



The MAEA News

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President's Message

From Kristi Oliver



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” --
Margaret Mead

National Art Education Association (NAEA) Executive Director, Deborah Reeve shared this quote with state leaders this past March at the annual delegates assembly. It stayed with me as I experienced the convention in all of its overwhelming energy, and, as I sit to write this article weeks later, I find myself still thinking-- we can change the world. As art educators in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we certainly have a unique perspective, and come from a grand history of art education pioneers. We have a sense of duty, a need to serve others, and a great deal of passion that allows us to work towards enhancing visual arts experiences for all learners across the state. Our mission to advance high quality visual arts education throughout the state by empowering art educators to excel in the practice, instruction, promotion, and celebration of visual art is not a small feat. We are only as strong as our members, and as a board we strive to serve you well.

As an association, we have certainly had a number of successes and changes recently. Last summer, a healthy group of MAEA representatives attended the first ever NAEA Leadership Conference, *The Artistry of Leadership*, a four-day leadership boot camp in Santa Fe, New Mexico. During this intense experience, we explored our leadership competencies, and honed our skills in hopes of becoming the most effective leaders possible. We arrived back in Massachusetts completely exhausted and inspired. This experience helped us lay the groundwork for our big task: tackling the structure of the association and updating our official documents. We began the school year with a retreat to update our constitution and bylaws, reformat the leadership roles with clear descriptions, and strengthen our NAEA alignment as a state affiliate. After many productive discussions and creative problem solving, we were able to bring our documents, and our mission into the 21st century. Then, it was time for the fun! We put out a call for all of our new Board positions and prepared for our annual conference.

In November of 2014 we held our conference in Boston, graciously co-hosted by Massachusetts College of Art & Design, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and the Museum of Fine Arts. We had over 60 sessions, celebrated our creative endeavors in three exhibitions (featuring members, our pre-service division/ student chapters, and National Art honor society members), and experienced an inspirational keynote address by Nathalie Miebach. During this event, we also honored our 2015 award winners from each division, and we are incredibly happy to have our Massachusetts Art Educator of the Year, Alice Gentili as the new MAEA President-Elect!

The new year brought its own changes, including record snowfall, but that did not slow this association down! We continued to meet monthly and began planning for Youth Art Month, Art All-State, our annual conference, and the NAEA Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. The various committees began planning for their various events, and the MAEA leaders began preparing for the annual NAEA delegates assembly (check out Alice Gentili's article for a full NAEA convention round-up).

We certainly have been busy with all of these positive changes taking place; ultimately it is our members that keep us going. We look forward to monthly meetings, which provide us an important venue to discuss topics and formulate plans to ensure the success of our mission. We encourage all MAEA members to join us at the monthly meetings. We would love to hear your point of view, and hope that you all will get involved in some way. We have many committees that meet both physically and virtually allowing effective collaboration, and dynamic committee chairs who would love your help!

What are we up to next?! The MAEA Board is actively planning the annual conference, Curiosity | Inquiry | Wonder to take place in North Adams, Massachusetts co-hosted by MASS MoCA, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), and the Clark Art Institute. With this inspirational location, rich with creative spirit, we are incredibly excited to see what workshop proposals you will create. If you didn't get to submit a proposal for the 2015 conference, start thinking about the 2016 conference. We encourage first time presenters and are always here to lend a helping hand if you need assistance in creating a strong proposal.

In addition, planning for Art All-State is actively underway! The committee just completed the student selection process and we are looking forward to accepting 144 of the Commonwealth's high school juniors to experience a two-day art-making extravaganza. Please join us at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth on the afternoon of June 13 to view the creative installations created by these collaborative teams.

Do we stop there!? Nope! The MAEA leaders are also headed to the Eastern Region Leadership Retreat in Northport, Maine this June to craft platform and position statements, address concerns and issues relevant to our states, and come up with innovative solutions to the matters at hand. When we return we will be coming together again to work on creating a policy manual to help us organize our committee work and procedures for the next generation of leaders. We are continually looking for opportunities to assist and engage our members from every corner of the commonwealth, and look forward to creating invigorating content-specific professional development opportunities that help our members advance our collective mission.

As MAEA President, I challenge each and every one of you to effect positive change in art education. What can you commit to doing that will advance art education in your school, district, or across the state? How can MAEA support you as you work to conquer your goals? As one of my wise students often says, *many hands make light work*.



