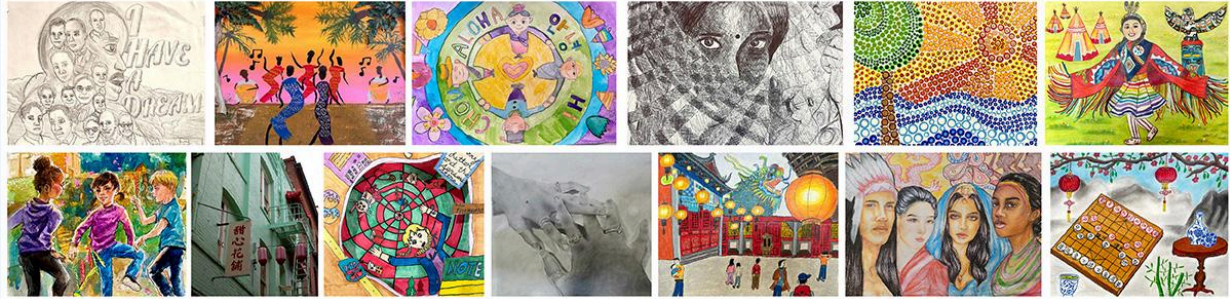




Artspiration Newsletter

April 2026 | Issue 8



Artspiration News

Celebrate Arts, Culture, and Creativity Month!

In 2019, the state of California has designated April as Arts and Culture Month, an effort led by Californians for the Arts. This organization is dedicated to raising awareness of the impact and power of the arts in our state. Their theme for engagement is Boundless Culture and Creativity. To get more information about this initiative (press releases and toolkits), please go to their website at the following link: <https://www.caforthearts.org/accm-2026>. The city of San Jose's [Office of Cultural Affairs](#) is conducting a celebration of Arts, Culture, and Creativity Month called WeCreate408. See the details in this newsletter.



A huge 'Thank You' to all the city councils that celebrated March as Youth Arts Month!

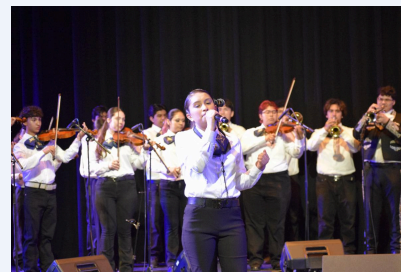
2026 ¡Viva el mariachi! Showcase

On Friday, March 20th, the Santa Clara County Office of Education presented the fourth annual 2026 ¡Viva el Mariachi! Showcase with Master of Ceremonies, Damian Trujillo, esteemed producer and host of *Comunidad del Valle* and Emmy Award winning NBC Bay Area reporter, at the Mexican Heritage Plaza Theater.

Youth mariachi and ballet folklorico groups from the Campbell Union School District, the San Jose Unified School District, the Milpitas Unified School District, the Sunnyvale School District, the East Side Union High School District, the Alisal Union School

District, and the Pajaro Valley Unified School District performed to a sold-out crowd of families and members of their respective educational communities.

A photo gallery and video of the performance will be posted on the [Viva el Mariachi Showcase](#) page of the Artspiration website. A small selection of photos of the performers are displayed below.



Artspiration Leadership Council 2025-26

This week, a team of arts leaders, arts educators, and school and county administrators met for the third session of a strategic planning process. We reviewed three options for a vision and mission statement to guide Artspiration over the next two years. The next meeting will be held virtually on April 21 to refine the focus for the work of Artspiration for 2026-2028. Deep gratitude to those who are coming along on this journey!

Register by clicking on the button below.

Artspiration Leadership Council
April 21, 2026, 4-5 online

Register for the Artspiration Leadership Council [Here!](#)

The 2026 Young Artist Showcase

**Theme - My Superpower:
The Power to Imagine. The Passion to Create.**

Everyone has a superpower—something that makes them unique, resilient, and extraordinary. It might be the rhythm in your music, the emotion in your performance, the movement in your dance, the vision in your art, or the message in your media.

“My Superpower” invites artists across all disciplines to explore and express the inner forces that define them. Whether it’s the courage to speak out, the power of imagination, or the strength to overcome, this theme celebrates the diverse ways we channel our creativity into something powerful.

