

# Bringing Artists to Your Community

Length: 30 minutes

## Featured School

School:	Idalia School
Location:	Idalia, Colorado
In this program:	Sherri Ramseier, parent Kathy Rittenhouse, parent Linda Shivley, parent and substitute teacher Katherine Babb, residency program co-founder Cyndie Weyerman, K-12 special education teacher and residency program co-founder Mary Allen, kindergarten teacher Birgitta De Pree, artist-in-residence Trudi Weiser, fourth-grade teacher Michael Stanwood, artist-in-residence Jim Rittenhouse, social studies teacher Sandi Waitman, third-grade teacher

# About This Program

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Visiting-artist programs make it possible for schools in locations outside the cultural mainstream to expose their students to rich instruction and experiences in the arts.

In Idalia, Colorado, 150 miles from Denver and far from any museum, theatre troupe, or symphony orchestra, tiny **Idalia School** has been working with visiting artists for several years. Young Audiences of Colorado sponsors workshops for artists to learn to work with schools and arranges their residencies. These same workshops are open to teachers, who learn to work effectively with resident artists.

In this program, two visiting artists work with teachers to enhance learning at three grade levels:

- Theatre artist Birgitta De Pree involves kindergartners and their teacher in a storytelling activity that engages the imagination while reinforcing story structure skills.
- After learning that fourth-grade teacher Trudi Weiser would like her students to build more colorful vocabularies, De Pree asks Weiser's class to pick verbs that sound "juicy" to them, act out the verbs, and use them in sentences.
- Musician Michael Stanwood works with students and their teachers to write song lyrics that relate to their curriculum, then puts these lyrics to music. Sandi Waitman's third-grade class explores Colorado history through a song. And social studies teacher Jim Rittenhouse describes the process Stanwood and the students used to create an emotion-filled song about the massacre of Plains Indians at nearby Sand Creek.

De Pree, who has worked with the school for several years, shares some of her strategies for successful residencies:

- "You work in different capacities with different people. Some [teachers] are willing to take a big risk. Some others just want to have a feel for what you do. I've found that once they see it in action and have experienced it—gotten over that they're not going to be put on the spot and realize that it's an enjoyable and applicable and important thing—then you go further."
- "When they see the teacher playing with the kids—that's huge. It's huge to see the teacher taking a risk. It's huge for the teacher to take a risk. But it's amazing what message that gives to a kid."
- "One of the ways I know kids are learning or have grown is when they can evaluate their own work, can articulate what they've done—and by the observations they make about the work of other people or the play of other people."
- "I don't think that I can teach like another teacher or that another teacher can teach like I teach. [I feel most successful] when I feel like I've given something to a teacher...[who] can get excited about finding their own way to do it."

"I think the arts make our teaching more effective," says K-12 special education teacher Cyndie Weyerman. "And if the teaching is more effective, our kids' results are going to be better, and we're going to meet those standards. It's not an either/or situation. They just go together, hopefully."

"We're still teaching the same curriculum. We're just teaching it better," adds Katherine Babb, co-founder with Weyerman of the school's artist residency program.

# About This Program, cont'd.

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## Arts Education Standards Addressed in This Program

### Theatre

- **Content Standard 2**—Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations

*Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:*

- Assume roles that exhibit concentration and contribute to the action of classroom dramatizations based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
- **Content Standard 6**—Comparing and contrasting art forms by describing theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other art forms

*Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:*

- Describe visual, aural, oral, and kinetic elements in theatre, dramatic media, dance, music, and visual arts
- **Content Standard 7**—Analyzing and explaining personal preferences and constructing meanings from classroom dramatizations and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

*Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:*

- Articulate emotional responses to and explain personal preferences about the whole as well as the parts of dramatic performances

### Music

- **Content Standard 2**—Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

*Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:*

- Perform independent instrumental parts (e.g., simple rhythmic or melodic ostinatos, contrasting rhythmic lines, harmonic progressions, and chords) while other students sing or play contrasting parts
- **Content Standard 3**—Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments

*Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:*

- Students improvise short songs and instrumental pieces, using a variety of sound sources, including traditional sounds (e.g., voices, instruments), nontraditional sounds available in the classroom (e.g., paper tearing, pencil tapping), body sounds (e.g., hands clapping, fingers snapping), and sounds produced by electronic means (e.g., personal computers and basic MIDI devices, including keyboards, sequencers, synthesizers, and drum machines)
- **Content Standard 9**—Understanding music in relation to history and culture

*Achievement Standards for Grades K–4:*

- Demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed

Source: *National Standards for Arts Education*, published by Music Educators National Conference (MENC). Copyright 1994 by MENC. Used by permission. The complete National Arts Standards and additional materials relating to the Standards are available from MENC, The National Association for Music Education, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191, telephone 800-336-3768.