Visual Notes from the NAEA Conference

Letter from the Editor

Welcome! Now Get Involved!

Welcome to the first digital publication from the Massachusetts Art Education Association. Our goal with this publication is to share what is happening around the commonwealth in art education. In this publication you'll learn more about what is happening in the association, how you can participate in the association, and what to keep an eye out for in terms of upcoming conferences, exhibits, and workshops.

It is our intent to provide useful information, and we hope that you will help us provide that information. MAEA doesn't work without all of the wonderful members. If you have something you'd like to share, we will be putting out three publications a year. One in the spring, one in the fall, and one in the winter.

To submit an article for the fall publication, please send it to editor@massarted.com by August 20, 2015. Please include any high quality photographs you'd like to include with the article.



Second graders from Luther Conant School in Acton, MA painting a spring themed window mural

Are you on Social Media? If so, follow us on:

Twitter: [@MassArtEd](https://twitter.com/MassArtEd)

Facebook: [Massachusetts Art Education Association](https://www.facebook.com/MassachusettsArtEducationAssociation)

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Board Meetings

Thursday June 18, New Bedford Art Museum 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Saturday July 18, Bunker Hill Community College 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Eastern Region Leadership Retreat (Team East)

June 26 – June 28, 2015 in Northpoint, Maine

For more information please visit: www.aeforme.org/MAEA/Team_East.html

MAEA Fall Conference 2015

Curiosity | Inquiry | Wonder

held in North Adams on Saturday November 7th – Sunday November 8th

For more information visit www.massarted.com/MAEA_conference2015

Exhibits – On View Now

The Art of the Sullivan/Young Family Now – July 1, 2015 at the State Transportation Building, Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Art Educators of Massachusetts - MAEA Summer Juried Exhibit June 1 – September 18, 2015 at the State Transportation Building, Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Exhibit Opportunities

Curious Encounters:Members Exhibition

Digital Submissions due September 15, 2015

November 7 – November 28, 2015 at MCLA Gallery 51, 51 Main Street, North Adams, MA 02147, Open Daily 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Navigation the Imagination: NAHS Exhibition

Digital Submissions due September 15, 2015

November 7 – November 28, 2015 at MCLA Press Gallery, 49 Main Street, North Adams, MA 02147, Open Daily 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

NAEA15 Chronicles

By Alice Gentili, President-Elect

If you have never been to the National Art Education Association's annual convention, you may want to read this. If you have been, and if you were there this year, you may want to read this, too. I have read many accounts of the convention experience already this spring, and I am struck by how different our experiences are.

I went to New Orleans to be in the company of 4000 other art educators at the National Art Education Association (NAEA) annual convention. I went as a delegate for the Massachusetts Art Education Association (MAEA), as a presenter, as an award recipient, as a member of a global Professional Learning Network, and as a student of best practices in art education. My plate was full and I was excited!



Tuesday: This was a travel day. It passed quickly with MAEA president, Kristi Oliver, in the seat next to me. Flying from Boston to New Orleans did not take long at all, but what a difference there in climate and atmosphere! We were so happy to finally have a break from our record-setting New England winter to feel the warmth and humidity of Louisiana!

Wednesday: The NAEA Delegates Assembly began bright and early the following day. I was elected as President-Elect of the Massachusetts Art Education Association in January, and with that, became a voting delegate for the Eastern Region of the NAEA Leadership. I had been reading through the position statements and issues group proposals for the past month, and we had discussed them with the MAEA executive board. After reviewing them one more time the night before, I felt ready to discuss and debate the various items. Two of the issues I felt passionate about were the creation of a Media Arts issues group (different from the Art Education and Technology issues group), and whether or not there should be a position statement endorsing TAB (Teaching Artistic Behaviors) over other teaching methodologies. There were several other important positions and policies to review, and it was a full day.

The decisions made at the Delegates Assembly are posted on the NAEA website at: bit.ly/NAEA15Chronicles2

Thursday: The next morning was the official opening day of the convention. First we heard the inspirational words of NAEA President Dennis Inhulsen, who would end his term at the close of the convention to become Past-President.

"When I look out and see all of you, I think of you as teachers," he said, "And when I think of you, I think of all the art education students you're representing back home."

I thought about my students back in Massachusetts, and what art education had meant to me when I was their age, and art education in our district, and art education in our state, and art education across the country... and I realized at that moment that what we were doing there in New Orleans was terribly important.

