



2025-26 Report Card

OUR MISSION AT CENTER ARTES

is to ensure that all children have access to learn in, with and through the arts. Our own research of Cal State San Marcos (CSUSM) college students identifies social equity factors that play into college preparedness and success. We recognize that there is significant social inequality in our society and understand there is much work to be done to create an equal playing field for all children. Our nonprofit organization works at creating arts equity for students by educating teachers/future teachers, parents, and school administrators about the importance of arts education for all students, developing pathways to become an arts teachers, and by implementing novel arts educational programming in K-12 schools. We provide various resources to the public throughout the year such as access to open source lesson plans and research that supports arts education, creative youth development as well as college and career pathways for future teachers, STEAM and literacy programming, boot camps and workshops on arts integration, and more.



Center ARTES

Visit csusm.edu/centeartes for access to our current research and upcoming events. Use our online toolkit to help spread the word about this important initiative. **BECAUSE THE ARTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

WHY ART? ¿POR QUÉ ARTE?



PATHWAYS, CREATIVITY, AND COLLABORATIONS

I am so proud of our students, faculty, staff, and partners for another stellar year focused on creativity, learning, partnerships, and community. Center ARTES' focus on creative career pathways and partnerships continues to stretch the boundaries of artistic practices, benefiting our students and community. This report card illuminates the dedicated work of the Center ARTES team including professors from the School of Arts and School of Education, university students in multiple majors from the sciences to the arts to credential programs, and numerous partnerships in our K-12 schools, community, and with arts non-profits.

A few of the highlights of this report include the recognition of our CREATE Residency which provides 20 future teachers per year with intensive arts training. Our program is a model throughout the state and has received funding from multiple sources and individuals, including the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Residency Lab through the Department of Education Foundation! Check out the wonderful professional development opportunities described in this report, attended by our students, cooperating teachers, and our student teacher supervisors.

Our robust STEAM Ambassador initiative has grown to include dance curriculum and continues to make a big impact throughout our county. Art and science as well as data visualization are core to the activities of the ambassadors. Check out the many activities including extracting DNA from strawberries, learning experimental photography techniques, dancing to engage with the environment, and collaboratively building Farm Lab art installations, to name a few.

During the year, we were saddened by the unexpected death of one of our longtime and beloved supervisors, Joan Hanor. We celebrated Joan's life by creating a healing quilt which was given to Joan's family. Students mentored by Joan engaged in this collaborative activity to celebrate and honor her legacy as an innovative educator. Her celebration of life provided our students with the opportunity to find solace, peace, and comfort in honoring her memory.

We could not do the work we do without the dedication of our team and the desire to ensure a future filled with opportunity, empathy, and creativity. We are incredibly thankful for all the support we receive from students, partners, artists, non-profits, corporations, businesses, and especially from our generous sponsors and donors.



Merryl Goldberg, Ed.D., Director of Center ARTES,
California State University San Marcos

CENTER ARTES TEAM



Lucy HG Solomon

*Center ARTES Associate Director
STEAM Ingenuity*

Lucy HG Solomon leads interdisciplinary outreach at Center ARTES. She brings rich experience layering art, science, and education to Center ARTES' integrated arts and education initiatives. In 2020 she launched the STEAM Ambassador program, building on the center's Arts Ambassadors and has worked collaboratively with Dr. Christiane Wood and Cherie Hill on the Center's expanded STEAM curriculum. An exhibiting artist, she and Cesar Baio (Cesar & Lois) exhibited art about the environmental impact of AI in Brazil and art on forest ecologies in Slovenia in 2025.



Dr. Christiane Wood

*Center ARTES Associate Director
STEAM + Literacy*

Dr. Christiane Wood is leading innovative efforts to enhance early childhood literacy. Through STEAM + Literacy, her work has impacted numerous classroom teachers and students, integrating maker education, the arts, literacy, and STEM to create transformative learning experiences. As CREATE Residency Coordinator, Dr. Wood leads the implementation of the CREATE Residency program, partnering with school districts, mentor teachers, and residents to prepare the next generation of arts-integrated educators and support the development of innovative teaching in elementary classrooms.



Cherie Hill

*Center ARTES Faculty Fellow in
Dance & Community*

Professor Cherie Hill creates art that explores human expression through the body in collaboration with nature, music, and visual imagery. As an equity advocate, her research, service, and teaching interests support equitable and inclusive environments. Professor Hill arranged for guest Hip Hop dance artists to teach in local schools and provide professional development to future educators in the CREATE Residency. She was also instrumental in video production for the Arts Teacher Pathway and is a faculty lead in STEAM.



Dr. Kristin Moss

*Center ARTES Faculty Fellow in
Community Arts*

Dr. Kristin Moss champions art and community collaboration as tools for building inclusive, peaceful communities. Her research highlights public art's role in inspiring civic engagement. As a faculty fellow focusing on partnerships, she expanded connections with community centers and arts institutions. These include planning professional development at the California Center for the Arts Museum and The New Children's Museum, and community art projects at EUSD Farm Lab. In 2025, she also worked to expand internship opportunities for students assisting in non-profit and educational organizations.

CENTER ARTES TEAM



Julie Goldstein

*Center ARTES Faculty Fellow in
Arts Education & Inspiration*

Professor Julie Goldstein, a woodcut printmaker, multidisciplinary artist, and educator, explores resilience, identity, and the human-nature connection. Her bold, evocative prints tell stories of strength and empowerment, while her teaching inspires students to develop their visual language as they discover their artistic and educational voices. Professor Goldstein was central to the development of the Multiple-Subject Arts Credential at CSUSM, expanding the pathway to becoming an arts teacher at CSUSM.



Matthew Armstrong

*Center ARTES Faculty Fellow in
Arts Integration and Education*

Matthew Armstrong is a musician, educator, and arts advocate dedicated to making the arts accessible and essential in every child's education. As a key member of the leadership team of the CREATE residency, he creates opportunities for developing student creativity, builds partnerships between schools and artists, and promotes equity in the arts. With San Diego Percussion Festival and the Cuban National Concert Band, he champions music as a force for cultural exchange, student empowerment, and community connection.



Cassiopeia Guthrie

*Center ARTES Faculty Fellow in
Interdisciplinary Innovation*

Cassiopeia Guthrie is committed to the imperative: inspiring courageous, creative, equity-minded, and empowered communities ready to change the world. A credentialed educator, professional journalist, and award-winning theatre critic, her instruction leverages interdisciplinary inquiry, arts integration, design thinking, and critical engagement to explore the intersections between pedagogy and social justice. Professor Guthrie is a vibrant contributor to STEAM.



Aidelen Montoya

Center ARTES Project Coordinator

Aidelen Montoya supports Center ARTES projects with a range of activities. A former Center ARTES STEAM student coordinator and graduate of CSUSM, she received the President's Outstanding Graduate Award in 2023. She earned an MFA at the University at Buffalo where she focused on the intersection of art, science, and craft. An exhibiting artist, she has presented workshops at Center ARTES using natural materials and mentored area high school students in art and science.

SPREADING THE MESSAGE OF WHY ART?

