

March 26, 2012

Arts Integration at Lafayette, Jackie Snowden, Arts Integration Coordinator

Spring is in the air and that signals the beginning of us thinking about plans for next year. As a staff we have some say in what CETA (Changing Education Through the Arts) course Lafayette will host next year and individuals can begin to think about the arts integration strategy they'd like to master. Some of the things we consider when submitting our top three choices are: the appropriateness of the strategy for all grade levels, which course will fit best with current curriculum, which and how many teachers in the building have already taken the course, and do we want to build expertise in a particular strategy and thereby be able to coach others in the building? It is not a random selection.

We were fortunate to host an "in-house" field trip, with a presentation from Class Acts Arts, sponsored by the Smithsonian Associates Discovery Theater on Tour. The play, *How Old is a Hero?* tells the stories of three young activists, Ruby, Ernest, and Claudette, who stood up for what they believed in. They brought their hope and energy to one great cause, ending segregation in the American South" (Class Acts Arts).

We've enjoyed a variety of musical presentations during Music in Our School Month assemblies, not the least of which was the first presentation by our newly formed Lafayette Step Team. We've hosted visiting artists teaching demonstration lessons, courses, or providing coaching. Third grade has been using *Human Slide Shows* and *Reading Portraiture as Biography* as they prepare for the DC Theater Café. Fourth-graders wrote *Six Word Memoirs* about historic figures they studied in social studies to prepare for constructing *collographs*, a form of print making, in art. Fifth grade demonstrated what they've learned about "the great migration" at their informance. It was a real showcase of so many disciplines, cartography, visual art, poetry, tableau, and dancing.

Finally, we hosted Amy Dumas, CETA's Director of Teacher and School Programs, for our annual site visit. She met with Ms. Main, observed arts integrated instruction in four classrooms, toured the building, and met with the CETA Strategic Planning Committee and

the classroom teachers whose lessons she observed, all between 9 and 12. Overall she was very pleased with our progress as a CETA school. We had an honest discussion about where improvements can be made and how we can continue to demonstrate how valuable arts integration is and the impact it has on student learning. A special thank you to Ms. Baker (Pre-K), Ms. Plummer (1P), Ms. Yedwab (3Y), and Ms. Shapiro (4S) for their outstanding demonstrations. Watching them in action reinforced what I already know: using arts integration helps “to facilitate the development of the social/emotional, academic, kinesthetic, and artistic growth of the WHOLE CHILD” (LES Visiofirst graders use their bodies to show the “elements of art.”