

The Magic of Art and Science

By Sal Steinberg, Friends of the Van Duzen River, Healthy Streams Supplemental Grant

One of our collaborators, Barbara A. Domanchuk Media, coined the phrase Ecology and the Arts. This concept combines the understanding of nature with the expression of the individual. It merges thought with feeling, and presents a physical manifestation of a student's interior landscape. Our Healthy Streams supplemental grant was fortunate to have gifted artists, Cat McAdams, Dan Levinson, and Gus Clark work with students in the Eel River Watershed.

Cat McAdams, local artist, conducted art lessons at two schools. At Bridgeville Elementary School's Watershed Day, she led students through an imaginary journey painting a Flying Fish with the capacity to both swim and fly, and also engaged in butterfly chalk drawings with grades K-2. At Scotia Elementary, Cat McAdams conducted a three lesson set specializing in crows, birds flying toward the sun, and godwits in the sand.

Poetry abounded at Hydesville and Scotia elementary schools. Students in Mrs. Griffith's 5th grade wrote poems on becoming better planetary citizens, while Mrs. Collar's 6th grade class had the golden opportunity to participate in a five day poetry workshop with Dan Levinson, California Poet in the Schools. At Scotia Elementary, Mrs. Gossien's class participated in the Redwood Audubon Society's writing contest "What Nature Means to Me". Molly Sager, 8th grader, won in the junior division with Jeshelle Royal and Cecil Smith receiving Honorable Mention. Selected poetry will be posted on the Friends of the Van Duzen Website www.fovd.org

Another of the highlights of the Healthy Streams Supplemental grant was the painting workshops at Cuddeback Elementary conducted by Gus Clark, local Eureka artist. Over two full days in Spring, Gus Clark and his assistants were able to guide 122 students in grades K-8 through various tempera paint projects which included animal drawings, collages, and mandalas. A dozen of Gus's paintings had been on display in each of the classrooms and the office. This statement was read to all of the students.

Augustus Clark Artist Statement for Cuddeback Elementary School students

Augustus Clark has been drawing and painting all of his life. His first major project was a large mural in kindergarten! Gus graduated from Fortuna High where his favorite class each year was art. Following high school, he attended UC Santa Cruz earning a BA Degree in studio art. He then studied classical painting techniques at the Lyme Academy in Connecticut. For the past few years, Gus has been showing and selling his work, primarily at his studio, located at 208 C Street in Old Town, Eureka. Come and visit during Arts Alive, the first Saturday evening of each month!



Gus was a wonderful teacher! He conducted whole group lessons for each class in the now redesigned Art Room. Thanks to Rhonda Jensen for sharing her space. All of his paintings throughout the school were collected and prominently displayed in the Art Room. A large supply of Gus' art books were available to students during the painting sessions. Gus and his assistants, Pana Reynolds and Shannon Snyder, moved around the room giving feedback. Gus also shared his brush strokes merging his artistic skills with the students in a beautifully collaborative way.



In the kindergarten class Lela Belmont and Chasen Sauers paint butterflies.



Gus and Kendall Stewart collaborate on a mystical Japanese turtle.



Hannah McEnry working on her masterpiece jaguar.



Cassie Peterson painting a visionary mandala.



Kiana Clark and Katelynn Morss in deep concentration.

What became obvious during these two sessions was the depth of Gus' interactions and the receptivity of the students and staff at Cuddeback Elementary School. Every teacher in each of the grades considered Art to be an important part of their curriculum and actively engaged in creative, artistic projects throughout the year. Being in the presence of an artist like Gus Clark, students became artists!

Gus Clark, Cat McAdams, Dan Levinson, and all the teachers provided opportunities for students to creatively express their inner natures. It was a very worthwhile, rewarding process for everyone



*The white and blue sky
A bird jets through the calm air
The bird is whirling*

RAINEL PRATER, SCOTIA ELEMENTARY