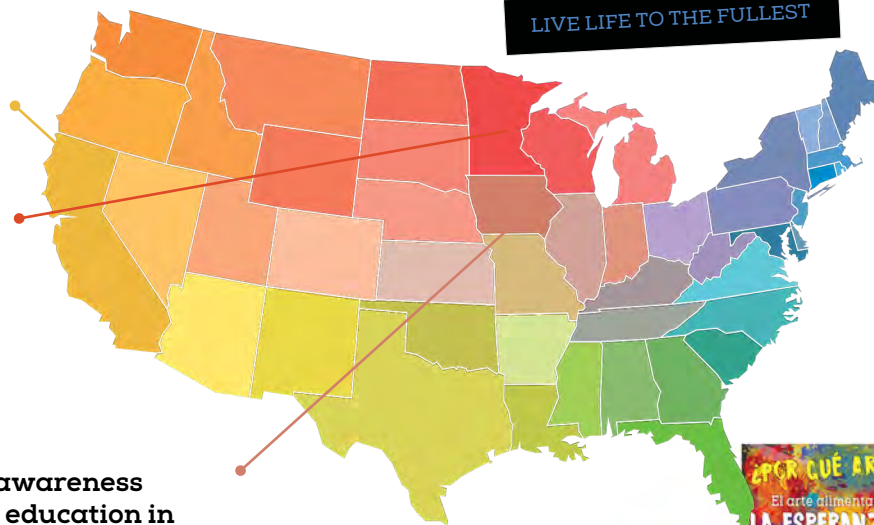
WHY ART? TOOLKIT

We continue to receive requests through our online portal for our research-based **WHY ART?** card packs, posters and other branded materials from arts organizations and schools nationwide. Quotes from our simple online survey confirm many students, educators, and administrators are joining our call to advocate for the arts!

“I sit on a high school council and will use these cards to help demonstrate that a strong arts education supports the administrator’s goals.”

“We are providing pro bono services to arts and humanities organizations. We will be sharing our “why and your cards capture some of those reasons beautifully.”

“I love being able to spread awareness of the many benefits of arts education in the elementary school where I work.”



HELP SPREAD THE MESSAGE!

CLICK to access our online toolkit which includes downloadable images, bookmarks, online banners, **WHY ART?** cards, and posters in English and Spanish.



Our open-source **WHY ART?** materials are available in English and Spanish.

BUILDING THE ARTS EDUCATOR PIPELINE: PATHWAYS TO TEACHING THE ARTS

Multi-tiered initiative supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation



HEWLETT FOUNDATION CONNECTS STATEWIDE ARTS EDUCATION ADVOCATES.

In March of 2025, members of the Center ARTES leadership team director Merryl Goldberg and associate director Lucy HG Solomon attended Hewlett Foundation's Youth Policy & Advocacy convening along with statewide grantee partners working in the areas of TK-12 arts education policy and advocacy. The convening gave Center ARTES an opportunity to connect with the arts educator community, deepen our knowledge of the statewide arts education landscape and models for advancing equity, and discuss our approaches to advancing implementation of the Arts and Music in Schools Act.

Dr. Merryl Goldberg directs an exercise to encourage engagement through music.

Center ARTES is actively building the next generation of arts educators by creating clear, accessible pathways into teaching, connecting future teachers to CSUSM's high-quality preparation programs and residency experiences. On Saturday, November 8, 2025, Center ARTES, in partnership with the CSUSM School of Education, hosted Discover the Path to Becoming an Elementary or Secondary Arts Teacher, a dynamic outreach event designed to introduce students to the possibilities of teaching the arts. Held on campus, the session welcomed 50 prospective educators interested in both Multiple Subject and Single Subject credential pathways. The event introduced these participants to the path to becoming an elementary or secondary arts teacher in the areas of dance, music, visual, and media arts. Participants also learned about the CREATE Teacher Residency program and engaged in interactive experiences with practicing arts educators, gaining insight into the pathways, preparation, and impact of becoming an arts teacher.

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BUILDING THE PIPELINE *continued*



Participants discover the pathways to teaching the Arts at the Building the Arts Educator Pipeline event held in November.

Framed by the momentum of Proposition 28 and the increasing demand for qualified arts educators, the day's sessions emphasized both opportunity and purpose. Participants explored a range of opportunities aligned with California's growing investment in arts education, including:

- The Multiple Subject Arts Integrated Pathway, focused on elementary classrooms
- The CREATE Residency Program, offering a paid, yearlong clinical experience grounded in mentorship and arts integration
- The Single Subject Art Credential, preparing educators for middle and high school settings

The event provided a clear and supportive entry point for students at all stages of exploration and reinforced the powerful role educators play in shaping creative, inclusive, and community-centered learning environments. Attendees engaged with faculty, current educators, and Student Services representatives, gaining insight into program requirements, application processes, and the broader impact of arts education.

Through events like this, Center ARTES continues to strengthen the educator pipeline, ensuring that more students are prepared, inspired, and supported to bring the arts into classrooms across California.



Above: Center ARTES panel on Pathways to Becoming an Arts Educator with Cherrie Hill, Dr. Christiane Wood, Matt Armstrong, Nicole Mendez, and Emily Stallings (left to right).

Left: The graffiti wall at the recruitment event welcomed tags about the power of the arts.



TRANSFORMING CLASSROOMS THROUGH ARTS INTEGRATION CREATE RESIDENCY

The CREATE Residency (Collaborative Residency for Education in the Arts and Teaching Excellence) prepares the next generation of teachers to integrate the arts into core instruction. The paired professional development series provides innovative arts preparation for future teachers.



2025-2026 CREATE Residency cohort at inaugural professional development day held at High Tech Elementary North County.

Through the **CREATE** Residency, this year's cohort of emerging educators prepared to integrate the arts into daily instruction, expanding access to rigorous, engaging, and inclusive learning experiences for students across TK through Grade 6 classrooms while strengthening the future of the arts educator pipeline.

In 2025 Center ARTES, in partnership with San Marcos Unified School District, High Tech Elementary, Fallbrook Union Elementary School District, and Vista Unified School District, welcomed 19 new multiple subject CREATE Residents into the yearlong residency program. Under the leadership of Dr. Christiane Wood, Center ARTES Associate Director and CSUSM CREATE coordinator, and Matthew Armstrong, SMUSD Program Manager, residents were placed in TK through Grade 6 classrooms that were selected for their integration of the arts into daily academic instruction.

At the center of the program is arts integration, an approach in which the arts serve as a pathway for students to construct and demonstrate understanding across disciplines. The arts are not an addition to instruction. Rather, art is positioned as a means for inquiry, engagement, and deeper learning, fully aligned with California content standards and the Visual and Performing Arts standards.

The CREATE Residency is an immersive, practice-based model. Residents participate in two days of coursework and three days in the site classroom each week, learning alongside mentor teachers while applying their knowledge in real time. This experience is strengthened through coordinated support from school districts and university supervisors, ensuring that residents develop both a strong instructional foundation and the ability to translate theory into meaningful practice.

The program's robust professional development programming was developed and implemented with generous support from the The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

YEAR IN REVIEW:

CENTER ARTES HOSTS ARTS EDUCATOR TRAINING FOR RESIDENTS AND MENTORS



AUGUST The year for the new cohort of CREATE Residents began with professional learning designed to build relationships and establish a shared vision. Residents and mentor teachers explored the National Core Arts Standards for their grade levels, engaging in inquiry through observation, questioning, and the analysis of arts-integrated lessons.