When Dennis was finished, Tim Gunn of Project Runway fame took the stage and shared many words of wisdom through an interview format. He was funny, yet motivating as he told his stories about being a fashion student as well as an educator.



Talking about reaching students of all levels, whether they are "brilliant children who fly around with angel wings" or those who struggle with the most basic of tasks, Tim said, "For me, it's always about taking that snapshot during the first couple of days of classes, and figuring out how high I can raise the bar so that the students at the top are still reaching for it, the students at the bottom are going to exceed their own expectations of themselves, and learn and thrive in this environment, and everyone in the middle benefits also."

Seeing Tim Gunn was thrilling. It buoyed me through the rest of the morning as I rehearsed my presentations, which I hadn't looked at since the weekend before. The first presentation took place at 2:00. It was about my students and my journey with using a 3D printer in the middle school art room. You can find the link to the presentation here: bit.ly/NAEA15Chronicles3. You can read more about our no-cost 3D printing journey here: bit.ly/NAEA15Chronicles4.

The presentation went well and there were so many interested people in the room! 3D printing is a fascinating new technology, and art educators everywhere are interested in including it in their art curriculum. It's a natural fit, as you'll see in the presentation linked above.

There were a lot of questions and connections made after the presentation, and when all was said and done, I had just one hour before my next presentation, which was to be held back at the hotel. While walking there from the convention center, I consciously worked on switching the focus from the 3D printing topic to my next



presentation, "Extending the Learning Digitally," a collaborative presentation with Illinois art educator, Tricia Fuglestad. Tricia made a video covering her entries into the presentation. I copied segments to add to our PowerPoint presentation. Because I was actually presenting, I was able to talk through my content, all still photos. If you have any questions about any of my content, contact me, I'll be happy to explain the projects and methods. You can see the presentation here: bit.ly/NAEA15Chronicles5

Friday: With my presentations behind me, I was able to explore the exhibit hall and attend some sessions! A memorable session from this day was "Critical Making: Making the Future," with Rhode Island School Of Design

President, Roseanne Somerson. This presentation took "making" beyond the 3D printer and maker space to a whole new realm of possibility. Ms. Somerson presented fascinating ideas and her own beautiful furniture design work. When the presentation was finished, I made my way to the exhibit hall.

The exhibit hall was bustling with activity. I checked in with the companies whose products I use, such as Dick Blick, Mayco, Artsonia (free T-shirts for subscribers), and The Art of Education (fun pins) to see what is new and improved. I picked up a few more posters for the art room and some fun advocacy trinkets. I talked to vendors about new products. I usually wait patiently for a spot at the creativity table of at least one vendor in the exhibit hall, but unfortunately there was not time this year.

The next event was the Eastern Region Leadership meeting facilitated by Peter Geisser. This was just a check-in meeting with leadership from each of the eastern states to share accomplishments and challenges. Kristi and I shared about MAEA's renewed focus on increasing membership, on our recent website work, and focus on social media to get out the news of the association. I look forward to spending more time with this group at the Team East retreat in late June.

I would see them shortly, though, at the Eastern Region Awards ceremony later in the afternoon. I was recognized at this ceremony for being named 2015 Massachusetts Art Educator of the Year. After an introduction by Kristi and Peter, and my brief acceptance speech, I was presented with a certificate, flowers, and a crown. It is an honor to have received this award and the ceremony was memorable.

Saturday: I had the morning without commitments so I took the streetcar up to the New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA). I had no idea that there would be an Easter egg hunt



and celebration going on in the sculpture garden. The place was hopping with families and fun. It was quiet inside the museum and I had a chance to see some nice regional art as well as works by the masters.

I returned to the convention center via cab in time for the NAEA President's meeting. After the meeting was a presentation by artist Lisa Hoke, whose work I first discovered in 2012 at the Springfield Museum in Massachusetts. I am a big fan of her vibrant colorful collages created with cardboard packaging so I was very excited to hear her speak.



Following her presentation, I was lucky enough to have a ticket to the after-session with the artist. About thirty of us gathered in a room with Lisa in the center, talking about her life, her work, making a living at art today, and shoes - after someone complimented her on her boots. It was a warm and personal experience. Talking about the creative process and artistic voice, Lisa said, "That life can be that crazy that the thing we diminish so much, that thing that we're doing, and that we keep doing it, eventually, some quality about ourselves comes through and makes it uniquely ours."