# Viewing Suggestions

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## Who Should Watch This Program

“Bringing Artists to Your Community” demonstrates ways that teachers and professional artists can collaborate to identify instructional needs and meet them using arts-based approaches. The program can be used in a professional development setting by classroom and arts specialist teachers to help them work effectively with professional artists as well as by artists to help them understand the skills they need to work in classrooms.

Other audiences for this program might include:

- arts organizations, to provide insights on current or potential visiting-artist programs;
- curriculum or arts project planners, to expand ideas on bringing the arts into a unit of study; and
- administrators, parents, funders, and policymakers, to gain support for a visiting-artist program.

## Before Watching

Over time, the teachers and visiting artists at Idalia School have learned to value each other’s contributions and to become confident of each other’s skills.

As you watch this program, look for instances where the classroom teachers look to the artists for ideas and strategies on instructional issues:

- What input does the artist need from the teacher to be helpful?
- How does the artist respond?
- How do artist and teacher demonstrate to the students that they are working as a team?
- Will the teacher and the artist assess achievement in the same way? If not, how will they differ? How will they agree on what constitutes success?

## Watching the Program

Watch “Bringing Artists to Your Community” (30 minutes).

# Viewing Suggestions, cont'd.

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## Suggested Activities and Discussion

Consider the following questions for reflection:

- What kinds of artist residencies would you like to see in your school?
- What steps would you need to take to have an artist residency program for your school?

Below are some additional ways you can build on the ideas in this program in a variety of school and community settings.

### Professional Development Sessions for Teachers

- Visit a school that has a visiting-artist program. What can you learn from that experience?
- Create or attend a workshop on hosting, developing, or funding an artist residency.
- Develop a joint session where teachers and artists can learn more about each other's communications styles and instructional approaches.
- Create a "dictionary" with key concepts and vocabulary from teachers' and artists' environments.

### Community Outreach

- Contact your city, county, or state arts council, and use the Web to investigate visiting-artist programs and funding available to schools in your area.
- Contact the educational outreach specialist of the symphony orchestra, museum, or other arts group nearest you. Invite a representative to a curriculum-planning session to discuss what resources are available locally and how a visiting-artist program could enhance learning at your school.

# Additional Resources

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## Related Video Library Programs

Watch these programs for more information on ideas explored in “Bringing Artists to Your Community”:

- Collaborating With a Cultural Resource
- Working With Local Artists
- Borrowing From the Arts To Enhance Learning

## Web Resources

*The Arts in Every Classroom* video library Web site: [www.learner.org/channel/libraries/artsineveryclassroom](http://www.learner.org/channel/libraries/artsineveryclassroom)

*The Arts in Every Classroom* workshop Web site: [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/artsineveryclassroom](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/artsineveryclassroom)

### Related Organizations and Resources

Young Audiences of Colorado: [www.youngaudiencescolorado.org](http://www.youngaudiencescolorado.org)

Young Audiences, Inc.: [www.youngaudiences.org](http://www.youngaudiences.org)

Artist-in-Residency Program: [www.pdkintl.org/profdev/residency/artisthome.htm](http://www.pdkintl.org/profdev/residency/artisthome.htm)

Metropolitan Opera Guild: [www.metguild.org/home.htm](http://www.metguild.org/home.htm)

Lincoln Center Institute Project: [www.pz.harvard.edu/Research/Lincoln.htm](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/Research/Lincoln.htm)

### Recommended by Mary Allen

Kinder Korner: [www.kinderkorner.com](http://www.kinderkorner.com)

ProTeacher Community: [www.proteacher.net](http://www.proteacher.net)