SEPTEMBER Residents participated in a hands-on learning experience at the Museum of Making Music, with a session on the history of music, instrument exploration, and body percussion and a session on instructional practice, where residents applied strategies to integrate music into mathematics.

Educator Jamelle Jones facilitated a collaborative workshop on arts integration planning and the instructional continuum at High Tech. Residents and mentors engaged in co-planning, using imagination and play to design meaningful, arts-integrated learning



experiences while rethinking classroom culture through the arts.

OCTOBER Through an activated workshop at The New Children's Museum, residents explored the connections between social-emotional learning, literacy, and the arts. They participated in an immersive art experience followed by a collaborative weaving project using recycled materials with artist Michelle Montjoy, connecting artistic process to instructional design and community-building.



Community-building and professional development around arts teaching is presented in a series of workshops, speakers, and arts-infused events hosted by Center ARTES. Select speakers were supported by the Virginia Hansen Speaker Series. Pathway PD activities were organized with the generous support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

NOVEMBER A

STEAM and literacy experience centered on the text *We Are Water Protectors* and hosted by the STEAM Ambassadors brought together environmental science, visual art, movement, and literacy. Through observation, creativity, and shared meaning-making, participants experienced the power of interdisciplinary learning grounded in both VAPA and content standards.



The day concluded with a zine-making project led by Center ARTES fellow Julie Goldstein. Zines are self-published, multimodal booklets that bring together text, imagery, and design. Residents used this format as a reflective process to synthesize their learning, make connections across experiences, and communicate understanding through both visual and written expression.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

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JANUARY Educator Jamelle Jones facilitated Reimagining Classroom Culture and Design through the Arts. Residents and mentors continued their collaborative exploration of arts-integrated learning environments, examining how intentional classroom design, creativity, and the arts can foster engagement, belonging, and meaningful learning experiences for all students.

FEBRUARY Artist Dave led Centering Social-Emotional Learning Through Mindfulness & the Arts, featuring an artist talk and gallery walk. Residents and mentors explored the connections between mindfulness, artistic expression, and social-emotional learning while engaging in a collaborative making process inspired by Eassa's artwork **Four Sails**, deepening their understanding of how the arts can support reflection, connection, and well-being.



MARCH Residents began the session by exploring the role of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in supporting student growth, relationships, and classroom community. Building on this foundation, Sara Pennypacker, author of **The Lion's Run**, joined the cohort for a special talk, sharing insights into the writing process, character development, and the importance of empathy, identity, and perspective-taking. Participants reflected on how

literature, storytelling, and the Arts can create meaningful opportunities for student voice, self-expression, and social-emotional development in the classroom.



APRIL Residents participated in hands-on DNA extraction of strawberries followed by a creative arts experience that invited them to visually represent DNA structures and genetic concepts. Through artistic interpretation, participants explored how the arts can deepen scientific observation, understanding, and communication. The session also included embodied learning experiences in which residents used movement and spatial representation to model DNA structure, replication, and genetic relationships, demonstrating how performing arts strategies can make complex scientific concepts more accessible and engaging for students. Guest lecturer Madeleine Wood shared process-based experiences integrating art with ecological

fieldwork. She shared examples of merging field notes with sketchbooking and introduced imaginative exercises to root young learners in the living world.

MAY Residents, mentors, and program leaders celebrated a successful year of learning, collaboration, and growth with a visit to the San Diego Botanic Garden hosted by Tomoko Kuta, the garden's Chief Operations and Advancement Officer and a longtime collaborator with Center ARTES. The experience provided an opportunity to reflect on the year's accomplishments, strengthen community connections, and honor the achievements of the CREATE Residency cohort while immersed in a natural wonderland.

Together, these hands-on, community-based experiences are what make the CREATE Residency transformative. The professional development program uniquely prepares educators to implement impactful classroom experiences on day one. The program prepares educators to design engaging, inclusive, and arts-rich classroom environments that expand learning opportunities for all students.

Stay tuned for an expansion of the professional development programming with the Collaboratory, bringing in regional educators, arts institutions, and future arts teachers at all levels.

SEEDS FOR A COLLABORATORY

Building on the Arts Pathway made possible by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Center ARTES is launching a new initiative propelled with support from the Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation, that synthesizes the many ways that educators can engage in hands-on learning and immersion in the arts. Center ARTES will expand our proven professional development programming while launching the Collaboratory. This initiative will fill the growing statewide need for qualified arts educators, enhancing arts education across the region by contributing to sustained, high-quality arts instruction in California schools. With the launch of the Collaboratory, Center ARTES doubles down on the center's mission of teaching with and through the arts!

DNA EXTRACTION WITH NARRATIVE, ART, AND MOVEMENT

What came first in the discovery of DNA's form—the concept or the model? In this expanded STEAM lesson, educators and students explore how art drives ingenuity.

Center ARTES hosted an Expanded STEAM and DNA activity that interweaves art and science together with storytelling and movement. The DNA extraction activity combines lessons on the structure and function of genes with an engaging picture



Center ARTES associate director Dr. Christiane Wood with the CREATE residents at the Expanded DNA workshop at The Makery at CSUSM.

book and hands-on arts activities. STEAM Ambassadors in collaboration with faculty mentors Cherie Hill and Lucy HG Solomon gave the expanded DNA lesson to the CREATE residents and provided them with classroom kits for their own classes while brainstorming curricular applications across grade levels.

The residents started by reading the book, **The Smallest Spot of a Dot: The Little Ways We're Different, The Big Ways We're the Same** by Linsey Davis and Michael Tyler with illustrations by Lucy Fleming, and discussing how to adjust the arts-integrated science lesson for different age groups. 92% of participating future educators were new to the integration of DNA lessons and visual art, and 100% of participants had no experience integrating DNA lessons and



Future teachers learn how to extract DNA from strawberries using simple household supplies.



CREATE resident Jasmin Arango Ramirez paging through the sketchbook of guest lecturer Madeleine Wood.

movement before the hands-on lesson. Future educators brainstormed how to expand on and apply the lesson in their classrooms:

“Students can draw their observations from the DNA extraction.

“Lessons on body systems can be integrated at the 6th grade level, with the addition of a watercolor activity linked to viruses.

“Math could be tied to the marble painting activity, as well as learning about shapes and color theory.



As part of the expanded DNA workshop, the random movement of a paint-covered marble results in a unique individualized painting.

This focus on DNA was made possible through the generous support of the Illumina Foundation.

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STEAM + LITERACY

School children consistently report that they understand science better when learning through art-integrated activities.

Center ARTES delivered specialized STEAM + Literacy lessons to over 700 elementary students school students, provided student teachers with lesson plans and STEAM kits for their classrooms, and delivered classroom lessons and workshops at schools and festivals. STEAM Ambassadors participated in Super STEM Saturday in March, reaching more children in the community with hands-on learning, and Center ARTES provided lesson kits in STEAM, literacy, and genomics to 25 area classrooms.