That succinct summary of what we as artists go through with our work was the perfect last clip from my #NAEA15 NOLA experience. NAEA15 was hectic, stimulating, and thought-provoking. It was great to see friends and meet online acquaintances. The weather was great and the food was terrific. I am so happy I went. My flight left early the next morning and I returned to Boston satiated. Yet I can't wait until next year!

Youth Art Month, 2015



By Helen Downey

Once again more than six hundred works of art transformed the State Transportation Building!

From March 9 through April 24 six hundred thirty-two students from fifty-eight Massachusetts cities and towns had the honor of having their work on display in this year's statewide Youth Art Month exhibit. Sponsored by MAEA, one hundred thirty-five teachers submitted student work, grades K-12, to this annual celebration of art education.



Attended by an estimated fifteen hundred people, the YAM Family Celebration was held on Sunday March 22 and featured the reading of a proclamation from Governor Walsh obtained for us by Senator Jamie Eldridge, and a proclamation from the House of Representatives provided by Representative Danielle Gregoire.

In addition, NAEA Eastern Region Vice President, Peter Geisser, Vice President Elect, June Krisky-Rudder, and MAEA President, Kristi Oliver spoke on the importance of art education.

The remainder of the program consisted of student recognitions. While the YAM Exhibit is a non-juried show, certain opportunities to acknowledge student work do exist. A list of the students who received recognitions may be found at the end of this article.

“Begun in 1961 by the Arts and Creative Materials Institute, with the cooperation of the NAEA, Youth Art Month is celebrated nationally each March as a means of emphasizing the value of art education for all children, encouraging support for quality school art programs and promoting art material safety.”

The mission of the Massachusetts Art Education Association is to advance high quality visual arts education throughout the state by empowering art educators to excel in the practice, instruction, promotion, and celebration of visual art.

To those ends MAEA sees the *statewide* exhibit as an opportunity to demonstrate to the public the quality and importance of art education from across Massachusetts while celebrating student work.

All the work from the YAM Exhibit is available to be viewed on the YAM page of the MAEA website at www.massarted.com/yam.html

There have been and still are a variety of other YAM celebrations across the state including school, district, and regional shows. There have been shows on the North Shore, the Cape, Plymouth County, and Central Massachusetts at the Worcester Art Museum. There are also plans in the works for a show in the Berkshires next year!



MAEA recognizes the importance of these local and regional exhibits and encourages their continuation. The MAEA statewide show in Boston is designed to augment these other shows, not replace them.

We are happy to spotlight all YAM celebrations on the MAEA website. Simply send an email to youthartmonth@massarted.com, and include the information, photos, or even videos and we will add them to the YAM across Massachusetts page currently under construction.

Plans for the MAEA YAM 2016 have already begun. We look forward to your participation!

YAM FLAG CONTEST

Ellie Davis, grade 4, Somerville; Jose Santos, art teacher

Henry Ayanna, grade 6, Somerville; Jose Santos, art teacher

Katherine DiBlasi, grade 9, Milford; Marcia Anzalone, art teacher

Riley Grinkis, grade 12, Gardner, Sue Gallagher, art teacher

Kaitlyn Whelan grade 11,
Gardner; Sue Gallagher, art
teacher

*Kaitlyn's design, seen here on
the right, was made into our
2015 flag and was on display at
the NAEA convention in New
Orleans.*



ARTWORK EXHIBITED at the YAM EXHIBIT - NAEA CONVENTION, New Orleans

Coen Nyce, grade K, Chelmsford; Jane Cristantiello, art teacher

Arianna Kell, grade 1, Milford; Lisa Duarte, art teacher

Shaylee Wells, grade 2, Worcester; Susan Slepetz, art teacher



Sarah Anderson, grade 3, Acton; Heidi
Kupferman, art teacher

Michelle Batisa, grade 4, Lawrence; Corinne
D'Onofrio, art teacher

Henry Allen, grade 5, Carlisle; Rachel Levy, art
teacher

Ella Hilfinger, grade 6, Westborough; Jackie
O'Rourke, art teacher

Hannah Addi, grade 7, Franklin; Megan Walker,
art teacher



Jessica Murray, grade 8, Norwell; Christine Bodnar, art teacher
Calvin Toran-Sandlin, grade 9, Falmouth; Jane Baker, art teacher
Marissa Crowlley, grade 10, Gardner; Sue Gallagher, art teacher
Darby Curtain, grade 11, Lee; Ginger Armstrong, art teacher
Kendell Carmody, grade 12, Hull; Amanda Held-Davis, art teacher

SARGENT ART RECOGNITIONS



Katie Wang, grade 1, Framingham; Donna Maxwell, art teacher

Andrew Murphy, grade 7, Mendon; Alice Gentili, art teacher

Amanda Laughead, grade 12, Falmouth; Corinne Adams, art teacher

and

Gati Aher, grade 8, Burlington; Laura Phillips, art teacher

Gati, one of her parents, and her art teacher will receive an all-expense-paid trip to New York City, sponsored by Sargent Art.



