

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **South Whittier School Fosters Arts Education through Meet the Masters Program**

**SOUTH WHITTIER** – Lake Marie Elementary School classrooms transform into art studios once a month while students become budding artists whose creativity, inspiration and cultural curiosity are piqued as they learn about the fascinating lives and famous works of extraordinary master artists.

Over the last five years, students at the South Whittier K-6 school have been exposed to an engaging arts curriculum as part of Meet the Masters, a national arts education program designed to augment the core academic program and increase students' performance across disciplines.

An Arts for All School, Lake Marie has blazed a trail to increase quality and equity of arts instruction in South Whittier, with students learning about artistic movements throughout history and artists' techniques and famous works.

"This program is a fantastic way of integrating art history and various art methods into our students' education at an early age, while at the same time increasing their literacy, language proficiency and communication skills" Principal Lisa Palomino said. "Art has a profound impact on helping students develop critical thinking skills and learn how to express themselves through creative means."

During the year-long program, students learn about colors, textures and patterns to recreate personal art using the same medium, style and subject matter as the highlighted "master," including such as artists as Edgar Degas, Georgia O'Keeffe and M.C. Escher.

Lake Marie arts coordinator and kindergarten teacher Ruby Acosta assigns a master artist that is age-appropriate to each grade level and distributes program materials to teachers across the school. Meet the Masters supplies lesson plans and all the necessary materials to provide elementary school students interactive, multimedia arts education.

"Meet the Masters is a fun and easy way for teachers to incorporate arts education in a monthly lesson plan," Acosta said. "With students learning about periods of art history and culture, it promotes an overall well-rounded education."

Teachers provide background on a selected artist's life and works, historical significance, as well as information on the respective art movement and relevant vocabulary words. The lessons are supplemented

with slide shows, PowerPoints, videos and background music to be used as motivation while the students create.

This month Acosta taught her class about the life and work of French artist Henri Matisse. Students learned about Matisse's involvement in the abstract movement and the use of colors and shapes in his art. They were exposed to a new medium with paper cutouts, and followed his style to create their own underwater-themed decoupage pieces.

The next artist Acosta will introduce to her class is Frida Kahlo and her work with surrealism.

Students recently showcased their artwork at the District's Whittier Area Healthy Living and Resource Fair on May 20, getting the opportunity to win prizes for the top pieces.

"Lake Marie continues to give students excellent access to learning about arts education through studying famous artists and seeing real-world relevance for what they learn in class," Superintendent Gail Baxter said. "Lake Marie is the perfect example of how South Whittier embraces art and culture in education."

### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**052517\_SWSD\_MASTERS1:** Lake Marie Elementary is an Arts for All school that infuses arts into the academic curriculum, instituting such programs as Meet the Masters, a national arts education program that introduces artistic movements through history and highlighted artists to encourage a passion for arts and culture.

**052517\_SWSD\_MASTERS2:** Lake Marie kindergarten students learned about the life and work of Henri Matisse and his use of colors and shapes in his art. As part of the lesson, students take colorful paper cutouts and mimic Matisse's style to create underwater-themed pieces.

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