purpose and meaning of the art they create and the process of creating art promotes compassion for others.

Arts education also has a wider community benefit: providing opportunity for the public to gather to attend arts exhibitions and performances and, as Andrea puts it, “collectivize people to support children and the arts.”

### ARTS EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS, PAST AND PRESENT

Despite the many academic, social and emotional advantages of arts education for children, state funding for arts education has been declining for many years and in many cases has been cut altogether. “There are schools in Siskiyou County that have never had an art teacher,” Andrea says. “We still invest in sports and most children have access to a variety of sports activities. But for kids who are not interested in sports, there are not a lot of other options. There are a lot of children we could be reaching through the arts that we are not reaching.”

However, in 2022, California voters approved Proposition 28, the Arts and Music in Schools Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act. The measure required the state to establish a new, ongoing program supporting arts instruction in schools beginning in the 2023–24 school year.

### THE SISKIYOU COUNTY ARTS ALLIANCE; VALUING AND INTEGRATING ARTS EDUCATION

The Siskiyou County Office of Education (SCOE), aware of the value and need for quality arts education in Siskiyou County, invested a portion of the proposition 28 funds they received to create a new arts education specialist position to provide arts education to schools throughout the county, especially to rural schools that cannot afford a full time art teacher.

To better understand the needs of both rural and more urban schools and to gauge interest in increased arts education opportunities, SCOE sent out a survey to county schools. Based on the enthusiastic response they received from the survey, SCOE established the Siskiyou County Arts Alliance Program and modeled the arts education specialist position on their successful and well-established science education program.

### INTEGRATING ART INTO THE CLASSROOM ENHANCES LEARNING ON ALL LEVELS

With 23 years of arts education experience, many spent teaching and supervising youth arts programs, Andrea was the perfect person to fill the arts education specialist position. One of her most rewarding experiences was helping bridge the language barrier through art in a school with recent immigrants who spoke many different languages. More recently she worked with children on open-ended arts projects on the Siskiyou County Arts Council Arts Bus. Andrea has a multiple subject teaching credential and was a classroom teacher for seven years before her role at SCOE.

As arts education specialist, Andrea travels to schools throughout Siskiyou County to teach art classes, lead workshops and guide students on school-wide art projects such as a recent project painting a mural at Scotts Valley Jr. High.

She brings all materials and lesson plans that teachers can follow and integrate into other subjects. Andrea encourages teachers to incorporate art in all subjects they teach. “It helps children to understand subjects on a deeper level,” she says. “Arts integration into any subject creates the opportunity to capture visual thinkers and is great way to help children to understand the subject matter they are being taught and to help them retain”



Opportunities to experience and create art in school fosters creativity, critical thinking and emotional expression, helping students develop essential skills for personal growth and academic success. *Photos provided by SCOE.*



the information and internalize it. If a child can draw a picture - do something to connect all their senses in the learning process - they can more easily understand and retain information."

After just a year and a half working with schools throughout Siskiyou County, Andrea has already made a big impact, as expressed by many teachers and administrators like Golden Eagle Charter School program manager, Justin McCollum. "Andrea's middle and high school art workshops foster creativity, critical thinking and emotional expression, helping students develop essential skills for personal growth and academic success," says Justin. "They also encourage cultural awareness and empathy, preparing students to navigate and appreciate the diversity they will encounter in our global community. We are deeply appreciative of our partnership with SCOE and hope Andrea is able to share her knowledge, expertise and passion with our students for years to come."

#### SISKIYOU ARTS ALLIANCE'S EXPANSIVE VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

SCOE's vision for arts education goes beyond Andrea's hugely impactful work. With a grant from the California Superintendents' Arts Initiative, SCOE is implementing a strategic arts plan for Siskiyou County schools. Through a series of four meetings early next year, they will bring together administrators, regional educators, arts organizations, parents, students, artists, gallery owners and anyone who is interested in expanding equity and access to the arts for all Siskiyou County students.

"By California education standards we should be offering five disciplines of arts to students: music, dance, visual, media and performing arts," Andrea says. "Strategic planning will identify needs and gaps in student access to arts education and develop a plan to offer these opportunities to students in collaboration with arts resources in the community."

As part of this new arts initiative, SCOE invites local teaching artists and art galleries to share their skills and resources with children in public schools. Teaching artists can be paired up with teachers looking for artists to work in their classrooms or schools to facilitate workshops

Contact Andrea at [amarchyok@siskiyoucoe.net](mailto:amarchyok@siskiyoucoe.net) for more information on artists' participation in this remarkable, innovative, paradigm-shifting program to strategically enhance the educational opportunities for all Siskiyou County schools. ■



Stacey was fortunate to have thriving arts programs in elementary, middle and high school. Her involvement in the arts and technical theater kept her engaged in school, helping to develop self-esteem, a creative approach to problem-solving and organizational and leadership skills that have served her well throughout her life.