“You can learn from us” The Art of Listening to Young Children

By Mary Geisser

The first week as a teacher assistant at the University of Rhode Island’s lab school, I remember being in awe of the absolute “cuteness” of the three-year-olds that I was going to be working with. My supervising teacher told me that if I was going to work in Early Childhood Education, I needed to rethink my understanding and my perspective of children if I was going to be a good teacher and that I needed to banish the words, “cute, precious, and adorable” from my vocabulary.

A few weeks later I understood what she meant when one of our three-year-old students told a visiting artist, “we are all artists, when we imagine and create.” From that point on, I realized that young children have a very powerful voice and are capable of complex and abstract thinking, but they need to be provided with the environments, the time, and the opportunities to be listened to.



Play and creativity are the fundamental basis for young childrens’ learning and its role should not be minimized in schools. As educators, we need to reflect on our assumptions on what children are capable of: wondering, creating, researching, and understanding. It is this core perception of children that impacts the learning experiences and the environments that we provide them.



From listening to the voiced concerns of teachers over the last ten years, a picture begins to build of a chronic underestimation of young children’s potential for creative thinking, for understanding abstract concepts, and their ability to be advocates for social change (more on this later). It is through language and experience that children develop the ability to think abstractly. This ability will emerge at different stages in a child’s development and

continually refine itself depending on the environments children are exposed to and the opportunities they are provided with.

The process of education's movement into standardized curriculums measured through test results has left newer teachers unprepared to realize the full potential of their young charges. Fundamental to the true benefit of all education is the image of the child that teachers hold before they ever begin the act of nurturing a child's learning. Are children beings that are weak and need sheltering from complicated and challenging experiences? Should knowledge and information be poured into them as though they were an empty vessel? Or, are children individuals that come to classrooms with their own experiences, curiosity, imagination, interests, and creativity, who are capable of constructing their own understandings of the world around them? Are they capable of complex thinking skills and the 21st century skills needed to reflect on their own learning? Teachers will often argue that with the demands of curriculum, testing, and the sheer numbers of students it is not possible or even practical to listen to each child. Perhaps, now is an appropriate time to question why we do what we do.

For an educator to ignore the voices, capabilities, and potential of children could be seen as neglecting the duties of their chosen calling. Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the philosophy behind the Early Childhood Centers in Reggio Emilia, Italy, believed that as educators our image of the child is the groundwork from which all of our educational practices stem.



“It's necessary that we believe that the child is very intelligent, that the child is strong and beautiful and has very ambitious desires and requests. This is the image of the child that we need to hold.

Those who have the image of the child as fragile, incomplete, weak, made of glass gain something from this belief only for

themselves. We don't need that as an image of children. Instead of always giving children protection, we need to give them the recognition of their rights and of their strengths.” (Malaguzzi, 1993, p. 54)

Malaguzzi's image of the child impacts the development of curriculum, policies, and programs for children, and in turn how we educate our teachers. Reggio-inspired educators believe that the child and teacher are co-learners in the development of knowledge. It is through listening to each other, providing materials, space, and time for exploration that children are able to research and develop rich understandings.

This reciprocal role, of the teacher and child as co-learners, necessitates that educators first learn how to listen. "Reggio educators talk about 'the pedagogy of listening' (Rinaldi, 2001, p. 80). This is listening with our whole being. It is listening that values and gives value to the thinking and experience children bring to each encounter. It is listening that opens time and space so children can be who they are" (Tarr, 2003, p. 9).



Mindful listening includes more than listening to sounds and words, it includes watching, observing, and allowing children the freedom to express their thoughts in a safe and comfortable environment. What are children interested in? What questions do they have about the world, each other, and the topics they are studying? Teachers who believe that children are capable of these questions support the learning of not only individual students, but the greater learning community as well. It is through listening that we can scaffold childrens' play and work to provide them with provocations that challenge their thinking.

