



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
May 26, 2016

Contact: Ken Blackstone
(408) 453-6514

20th Young Artists' Showcase event highlights student talent, inspiring educators from across the county

SAN JOSE, CA – During the [20th annual Young Artists' Showcase celebration](#) on Tuesday at the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE), a picture was painted of how the arts are a critical component of a well-rounded education. The event was held to honor [38 students](#) whose art was chosen from more than 1,000 submissions to the annual competition, open to public school students, grades kindergarten through 12th grade, in Santa Clara County.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the creativity, talent, passion, and ideas of our students whose work will be entered into the county's permanent collection," said Esther Tokihiro, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator with the SCCOE.

County Superintendent of Schools Jon R. Gundry talked about his support of the arts during a keynote address.

"I just love being surrounded by the creative genius of students in our midst," Superintendent Gundry said. "So I would like to start by saying thank you to all the young artists here today."

In particular, Mr. Gundry shared his gratitude for Cindy Nguyen, a seventh-grader at Sylvandale Middle School in the Franklin-McKinley School District, because he recently chose a copy of Cindy's piece "Koi Fish Pond" to display proudly in his office.

"So I'll be reminded every day when I come to the office of the talent we have here in this county," he said.

Cindy was among the winners whose art was framed and put on display for attendees to view at the event. It will be added to the more than 1,000 framed art pieces in the permanent, ever-growing collection that began wrapping the hallways and three floors of the Ridder Park building when the contest began in 1996.

"To put that in context, the San Jose Museum of Art has about 2,500 pieces of art," Mr. Gundry said. "We do know that this has become the largest collection of adjudicated student artwork in California."

In his comments, Mr. Gundry recognized that it often takes the work of devoted educators to inspire students to reach their potential, sharing an anecdote about an art teacher he met years ago as a principal in Pasadena Unified School District.

“This teacher devoted herself to the art car and inspiring kids to have a creative vision for what they can do with junk, and turn it into moving works of art,” Gundry said. “In the years I knew her, she worked at three different schools, from a very affluent community to a very low-income community, and everywhere she went kids won first place in the art car.”

He continued: “It was an important lesson for me as a young administrator to see just how important these inspiring young adults, particularly teachers who work so closely with kids, can really make a difference in children’s lives.”

This type of leadership was recognized shortly after Mr. Gundry’s address.

“Tonight we celebrate two outstanding leaders who helped make their schools shine as models for arts education, and demonstrate the vision needed to accomplish this,” said Melissa Christie, Director of Curriculum and Instruction with the SCCOE, standing beside Tokihiro. “It is our honor and privilege to introduce these two leaders as the inaugural recipients of our new award, the Artspiration Principal Arts Leader, or APAL award.”

Wanny Hersey, Superintendent and founding member of County Board of Education-authorized Bullis Charter School, was recognized along with Paul Winslow, founding member and principal of Christopher High School in the Gilroy Unified School District.

“In schools, support for the arts is critical to ensuring that students receive equitable access to arts education, which also requires inspirational leadership to help make this a reality,” Christie said.

###