Curricular Innovations in K-6 Classrooms

The project produced STEAM + Literacy lesson plans, incorporating podcasting, art, and storytelling with scientific content. These lessons:

- Enhance critical thinking skills through hands-on science investigations.
- Encourage creative expression by integrating artistic elements and storytelling.
- Reflect multimodal approaches, combining art, narrative, and scientific inquiry.



This focus on STEAM + Literacy was made possible through the generous support of the Illumina Foundation.

Watch a video on environmental DNA produced by Illumina: <https://youtu.be/fz963hJ0SpY?si=GzDEssxLqNBVoH9D>



STEAM Ambassadors engage 6th grade students in making and close looking.

Assessment shows:

- A marked increase in students' understanding of STEAM concepts, literacy skills, and ability to articulate complex ideas through storytelling.
- Increased motivation and interest with hands-on, narrative-driven activities, especially among students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Improvement in development of student identification as young scientists and storytellers, with increased confidence in applying knowledge to real-world scenarios.

Center ARTES provided professional development in STEAM + Literacy for preservice and current teachers, fostering a collaborative learning and innovation culture in STEAM education. Lessons on water habitats included Illumina Foundations educational video on environmental DNA (eDNA). Training focused on integrating art and science through narrative and exploration-based learning, building educators' capacity to create equitable and inclusive learning environments.



MEANINGFUL PATHWAYS

Center ARTES Director Dr. Merryl Goldberg was featured in a fireside chat at the Residency Lab Pipeline Remix Conference in Pasadena, California, where she shared her expertise on the transformative role of the arts in education and teacher preparation. Dr. Goldberg highlighted how arts integration, literacy, and youth leadership create meaningful pathways for student success and educational equity. Drawing from her extensive experience as an educator, researcher, and professional musician, she inspired attendees to reimagine teacher preparation through the arts, emphasizing the power of creative leadership to foster academic achievement, empathy, and opportunity for all learners.

MEANINGFUL MENTORSHIP

Crucial to the CREATE residency is the collaboration and partnership between the residents and mentor teachers. Across the academic year, mentors share strategies on how to deploy arts curriculum that engages students in creative problem-solving.



CSUSM mentor provides insights to resident mentees.

Residents describe the practical application of integrating arts in elementary education:

Making Abstract Concepts Concrete

“Having students act out math problems is something that my mentor teacher and I brainstormed and implemented together. It has really helped kids to physically feel the math problem so they understand in a more tactile way what is happening.”

Improved Retention and Memory

“Whenever you include a hands-on activity, the lesson is more memorable. They remember!”

Providing Opportunities for Diverse Learners

“The one area, the one content area that I have seen this student feel differently, is art. So when I integrate art into my lessons, she is all in, in part because there is no right answer to art.”

Supporting Emotional Expression and Regulation

“I gave my student a drawing journal, which I presented as a time for him to first reflect on the work that he did and what he learned or the skill that he practiced and then to reflect on the emotions that he feels. That way he doesn’t have an outburst in class.”

HEALING QUILT

Center ARTES fellow Julie Goldstein introduced the Healing Quilt workshop as a social and emotional arts-integration activity designed to support students in processing grief, loss, and emotional change through collaborative artmaking. Students engaged in mixed-media techniques, including fabric collage, embroidery, and symbolic mark-making, as they created their panels.

By incorporating personal storytelling through making, the lesson encouraged self-reflection and emotional expression. Participants assembled the individual panels into a collective quilt, reinforcing empathy, community connection and shared healing. This lesson strengthened self-awareness, emotional regulation, and relationship-building, while demonstrating how arts integration can enhance student well-being and classroom culture.



The CREATE Residents created a quilt in memory of beloved educator and resident supervisor Joan Hanor.

CONTINUING COLLABORATION WITH THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM



CREATE residents engage in community weaving at The New Children's Museum.



Center ARTES continues to work with area arts institutions, introducing future teachers to the museums in their backyards while developing relevant K-9 curriculum concepts rooted in the exhibitions in those spaces. In October the CREATE residents engaged in an immersive professional development experience at The New Children's Museum, a space dedicated to offering interactive art experiences to spark creativity, exploration, and a sense of belonging. The residents met with Oceanside-based artist and educator, Michelle Montjoy, in the permanent exhibition that she created for the children's museum. The **Breathing Room** is an inviting sensory space for museum visitors as well as a space of solace for noise and crowd-averse visitors. This installation provides a space for visitors to breathe, relax, and touch. The room features knitted sculptures made of repurposed t-shirts that are suspended from the ceiling. A soothing palette and soft forms including pods and weighted "hugs" provide a calming environment and space for reflection and wonder.

Artist Michelle Montjoy led residents in a hands-on workshop in community weaving and presented the collective weaving as a community art activity for classrooms. Working together on oversized circular looms, the residents discovered how collective hands-on activities can activate classrooms and community spaces.



Future teachers experiencing The Breathing Room discover how an artwork can be a respite.

Future Teacher Take-aways:

"I want to incorporate some kind of dreaming space or activity into my classroom. I feel that would be such a great brain break, something to come back in from recess or lunch to give students a mindset change."

"I got a lot of ideas material-wise that I can utilize as a teacher that maybe don't cost so much and can be integrated into the classroom. I found the experience really helpful."

"The Breathing Room was a really good experience. There were a lot of takeaways to help incorporate these types of experiences for students into the classroom."