A few years ago, I observed a class in which a group of beginning art teachers came to speak to a group of art education students at Lesley University. One of the teachers mentioned to the class that she loved teaching every grade in elementary school, except for the kindergartners. When I asked her why, her reply was, "Because they can't do anything yet." My skin crawled at this comment. Having worked with children from 3-7 years old, I have found that kindergartners can do almost anything that they put their minds to. My own kindergarten class had just completed an investigation to prove that children could be artists to disbelieving adults. They created works of art,

documented art in their lives, wrote poetry, and interviewed children, teachers, and family members to find out what people thought the terms: “art, artist, imagination, creativity, and poetry” meant. They had also created a poster campaign initiated by children to protest the vandalism that had been done to our school window and all the local shops on the street. When asked how they could solve problems, my students typically found ways to make issues of concern visible to each other but also the greater community.

I asked the young art teacher if she had observed what the students were interested in, what they were capable of, and if she was providing them with opportunities for open-ended exploration? The teacher looked at me as though I had three heads, and responded “No! They need to learn how to create the project that I had planned.” This perspective negates all we know about the nature of young children and how to engage them. Honestly, if we as educators cannot take the time listen to children, then how do we expect them to listen to us?



One of my former students, Jack, came to visit me when he entered first grade. It was his insistence that children “were artists”, which led to our kindergarten’s investigation on the meaning of art. He could not wait for his first “real” art class in his new school, because his teacher said it was the only time they could do art. Jack came to visit after his first art class, but was not looking very happy.

Jack: “Mary, you got me in trouble!”

Me: “Oh, no. How did I do that?”

Jack: “Because you told me that children are artists and that we can imagine and do anything.”

Me: “You are right you can do anything that you put your mind to, and remember you discovered all the ways and reasons that children are artists?”

Jack: “Yes I think we are artists. And being an artist means that you need to imagine.”

Me: So what was the problem?

Jack: “My art teacher said that it is not about imagining, but following directions so that maybe someday I can be an artist.”

My heart sunk as I heard this.

Me: “Jack, how do you feel about that?”

Jack: “Well... I brought her our book, and showed her that I had proof of what art is. She said that it was “cute,” but I still needed to listen to the directions. I decided that I would do what she said, so I wouldn’t get in trouble. But I do my real art when I go home so I can imagine.”



Two years ago, I ran into Jack and his family at the theatre. He is now a teenager, but he remembered me as the teacher that got him into trouble when he was little. His mother laughed and told me that I was also the teacher who taught him that it was okay to look for answers and to be confident in his own voice. As a teacher, I could not have imagined a greater compliment.

Loris Malaguzzi believed that children communicate visually, linguistically, imaginatively, kinesthetically, musically, and in a hundred other ways. An enriching early childhood experience integrates what he called “the Hundred Languages of Children” into each and every learning experience. As educators, it is our job to learn to see these hundred languages and then to integrate them into our classrooms, in order to provide children with multiple ways to spark their creativity and curiosity. This lesson is applicable in every learning space, whether it be in the art room, the classroom, or the playground. Poet and educator, Richard Lewis stated “it is dispiriting to realize how much of the inward genius of childhood learning disappears with age, and it is only with prompting that we are able to catch a glimpse of the marvel of our first years” (2010, p. 46). We need to encourage students like Jack to use their imagination and not to allow an increasingly standardized setting to crush their confidence, enthusiasm, and creative genius.

Ultimately, by viewing children as capable and full of potential, teachers can empower their students from a young age to have confidence and passion in their abilities to think creatively and to shape their own learning. By adopting this image of the child we also learn about ourselves as educators and that we have much to learn from our youngest students. Working with young children, we are constantly privy to moments of wonder and magical thinking. Teaching gives us the rare opportunity to “be advocates of the immeasurable” and allow ourselves to enter into a world that is constantly at question - affording us the opportunity for a lifetime of growth (Lewis, 2010, p. 13).

As June, a 4.5 year old, once told me:
“Kids have a special imagination, more than grown ups. Well, grown-ups have a bigger imagination than kids, but kids have a wider, spacer brain and they think about more stuff, more than grown ups, because we imagine more. You can learn a lot from us.”



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Are You Ready to Take a Leadership Role?