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# FARM SCHOOL

## Reimagining Education for the Whole Child

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What if your child could learn at their own pace, spend much of the day outdoors in nature getting plenty of exercise, synthesizing and integrating academic subjects through hands-on application that leads to a deeper understanding and a love of learning? More and more parents are exploring nontraditional approaches to teaching as the best way for their child to learn.

Nestled on a working farm near Ft. Jones in Siskiyou County, Farm School is just such a school - a truly unique, non-traditional learning center where children are physically active, learning outdoors as well as indoors. They participate in making healthy, nutritious scratch-cooked daily meals and learn through practical, real-world experiences in a combination of project-based learning, direct instruction, music and art.

### INTEGRATING ACADEMIC LEARNING TO SOLVE REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS

"We try to focus integrating things that students are interested in with traditional academics, rather than learning isolated from real-world experiences," says Niki Harris, director of Farm School and co-founder of Farm School along with her husband and farmer, Richie. "For example, in our farm and garden class, students built a greenhouse using real life practical math skills, reinforcing those skills through their activities in the farm and garden class." As Niki explains, they get the pride of measuring and building a useful structure while employing academic learning to solve real-world problems.

23 ►



Farm School students learn to sing and play a variety of instruments, understand music theory and enjoy jamming together in an ensemble.



### MAKING LEARNING PROGRESS VISIBLE WITHOUT USING TRADITIONAL MEASURES

One of the unique and innovative aspects of Farm School is that they don't do standardized testing, have grade levels or give grades or report cards. "Children's confidence can erode quickly if they don't fit in the traditional pattern of learning; there's often a stigma attached when a child learns differently or at a different pace than their peers," says Niki. "That sticks with them their entire learning career and into adulthood. Some of the most brilliant young minds do not fit inside the traditional mold of school. At Farm School, we work to honor diverse learners and creators."

Instead of standardized tests and grades, "we make learning visible at the individual level through a variety of modalities, teacher observation being one of the most compelling," Niki says. "Teachers are diligent about recording observations daily about each student's progress, challenges and areas of growth." Student portfolios are used to track progress and include samples of their work and self-reflections and assessments of their work and progress. Photos of the progress of their projects with teachers' notes are also included. Students journal in different topic areas so their progress can be assessed over time in different subjects.



Farm School music teacher Annie Kramer combines her love of music and her joyful, gentle, patient nature to help children develop their musical talents and, most importantly, gain self-esteem and a feeling of accomplishment. *Photos provided by Farm School.*

### EVALUATIONS ARE BASED ON INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS

"It's highly individualized," says Niki. "We don't expect every child to learn the same things at the same time in the same way and regurgitate it to us. That's not how humans learn. We all learn at different rates and in different ways."

Teachers share with parents their observations of their child's progress and their child's portfolios, so parents are pulled in and engaged in understanding their child's progress and growth. Students also have "performances of understanding" and demonstrations of projects. Once a year each student selects a project and is paired with a mentor in the community, sets a goal and works toward it. They document their work, recording self-reflection throughout the process in their journals. They then present the project they are working on and share it with the community in a Spring Showcase.

### FARM SCHOOL PARTNERS WITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGE PREP INSTITUTIONS

Farm School offers enrichment programs that children from traditional schools can attend, afterschool programs, music programs and summer school camps open to public school students. "We have a great relationship with our public school district. We work together to support all children in our small community through a variety of programs," Niki says.

In preparation for attending a traditional college, students who attend schools that do not generate traditional metrics can work with the Mastery Transcript Consortium Program to co-create uniquely flexible and scalable learning records to solve the challenge of credentialing. This program is currently accepted by over 600 universities and growing nationwide.

### MUSIC MAKES LEARNING FUN WHILE INTEGRATING ACADEMIC SKILLS

In addition to learning through farm and garden experiences, students learn important life skills through music instruction and performance. Music instructors Annie Kramer and Thomas Walker lead students on a musical journey that incorporates social emotional learning with the joy of music, simultaneously incorporating academic skills such as math and memorization.

"Music permeates and enriches our lives, and our brains are wired to make and respond to music," Annie says. "Musical experiences promote brain development, provide a foundation for academic skills and enhance social and emotional development." She adds, "But most of all, music is FUN! And my goal is to share the joy of music with the children, so that it will always be an important part of their lives."