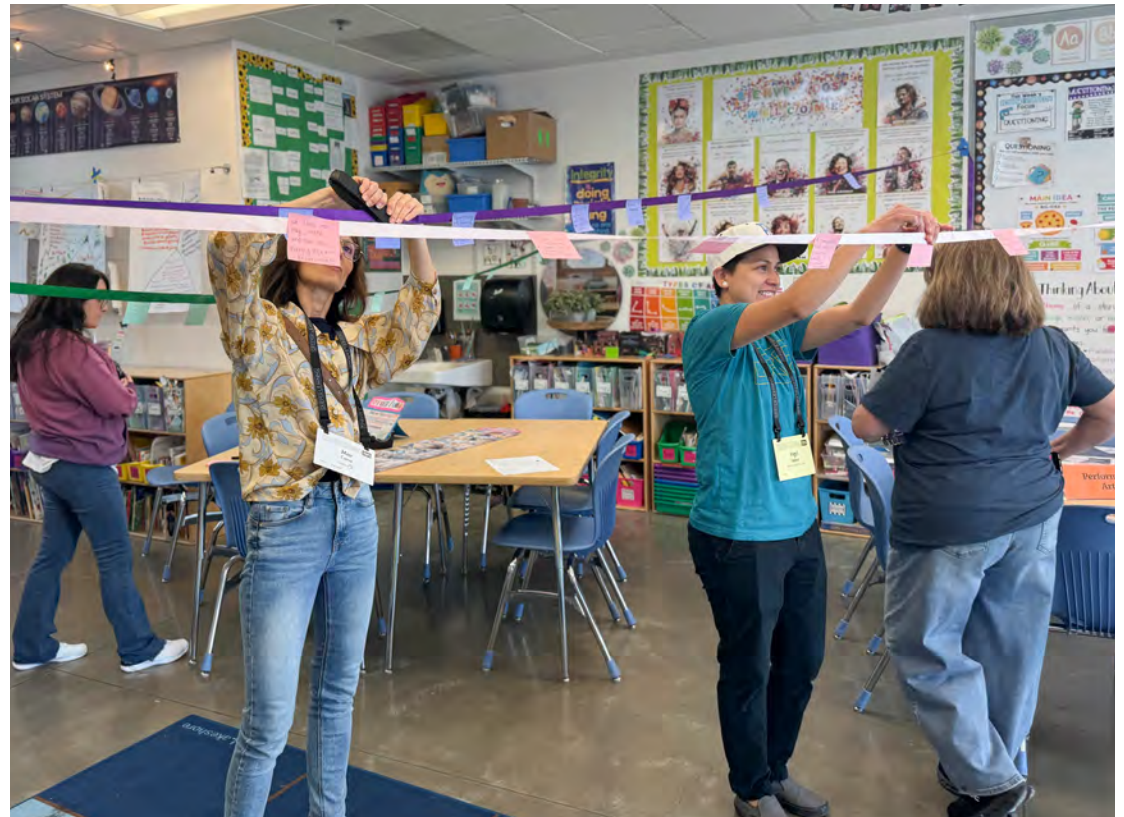




CENTER ARTES FELLOWS CONTRIBUTE TO DEEPER LEARNING

At the 2025 Deeper Learning conference in San Diego, Center ARTES Fellow Cassiopeia Guthrie coordinated the session, **Art as Advocacy: Leveraging Creative Expression for Equitable, Student-Centered Learning Environments**, which included Center ARTES associate director Lucy HG Solomon as a panelist on the power of interdisciplinary curriculum. The panel dove into how to design curriculum and projects that foster students' meaningful engagement with community. The session leaned into a driving question, asking How might we use art as advocacy so that equitable, student-centered learning environments benefit students, schools, communities, and the world? The working group grappled with funding challenges for the arts and education and how artistic projects can act as a catalyst for broader educational changes.

Educators from near and far participated in a dynamic day of inquiry and creativity leveraging the transformative power of art and advocacy to inspire change, the two-day session examined how to foster a more equitable and vibrant educational landscape through collaborative artmaking.



Educators and conference participants participate in interactive community-building and creative exchange.

STEAM+LITERACY INCLUSIVE MAKERSPACE (SLIM): EXPANDING EARLY LITERACY THROUGH PLAY, INQUIRY, AND THE ARTS

The STEAM+Literacy Inclusive Makerspace (SLIM) project, led by Center ARTES associate director Dr. Christiane Wood, brought together TK through 2nd-grade teachers across Oceanside, San Marcos, Vista, and High Tech High Elementary to design and implement integrated STEAM and literacy instruction.



Classrooms become dynamic spaces where students explore ideas, construct meaning, and express their understanding through multiple forms.

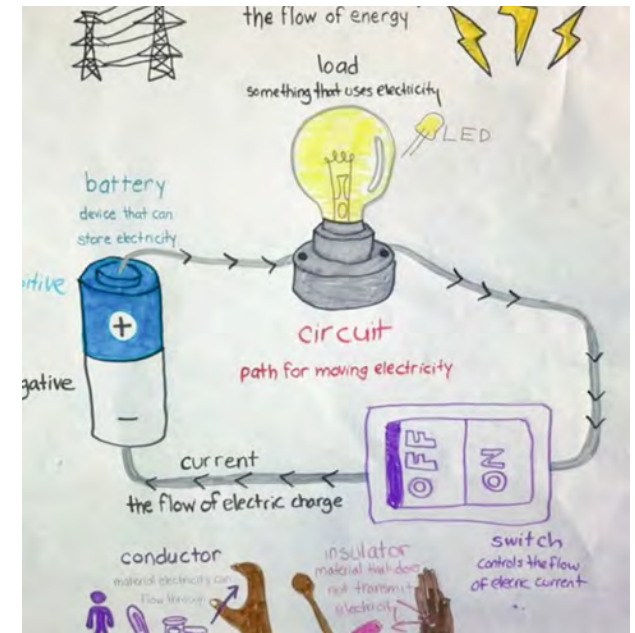
The SLIM project transforms early learning environments by equipping educators to integrate literacy, STEAM, and the arts, resulting in increased student engagement, stronger literacy outcomes, and expanded access to meaningful, equitable learning experiences.

This work was made possible through the generous support of the Dr. Seuss Foundation.

Grounded in play, inquiry, arts integration, and maker-centered learning, SLIM reimagine how literacy is taught in the early years. Through the program, teachers engaged in sustained professional learning and collaborative planning, developing interdisciplinary lessons that connected reading, writing, science, engineering, and the arts.

Teachers reported that students who had previously struggled with engagement became active participants in their learning. Through hands-on experiences, storytelling, design, and the arts, they developed stronger vocabulary, improved comprehension, and increased confidence in expressing their ideas. At the same time, they built essential skills in collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving – foundations for long-term academic success.

The project also expanded access to digital and multimodal learning. Students engaged in coding, visual storytelling, and creative media to communicate their thinking, while classrooms were equipped with materials that supported exploration, play, and innovation. For many students, these experiences provided their first opportunity to engage in enriched, hands-on STEAM learning. Equally important, SLIM strengthened teacher practice. Educators reported increased confidence in designing inclusive, arts-integrated instruction and a deeper understanding of how to meet the needs of diverse learners. Through ongoing collaboration, teachers built a shared commitment to equitable, engaging, and interdisciplinary teaching.



Visual storytelling reinforces learning about electricity and circuits.

SLIM's core practices—integrating literacy with STEAM, centering play and inquiry, and using the arts as a pathway for learning—are now embedded across teacher preparation and are strengthening the instructional practices of both emerging and practicing classroom teachers through Center ARTES and the CREATE Residency.



CENTER ARTES AND THE RESIDENCY LAB: PIPELINE REMIX



In October 2025, the Center ARTES team was invited to participate in The Residency Lab's Fall Conference, Pipeline Remix: Residency, Apprenticeship, and AI for Arts and CS Education, hosted at ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, California. Dr. Christiane Wood, Matthew Armstrong, Lucy HG Solomon, and Dr. Merryl Goldberg

represented Center ARTES. As keynote panelists, Dr. Christiane Wood (Center ARTES Associate Director and CSUSM CREATE coordinator) and Matthew Armstrong (SMUSD CREATE Program Manager) contributed to the statewide conversation on strengthening California's Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) educator pipeline. Throughout the conference, Center ARTES associate director Lucy HG Solomon, who is also an artist, illustrated the convening with live drawing of the discussions underway. To close the conference, Center director Dr. Merryl Goldberg discussed the marvelous power of the arts, then culminated the conference with a spirited performance of klezmer music on her saxophone.



Throughout the convening, Lucy HG Solomon captured the energy and insight of the experience through live sketch-noting, transforming complex ideas into vibrant, visual storytelling.

In the keynote panel, Dr. Christiane Wood and Matthew Armstrong drew on the CREATE Residency model to demonstrate how intentional design, authentic collaboration, and shared accountability drive scalable, sustainable solutions to meet California's arts educator workforce needs.



Dr. Christiane Wood (seated third) and Matt Armstrong (right) present at The Residency Lab convening.

