



community school of
music and arts

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Meet Lupe: *Art in the Schools* encourages her dreams

Across the freeway from the affluence of Silicon Valley, the lock-down gate that protects Costaño School from neighborhood violence makes it clear that things are different here. Fully supported by the Yahoo Employee and Shutterfly Foundations, the Palo Alto Rotary Club, and other institutional grantors, CSMA has been able to provide weekly art classes for K-8th grades at Costaño for 5 years.

Lupe M. is a 6th grader and the youngest of 9 children. She loves art because “you can put all of your emotions and dreams into it. Art is the main way to express my own feelings and feel inspired in life.”



Lupe's favorites are her jaguar and “passionate fingers” projects. “This jaguar adds something to my imagination because his polka dots are just like memories on him,” she explains. Her “passionate fingers” piece reminds her of tattooing that is common in her culture. “It helps me connect to the world. It represents peace and the sign language of love.”

Right now, Lupe's working on a paper collage. “I feel like Picasso,” she exclaims. “Picasso makes shapes into faces, and helps you see things you wouldn't see and makes things that I didn't know. It's so fantastic!” Her dream is to become a pediatrician. “When I become my dream,” she says, “I want to show kids how to paint so that they can put their art on the wall and feel better.”

Harmony Hayes, a 6th grade teacher and self-described reading and math specialist, appreciates that CSMA's instructors bring artistic talents and perspectives to Costaño. “Art gives students who are academically challenged another way to excel and feel good about themselves.” Even students who have classroom attention issues “are fully engaged with what's going on in art class. That's phenomenal!”

“It's really sad that art's the first thing to go when the budget gets cut,” Mrs. Hayes continues. “Colleges want you to have that background, and other students get it. Our students don't go to museums, art shows and things like that. The art classes help them to become culturally aware. And it's not just the art; it's the information that comes from it. Our students wouldn't get this otherwise.”