Annie provides music enrichment experiences to Farm School students through teaching them traditional and contemporary folk songs, with an emphasis on songs that engage several senses and skills simultaneously, such as clapping out the rhythm or combining movements with the tune and lyrics. Children play rhythm games, learn basic music notation, make



Talented musician Thomas Walker teaches Farm School students a wide variety of musical instruments, how to play in an ensemble and, most remarkably, to enjoy learning music theory.

music-themed crafts and learn folk dances such as the Virginia Reel, Appalachian clogging and Maypole dancing. They learn to sing rounds, to introduce harmonizing and to work on group timing and cohesion.

Annie usually accompanies the students on guitar and several times during the school year she invites guest musicians to perform for the students, giving them the opportunity to experience firsthand a variety of instruments, such as the banjo, flute, violin, upright bass and even bagpipes.

Thomas, an accomplished musician with a diverse musical background, brings rich musical expertise and a truly inspiring passion to his students. Thomas teaches music theory and how to play a wide variety of instruments in an ensemble setting. Students learn rhythm, how to work together, practice math skills inherent in reading music and gain memorization skills. "The coolest thing is to see students come from never having touched an instrument to playing and reading charts. That's been really rewarding," Thomas says. "The great thing about Farm School is that students of all ages can participate at any level they are able." There aren't artificial limits on what a child is taught or viewed as able to learn at a specific age. "Children can advance as fast as they wish or are able. As much as they can handle, we'll do."

But most of all, Thomas says, "I like the opportunity to just jam with students in class, like students who love music would normally do at home after school. Tinkering is the way musicians learn and grow musically."

To learn more about Farm School, go to [pasture-raisedkids.org](http://pasture-raisedkids.org) or call 530-643-6551 or email [niki@pastureraisedkids.org](mailto:niki@pastureraisedkids.org). ■



Stacey's experience raising two active boys brought home to her the importance of providing plenty of opportunities for her children to learn through hands-on activities, physical interactions with their environment and plenty of time outdoors to keep their bodies and minds engaged and learning.





# Learn About Local Preschools

West Redding Preschool. Photo by Tracey Hedge

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Shasta Head Start is a private, non-profit corporation which was formed in 1965 to provide high quality childcare and social services to low-income children and their families in Shasta, Siskiyou and Trinity Counties. Lic# 455406084

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[www.reddingtllc.org](http://www.reddingtllc.org) [crystal@reddingtllc.org](mailto:crystal@reddingtllc.org)

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# Prepare Your Kids for College

## 10 Things to Do Now So They Are Ready

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My son looked at me with dread in his eyes. He needed to find out about driver's education classes and there was minimal information on the website. I smiled and told him he needed to call them. As he held the phone in his hand, he wasn't sure what to do, what to say or what to ask. He didn't want to make the call, but I knew he needed to.

As kids approach adulthood, there are things you can do to help them feel prepared and confident. From simple things like making a phone call to more complex skills like financial planning, you can help your child feel ready for college and more.

Here are 10 helpful things to teach your child:

### LIFE SKILLS NEED TO BE TAUGHT, NOT JUST ASSUMED

**Cook simple meals:** Yes, they will probably have a meal plan if they go away to college. But knowing how to make a few meals will help them far beyond their college years. Spend time including them in food preparation. Teach them how to follow a recipe, measure and prep ingredients.

**Transfer health care:** While you have been responsible for every aspect of their health care, they need to learn how to navigate their health. Let them make appointments, handle check-in and share insurance information. Give them a chance to answer questions at doctor's appointments before you give any input and be sure to give them one-on-one time

with the doctor. Letting go of the control in this area can feel hard, but they must learn how to do this. The more you equip them to handle these things the easier it will be when they get sick and are away from home.

**Run errands:** Things that seem simple to us can be challenging for teens because they haven't done them before. Give them a chance to run errands like going to the grocery store or pumping gas so they learn how to do these things on their own. Even having them take the car in for an oil change or bring the dog to the groomer so they learn how to interact with service providers independently is helpful to prepare them for college and adulthood. 26 ►



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**Self-care:** This isn't about relaxing or taking time for yourself, although that is a helpful thing to model and teach. This is about teaching your child how to take care of things like hygiene, laundry, making a bed, wiping down counters, cleaning out the fridge, getting rest and exercise and even managing time. While it is nice to do these things for them sometimes, make that the exception. In life, it is not typical for someone else to handle these things. Teach them how to do it now and they will be much better off down the road.

**TEACH TEENS FINANCIAL SKILLS TO AVOID FUTURE FINANCIAL STRUGGLES**

**Open a bank account:** Help your child open their bank account. If they are under 18, you will need to be on the account with them but many banks offer student accounts that can be opened as young as 15 and used until their early to mid-20s. Be sure to get an account with a debit card and teach them how it works as well as how to monitor their spending.

**Pay bills:** Kids need to learn how to pay bills on time. Even if they don't have any official bills, you can start teaching them to contribute to their expenses such as cellphone or car insurance bills on a certain day each month.