Grounded in research from SRI Education, they advanced clear, actionable strategies to expand credentialing pathways, build local talent pipelines, and deepen partnerships between Local Education Agencies and higher education.

SHARING INSIGHTS FROM THE PATHWAY



In a series of statewide convenings by The Residency Lab, associate director Christiane Wood shared the Arts Educator Pathway

developed collaboratively by Center ARTES, providing key takeaways on how to plan and implement an Arts educator residency program. In panels at The Residency Lab's Statewide Residency Symposium, Dr. Wood and Center ARTES fellow Matt Armstrong shared insights and lessons learned from their experience establishing and implementing the CREATE Residency.

Dr. Wood brought CREATE residents to CUE 2026 at Palm Springs, the annual conference for Computer-Using Educators featuring the California STEAM Symposium. The future teachers readily participated in breakout sessions, with several residents reporting that the professional development provided by Center ARTES empowered them to share their knowledge and experiences as educators among their future colleagues.



CREATE Residents participate at CUE (Computer-Using Educators), the first educator conference for many.

HIP HOP AS EDUCATION: VISITING ARTISTS CONNECT DANCE, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY

The All Out Hip Hop Dance Residency brought nationally recognized street dance artists to CSUSM for a multi-day engagement centered on education, community connection, and professional pathways in the arts.

Popper and locker Quentin Robinson, known professionally as Special FX, and Johnny Lopez, known as Johnny 5, co-curated the All Out Turf & Popping Hip Hop Cypher and Battle, a day-long event that included six street dance workshops, a panel discussion and Q&A, and an evening cypher and battle. Participants traveled from across Southern California to engage in this immersive experience celebrating hip hop culture, artistry, and community. Reinforcing their commitment to youth and community engagement, Quentin and Johnny led dance workshops in popping, locking, and turf dance for students at High Tech High Middle School. The artists also collaborated with Center ARTES Dance Fellow Cherie Hill to develop additional learning opportunities across campus, including a professional development workshop for future arts teachers.

As part of these efforts, Cherie Hill and visiting artist Quentin Robinson co-taught a professional development workshop for multiple-subject credential candidates. The session integrated embodied pedagogy and arts-based teaching strategies grounded in neurodevelopmental movement patterns and gesture-based movement and storytelling practices.



Johnny Lopez, known as Johnny 5, is a Mexican/Latino professional turf dancer and the founder of TURFinc, a San Francisco Bay Area-based dance company dedicated to creating positive community change through movement. Here he leads HTH middle school students in floor work.

During the workshop, Quentin reflected on the profound impact a middle school teacher had on his life. He shared that although he and his peers often struggled with traditional academic engagement, their passion for hip hop dance motivated them to complete assignments and meet classroom expectations in order to earn time to practice. Many of those students, he noted, went on to become professional dancers, filmmakers, and performers for companies such as Cirque du Soleil—demonstrating the transformative power of arts access within educational spaces.

Johnny Lopez and Quentin Robinson exemplify the expansive career pathways that emerge through sustained engagement in the arts. Throughout the residency, they taught students across multiple educational levels, including middle school youth, CSUSM undergraduates, and future credentialed teachers. Both also maintain active professional performance careers. Quentin directs and produces film and performs at high-profile events, while Johnny performs internationally and is sponsored by global brands including Red Bull and Jordan. Their experiences illustrate how arts education fosters transferable skills such as leadership, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and creative problem-solving.



Popper and locker Quentin Robinson, known professionally as Special FX, is a dancer, filmmaker, director, and U.S. Marine Corps veteran. He leads gesture-based movement exercises integrated with storytelling for future arts educators in the CREATE Residency program.

The All Out Hip Hop Dance Residency highlighted the vital role of hip hop culture within education and community engagement. By centering lived experience, professional practice, and mentorship, the residency reinforced Center ARTES' commitment to culturally responsive arts education and to supporting students in envisioning sustainable and meaningful creative futures.



Attendees at “Educator Pipeline: Pathways to Teaching the Arts” move like water in the guided lesson paired with the text *We are Water Protectors*. (image credit: Albert Rascon)

EXPANDING STEAM EDUCATION THROUGH DANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



The STEAM Ambassadors! STEAM Coordinator Angelina Parra (center) with STEAM Ambassadors (clockwise) Pike Steck, Dulce Brown, Emma Avila, Milan McLaurin.

Center ARTES expanded the CSUSM Student STEAM Ambassador Program to include dance-based curriculum focused on climate awareness, environmental justice, and sustainability education. The expansion into Dance, spearheaded by Center ARTES fellow Cherie Hill, created new pathways for Dance Studies students to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration and apply embodied learning to complex environmental and social issues. Three Dance Studies minors joined the STEAM Ambassador cohort in 2025, working alongside peers in science and visual arts to design and facilitate movement-based K-12 lessons grounded in STEAM pedagogy.

Cherie Hill collaborated with Lucy HG Solomon to build new pathways for STEAM learning that include movement, expanding the STEAM + Literacy curriculum developed with Dr. Christiane Wood.

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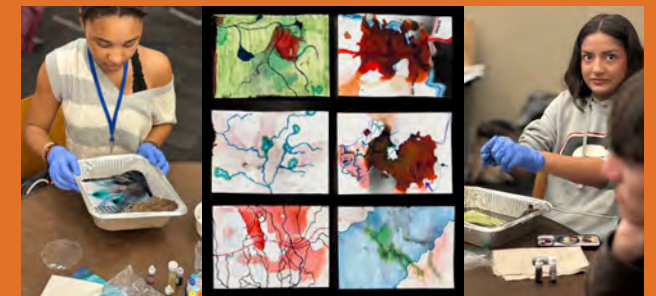
WATERWAYS MAPS: LAYERING WATERCOLOR AND GROUNDWATER

Students led lessons on expanded STEAM at the Future Educators Summit in January 2026, leading high school students in an engaging workshop on how to teach the interdisciplinary water lesson. In the art portion, participants drew personalized maps of their local waterways. They then

formed a landscape out of clay and dripped watercolors down the landscape onto their maps to mirror runoff from groundwater contaminants. Parallel to the watercolor activity, students examined what is in our water up close through a microscope and drew their observations onto the map within a highlighted circle.



Create Resident engages in the workshop before teaching the lesson in her classroom.



Mimicking groundwater pollution, participants dripped watercolors over their designs. Center: Visual outcomes from the workshop with the CREATE residents.

DANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE *continued*

The STEAM lessons are paired with books like **Buzzing with Questions: The Inquisitive Mind of Charles Henry Turner** by Janice N. Harrington, which explores scientific curiosity and observation through movement. A lesson based on **We Are Water Protectors** by Carole Lindstrom centers on embodiment of water, land, and collective responsibility. Both lessons encourage participants to physically engage with concepts of climate change while fostering dialogue around environmental justice and the disproportionate impacts of ecological harm on historically marginalized communities.

Water Protector
An Experiment in Motion
YOU CAN BE WATER PROTECTORS!

Movement Exploration

Have students explore movement qualities of the following categories/species:

- **Water** (fluid, waves, ripples, crashing in different body parts, levels, and pathways).
- **Plants** (stability, sway, strong roots, branches, growth in one place, rising/falling, using different body parts).
- **Animals** (students choose—can be flying, crawlers, reptiles, runners, etc.).
- **Snakes** (slither, curve on the ground, and standing).
- **Humans** (walk, run, stomp, skip, strong shapes and poses, moving on beat with drums, protecting).