By June Krinsky-Rudder

Though you may not think that you are ready for a leadership role, perhaps you are mistaken. I say this as someone who seems to have fallen into leadership roles quite by accident, rather than by design, though what really happened is that I saw things that I could help with, and chose to get involved.

What does it take to be a leader? It takes qualities that you already possess as an art educator. I used to think that one had to be comfortable speaking in front of large groups, and enjoy being the 'center of attention' in order to lead. While those are characteristics that might be shared by some more charismatic leaders, neither applies to me, and might not apply to you either. To be a leader, you only need to have a vision about how to improve something, or create something that doesn't yet exist, and convince at least one other person that your idea is worthwhile so he/she can help you to realize the vision. You don't even need to start with something so grand as an idea about improving something; you can start by helping to fill a role in a group or organization that needs your skills. I ended up joining the MAEA Board when I was asked to join a group of other art educators for lunch (maybe breakfast) at a conference. Somehow, when the meal ended, I was the new Secondary Education Representative. It was that simple...at the beginning.

To start, I was told that I had to attend a majority of MAEA Board meetings, which were held monthly, and at the time mostly in Newton. I was expected to write occasional articles that were relevant for secondary art educators for publication in the MAEA newsletter. That was all that I needed to do.

Of course, it's very difficult to limit your involvement when you become engaged with a group of passionate, caring, intelligent people who are interested in many of the same things that you are. I sat on the local planning committee for the National Art Education Association convention when it was held in Boston. (Those committees in recent years have been tasked with more responsibilities, leading to a local flavor in each location.) I joined the Advisory Board of The Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards (not something I, or MAEA, are involved in any longer). I helped to hang multiple exhibits of student and art educator work. I served on

conference planning committees, and gave workshops at numerous conferences. I traveled to conferences and conventions out-of-state, serving on Delegates Assembly at a number of NAEA conventions. In short, one thing led to another, and my activities followed my interests. I eventually took on more leadership activities as Vice President (now called “President-elect”, as it is in the NAEA), and then President (each are two-year terms), followed by two years of advisory service in the role of “Past President”). I am currently the Eastern Region VP Elect for the National Art Education Association.



The Massachusetts Art Education Association is unique in its ability to seek participation by new members, and to keep veteran members engaged as well. When I became president, my goal was to bring new board members into ‘the fold’, and keep as many of the veteran members as was possible. One way in which I did this was to move meetings to different locations around the state. Given that meetings are usually held after a school day, a number of people were stuck in traffic for a meeting in one location, and others got caught on other days, in other places. On the bright side, we did get new people involved, and kept many of our veterans, and we all worked together

to advocate for art education, and to increase opportunities for both art teachers and their students to have more public displays of their work. You can now join meetings virtually, and participate in that way. We upgraded our website – now in at least its 3rd upgrade since that time, and expanded our digital communications with members (now greatly expanded!) and visitors to our website. Massachusetts

Art Education Association Members are automatically members of the National Art Education Association allowing access to the benefits of that organization as well. Being a member allows you the opportunity to share your best practices at conferences...or you can write an article for the new newsletter! (Both of these things are more critical given the new teacher evaluation system, which encourages professional engagement.) These accomplishments were not mine, but that of the volunteer board, and additional volunteers who prefer to work on projects that interest them, rather than attending monthly meetings and focusing on policy or budget items. Volunteers make things happen because they believe in those things, and put in the work. Substitute the word “volunteer” with the word “leader,” and maybe you can more clearly see yourself in a leadership role.

All of you are leaders in your art rooms. You know what you want to accomplish, and you plan to make sure it happens – ordering supplies, planning lessons, delivering lessons, modifying lessons, diversifying your approach, reflecting on what worked, and making changes for the future... All of these things qualify you to lead in larger venues. How many of you take on tasks for your schools or art departments? Do you engage your school communities? Have you done work with parents or with other teachers? Are you actively involved with any community art organizations? Have you started an artists’ group? Do you communicate with elected officials about the importance of art education? Do you communicate with family, friends, and colleagues about the importance of art education? Do you regularly visit art museums and attend Open Studios where you live? Have you given a workshop for someone in addition to your usual students? Do you mentor student teachers? Have you donated art materials for needy students? Donated art for a worthy cause? Do you mentor a National Art honor society or Junior National Art honor society? Have you held an “Empty Bowls” event? All of these are acts of leadership. Leading is action.

Are you ready to take on a leadership role? I think you are!