**Plan spending and saving:** Have regular conversations about how to plan their spending. Budgeting can sound too intense for many teens, so ask questions to get them thinking about upcoming expenses or savings. For example, "I saw that the fair is coming. How much do you plan on spending when you go with your friends?" or "I know you're hoping to get a computer before college starts. How much do you need to save each month to make that happen?" will help your child think ahead about how to best use their money.

**TEENS LEARN PROFESSIONAL SKILLS THROUGH PREPARING FOR COLLEGE**

**Talk about plans:** Have regular conversations about what options are available to your child. If they are going to college, make them part of the process and help them understand the financing. Whether you are paying for school, they are paying for school or they are utilizing aid, clear communication is essential so they know what they are responsible for now and in the future.

**Prepare documents:** College requires a lot of documents. From resumes to applications, essays to scheduling, there are a lot of things to fill out. Let your child fill them out. Yes, you can answer questions. But help them take responsibility for their learning by handling

this process. There can be a lot of questions and discussions that need to happen for them to do this. Consider setting aside a weekly time to answer any questions they may have so you both have the time and attention you need for the tasks to be done.

**Pay attention to deadlines:** The college application process is full of deadlines. Taking tests, sending transcripts, completing admissions and financial applications and sending deposits all have very specific deadlines. Discuss these with your child and expect them to meet these deadlines. It is helpful to talk about upcoming deadlines together and even ask them to plan time to complete the tasks. Visual and digital reminders will help them stay on track so they meet any upcoming deadlines.

If you give them the opportunity to do these things now when you are available to help if needed, they will feel ready and better equipped to do these things on their own. ■



Rebecca is a former teacher who is passionate about authenticity, faith, and family. She has been featured on sites such as The Washington Post and Parents and her books are available on Amazon. Connect at [RebeccaHastings.net](http://RebeccaHastings.net)

You can help your students prepare now to navigate financial and personal challenges in college, setting them up for personal and academic success.





# "MOM! I Don't Want to Set Goals!"

## Talking to Your Teen About Goals



As we leave 2024 behind us and look forward with hope to a bright new year, we begin to set new year's resolutions, or as they are called the rest of the year, goals. You may wish to help your teens set goals too. With some teens, this might be a simple, straightforward process. You can discuss with them what steps they might take to achieve what they want to this year. Then set goals with them and find ways to be supportive – especially when there are setbacks. A great technique to make sure goals and the steps to meet them are successful is to make them SMART goals (Specific-Measurable-Achievable-Relevant-Time-based).

But what happens if your teen becomes distraught and says "MOM! I don't want to set goals!" and insist they are already worried about their grades and don't need the pressure? If you are having difficulty coaxing your teen to sit with you at the table and complete a SMART goals worksheet or to help organize their goals and set them up for success, you may need to approach goal setting differently.

### A CREATIVE APPROACH TO SETTING GOALS

A mom I know tried an unconventional but ultimately successful strategy. She waited a day after her unsuccessful attempt to engage her teen in goal setting and approached her teen more casually. She asked the teen if there was anything they wanted to do this year and mentioned something that the teen had already expressed interest in, prom. She then asked questions about what the teen might need to make that event happen and what she (mom) could do to help. Mom learned from this successful conversation that she could approach her teen about goals by presenting the topic in a gentler way but still including the same concepts, without provoking anxiety.

By asking in this less direct way, the teen was able to talk about what they wanted to do for the school year. They started with prom and were able to casually talk about other things the teen wanted to do during the rest of the school year. Mom was able to use reflective listening so her teen would know she was really listening and feel mom was engaged. The teen could also clarify any misunderstandings for mom. For both parent and teen this was a less anxiety-provoking and frustrating experience.

Does this approach meet the standard for goal setting? Let's see: Mom asked her teen about something the teen was interested in doing this year that had a date (prom), so the timeline is implied, the goal is specific and it's relevant to the teen's age. The teen expressed interest in finding specific attire and can begin looking for the promwear and saving money for it now. The goal is achievable and measurable in successfully having the outfit before prom and purchasing tickets. It may not have been developed in the traditional sense, but it can be set up as a SMART goal none-the-less.

### MEETING SMALLER GOALS LEADS TO SUCCESSFUL LARGER GOALS

As goals go for an adult, prom may not be something we think of as an accomplishment or concern. But for a teenager, that goal might just be right up there with getting their driver's license or passing Spanish this semester. Try to remember these are their goals. You are there to support and offer guidance in helping them achieve them. If you give them some room to grow, you are far more likely to be given that opportunity to share some wisdom on the grander goals. ■



Erin Stidham is a local mother of a teenager and two young adults and is a therapist at Creekside Counseling Center in Redding. She feels that serving her community and helping people as they heal is an honor and a privilege.

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