Please look for our virtual gallery next month as well as the virtual Showcase for students, their families, and their teachers. See the information below.

- May 4, 2026| Online Student Art Gallery at www.sccoe.org/arts/yas
- May 14, 2026 | Young Artists Virtual Showcase Celebration: 4:00 p.m.

Registration for the 2026 Young Artist Showcase opens on Tuesday, April 14, 2026. Click on the link below to reach the registration page.

[Register for the Virtual Showcase Here.](#)

SCCOE Corner



Early Childhood Education: Music & Movement for Executive Function and Self Regulation in Young Children

According to [Music Together](#), all children are musical and born to be music-makers! Children don’t even need any materials to make music. They have bodies for moving, voices for singing, and brains for learning. The authors of a [study](#) on music training in preschoolers concluded that “music training has a positive effect on inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility in preschool

children aged 3-6 years.”

“S-p-i-n and stop!” “S-p-i-n and stop!” calls a TK teacher to her students spinning in circles on the carpet to music, dragging out the word “spin” to coincide with several beats of music. When she says “stop,” the music ceases. The children double over giggling when they stop, a few continue swirling.

Moving and freezing activities allow children to practice the executive function of inhibitory control. Freeze dance is also thrilling for children when tasked to freeze in a specific position—arms above the head, balancing on one foot, etc.

[Harvard Center on the Developing Child](#) states “the demands of songs and movement games support executive function because children have to move to a specific rhythm and synchronize words to actions and the music.” During the preschool and early elementary years, executive function and self-regulation skills grow at a fast pace. [Executive Function Activities for 3-5 year-olds](#) suggests music and movement activities such as songs that repeat and add a verse and a motion, such as “She’ll Be Coming Round the Mountain” or “Five Green and Speckled Frogs.”

If you or your local education agency needs support with developmentally age appropriate music and movement experiences, please contact the Learning & Instruction team at Santa Clara County Office of Education: Robyn Stone, Coordinator, rstone@sccoe.org

Partner Corner



WeCreate408

- Educators, get ready for the **#WeCreate408 Creative Challenge** this April - California Arts, Culture and Creativity Month.
- Access free, ready-to-use California Curriculum **lesson plans (Pre-K–5th grade)** for a month-long creativity challenge.
- Encourage all students to take part—use creative prompts as warm-ups, assignments, or extra credit.
- Let students know: creative responses can earn rewards like event tickets, stickers, and more.
- Explore the Creative Challenge and **lesson plans at #WeCreate408**.

Summer Offering:

Invite students and families to **Make Music Day, Sunday, June 21**—a free, all-ages music celebration.

Sign up to perform, host, or join! Info session: April 6, 4:00 PM.

Details: www.makemusicday.org/sanjose.



Grant Opportunities: The Educational Theatre Association

The Educational Theatre Foundation, in partnership with MTI, is offering three high schools the opportunity to receive no-cost licenses to produce *Ain't Too Proud* in 2027. This electrifying jukebox musical traces The Temptations' rise from the streets of Detroit to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, featuring beloved hits like "My Girl," "Get Ready," and "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone," alongside a powerful story of brotherhood, loyalty, and ambition. Applications are open March 1 through April 15, with recipients notified by May 1, 2026.

The Educational Theatre Foundation, in partnership with MTI, is offering three schools the opportunity to receive no-cost licenses to pilot the *Shrek the Musical Jr. Bilingual Version* in 2027. Selected middle and high schools with an active Thespian troupe or EdTA membership will receive a full MTI Jr. production package, including script, score, and accompaniment tracks, and will have the opportunity to provide feedback throughout the pilot process. Applications are open March 1 through April 15, with recipients announced by May 1, 2026, and productions taking place in 2027.

Applications are available here, along with a few other great opportunities as well: <https://foundation.schooltheatre.org/grants/production-grants/>.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Janie Slavens at foundation@schooltheatre.org.

Technical Assistance and Office Hours



As your County Arts Coordinator, I am available for consultation on all aspects of arts education and can provide professional learning for educators, arts organizations, and community organizations. If you would like to connect, send me an email. In my response email, use the hyperlink 'Book time with Sofia Fojas' to set up a meeting, found in my signature.

Questions? Schedule a 1:1 with Dr. Fojas

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