Students K-3 are assigned a role. Older students choose their role. *There should be 1 snake.*

Students dance their role.

The snake calls out a species (water, then animals, then plants, etc.)

When called out by the snake, each species dissipates or disappears into the floor by melting, falling, rolling, and freezing in a shape.

Humans dance to and surround the species that are disappearing and protect and revive them.

The dance game continues in rounds, with students changing roles to experience different movements.

Environmental DNA

What is environmental DNA and what can genetic sampling of the environment tell us about what lives in the watershed?

View Illumina's video about eDNA to make more connections between the land, its water, and their inhabitants.

Read-aloud *We are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom

Ideas for further research:

Discuss dance and social justice, sharing ways that movement can express culture and resistance.

This integrated STEAM curriculum was developed by CSUSM STEAM Ambassadors with support from **Illumina Foundation**

This pairs with the book *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom and the STEAM Water Protector Kit for Classroom.

students, local educators, and arts administrators. Later that month, students taught the lesson to multiple-subject credential candidates during the CREATE Residency Professional Development Day.

Through weekly collaborative meetings, STEAM Ambassadors explored how dance can support empathy, inquiry, and deeper understanding. Students gained practical experience in curriculum development aligned with the National Core Arts Standards, interdisciplinary lesson planning, and teaching across diverse learning environments.

In November 2025, the **We Are Water Protectors** lesson was presented at CSUSM's "Educator Pipeline: Pathways to Teaching the Arts" event engaging undergraduate



Center ARTES fellow Cherie Hill and STEAM Ambassadors Dulce Brown and Milan McLaurin lead movement exercises paired with STEAM.



STEAM Ambassador Milan McLaurin (center) demonstrating movement possibilities to participants at the Educator Pipeline event. (image credit: Albert Rascon)

THE POWER OF ART AND SCIENCE



Artist elin o'Hara slavick captures the lingering effects of radiation with contact prints of bombed trees. Epidemiologist Dr. David Barrie Richardson has conducted studies of cancer among U.S. federal nuclear workers and Japanese survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Center ARTES was a cosponsor of the March Arts & Lecture event, "A Marriage of Art & Science: Entwined Research in a Nuclear Family," presented by the College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral & Social Sciences and hosted by Center ARTES associate director Lucy HG Solomon. Internationally exhibiting artist elin o'Hara slavick and epidemiologist Dr. David Barrie Richardson discussed how they address the enduring effects of radiation and the global nuclear reality in their respective fields in Art and Science.

Center ARTES STEAM ambassadors collaborated on the Art & Science workshop in which students were tasked with parsing nuclear datasets as visual designs. Dr. Richardson, who is Lead Coordinating Writer for the United Nations Committee on Epidemiological Studies of Radiation and Cancer (UNSCEAR), shared with the audience that he intends to bring a selection of participants' designs based on the nuclear datasets in his report to his colleagues at the United Nations.



Artist elin o'Hara slavick engages with participants at the workshop.



Above: Workshop participants crafted visuals based on nuclear datasets.

Excerpts from a discussion among students of Data Visualization on what stood out in the panel discussion and workshop:

“ Environmental and historical data (like radiation exposure and war) can leave traces that aren't always visible in traditional datasets, but that can still be communicated through art in a way that makes people actually feel the impact.

“ Both speakers, elin o'Hara slavick and Dr. David Barrie Richardson, approached radiation not just as a scientific phenomenon but as something that 'writes itself into the world.' Slavick's descriptions of her cyanotypes and shadow prints made me realize that radiation leaves behind a kind of 'accidental archive.' Likewise, Dr. Richardson added a layer that made the conversation feel even more fascinating. Hearing him talk about long-term health effects made Slavick's artwork feel more symbolic and informative at the same time.

“ One of the things that stood out to me was the idea that radiation leaves traces that continue to exist in different forms. When elin o'Hara slavick talked about her work, it made me realize that the environment itself can act as a record. Overall, this discussion got me thinking about how information can be recorded in less obvious ways. Events can be 'recorded' through environmental changes, artistic representations, and even long-term health effects.

“ I really enjoyed trying to take the data that was given to us and having to figure out how to understand it. From there, having to create a piece to represent the data was very engaging and thought-provoking. For the presentations by nuclear artist elin o'Hara slavick and epidemiologist Dr. David Barrie Richardson, I enjoyed how they were sharing information about their discovery with the same topics but went on different paths to analyze and share it.

EXPLORING COMPLEXITY IN ART AND SCIENCE

Center ARTES STEAM Ambassadors supported the workshop for CSUSM's Arts & Lectures event, "From Fungi to the Planet, Complex Systems in Art and Science." The event introduced complex systems in the research of scientists from The Treseder Lab at UC Irvine, complexity in art presented by curator David Familian who is the artistic director of Beall Center for Art + Technology at UC Irvine, and complex systems embedded in the art of Cesar & Lois, the art collective of Lucy HG Solomon (Center ARTES associate director) and Brazil-based artist and professor Cesar Baio.

Dr. Kathleen Treseder and researchers Eduardo Misael Chorenno Parra and Melanie Taleen Hacopian discussed research by the Treseder Lab that examines fungi's relationship to planetary systems. Fungi are essential to the Earth's metabolic processes and to ecosystem respiration. The panel focused on complex systems across art and science, with David Familian contextualizing different artists' approach to and integration of complex systems. This included art by Cesar & Lois, whose artwork created in conversation with the scientists at the Treseder Lab highlights fungi's role in global respiration.

The workshop included hands-on making with plants and paper to create landscapes integrated with fungal designs, based on the art of Cesar & Lois. Paired with this making, university students and community participants examined fungi up close through microscopes and contributed to a collective mural by printing with plants.



Lucy HG Solomon and the STEAM Ambassadors introduce the concepts of the workshop.



The artwork *Being Hyphaenated*, created by Cesar & Lois while residents at the Treseder Lab at UC Irvine, exhibited in the *Future Tense: Art, Complexity, and Uncertainty* exhibition curated by David Familian as part of the Getty initiative, *PST ART: Art & Science Collide*. (image credit: © Cesar & Lois, 2024)



Cesar & Lois designed the workshop to help participants link fungi to plants and the planet through symbiotic collage. Above: Workshop participants examine their art materials (plants) with a microscope.



Right: Diagram describing fungi's planetary role by CSUSM student Fernanda Ugarte.





Wildlife biologist/educator Steffani Jijon and STEAM Ambassador coordinator Melanie Wollrabe create symbiotic plant collages with students from CMCS in



ARTMAKING WITH PLANT SPECIMENS

STEAM Ambassadors visited area schools loaded with plant specimens to be used as materials for artmaking! Students examined the plants and learned about the genetic differences between plants and fungi. Center ARTES associate director Lucy HG Solomon gathered a wide variety of plants to be used as art supplies. Wildlife biologist Steffani Jijon collaborated with the STEAM ambassadors to layer elements of genetic science and microbiology onto the plant collage project.

EXPERIMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP WITH CENTER ARTES

In February, Center ARTES hosted an experimental photography and educational workshop for Bonsall High School students at the Innovation Hub at CSUSM. Center ARTES project coordinator Aidelen Montoya presented a lecture on the science of photography, with Lucy HG Solomon providing context on the integration of art and science. The day included a cyanotype workshop led by Aidelen Montoya and the STEAM Ambassadors, with students rotating through experiential cyanotype printing stations and a collective mural-sized botanical print. The students experienced how photography operates as both an artistic and a scientific process.



This immersive day significantly deepened the students' understanding of photography by bridging theoretical knowledge with physical creation. By stepping outside the traditional classroom, the students experienced how photography operates not just as a digital medium, but as an active scientific and artistic practice. The day connected historical processes to contemporary research and nature, encouraging the students to see their own artistic potential through a multidisciplinary lens.



Right: Bonsall High School students create botanical prints created through sun exposure, (left) STEAM Ambassador Dulce Brown hoses down the mural cyanotype.

FUTURES WITH DATA VISUALIZATIONS: STEAM INTEGRATION WITH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



Lucy HG Solomon presents a lecture on data in art, discussing the environmental data embedded in an artwork she created with Cesar Baio with their art collective Cesar & Lois.



Students view data visualizations created by student artists in the Planet Mentorship program on display at the CSUSM Library Data Stacks.

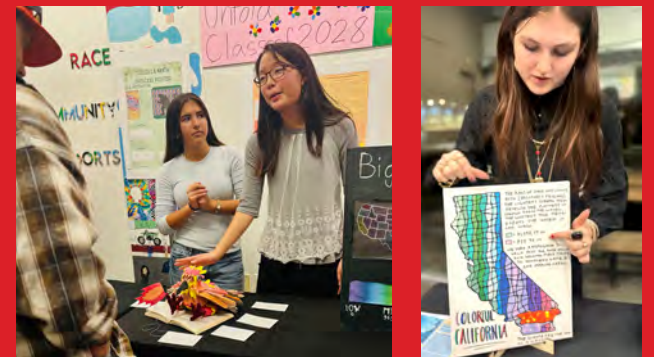
The Fall event, “Futures with Data Visualizations,” brought area high school students to CSUSM to experience STEAM integration across campus. Hosted by Center ARTES associate director Lucy HG Solomon, the day introduced visiting students to data visualization as a vehicle for integrated STEAM research. Building on the prior year’s collaborative curriculum-building with educators from High Tech High, Center ARTES brought together CSUSM professors in the Arts and the Sciences to engage with and inspire the 9th grade integrated Humanities and STEAM curriculum. With support from the College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral & Social Sciences and the collaboration of the Innovaton Hub and Library, the career readiness day introduced area high school students to data visualization as a vehicle for clarifying and communicating important research topics.

High Tech High North County educators Afton Dixon (Environmental Science), Caroline Sailor (Mathematics and Physics), and Anjelica Schexnayder (Ethnic Studies) worked with Lucy HG Solomon, whose teaching focuses on data visualization of environmental and societal research, to build a research-focused data visualization experience for high school students. Their curricular collaboration draws on the data visualizations at the intersection of environmental and social justice from the Planet Mentorship Program, with the enthusiastic participation of STEAM Ambassadors. Afton Dixon describes the high school curriculum project as one that is rooted in counter narratives in nature and in society: “Part of the Environmental Science content for this project is Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and students, along with their physical data-visualization art pieces, created a magazine which includes information on TEK and SEK (Scientific Ecological Knowledge) about CA native species.”



On exhibit at the CSUSM Library Data Stacks: (left) Diorama art examining indoor air pollution by STEAM Ambassador and Planet Mentorship artist Angelina Parra, and (right) CSUSM student Sarah Heinrich's data visualization of data on the endangered Freshwater Pearl Mussel.

After visiting CSUSM, the high school students went on to develop their own data visualizations based on conservation research. Center ARTES Project coordinator Aidelen Montoya mentored the high school students in their creation of data visualizations. The high school students researched datasets on current social justice and environmental issues around the world, with the objective of using art to communicate their research to the broader community. In a visit to the high school, Aidelen gave 9th grade students feedback as they developed their projects in data visualization, pushing students past typical bar graphics to consider expansive creative possibilities for conveying their datasets.



Freshman at High Tech High North County presented their Data Visualizations at an exhibition held for the community at the high school.

DNA EXTRACTION OUTDOORS

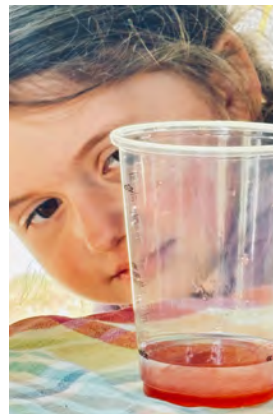
In educator Steffani Jijon's outdoor classroom, STEAM Ambassadors led students in a lesson layering genetic science with storytelling, art, and movement, and they taught future teachers the expanded DNA lesson. School children explored DNA in multimodal ways, as they extracted DNA from strawberries, created dot self-portraits, and moved their bodies in coiled DNA chains. One CREATE resident commented on how mirroring in dance relates to DNA structure and, reinforcing a theme of the paired book, students' individualized movements show how each of us is different and unique.



STEAM Ambassadors teach at "Nature School" (Homeschooling in Nature) at Dixon Lake Park.



Participants shadow one another, reinforcing how the DNA double helix unwinds to replicate.



School children ages 4-11 extract DNA from strawberries.

LOVE LETTERS TO SCIENCE

Dear Scientist, Engineer, Researcher...



When support for science research was threatened, Center ARTES and the STEAM Ambassadors stepped in to send love letters to scientists.

STEAM Ambassadors hosted letter-writing booths on campus for students to write supportive notes to scientists. The STEAM Ambassadors' message: **We love science! Thank you, scientists!**



STEAM Ambassadors invite students to write a love letter at a letter writing station.



Above left: STEAM Ambassadors share Love Letters to Scientists with Dr. Jane Kim (Biological Sciences) and her daughter. Above right: Lucy HG Solomon (center) and Merryl Goldberg (right) of Center ARTES present Jackie Trischman, dean of the College of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics, with a Love Letter.

COMMUNITY PARTNER FARM LAB OFFERS CREATIVE CHALLENGE



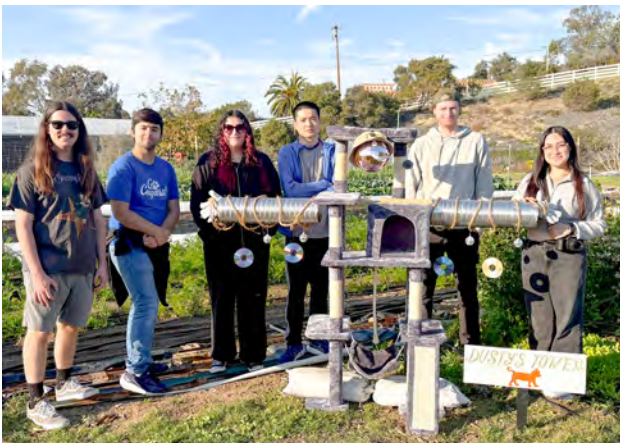
View of the vegetable garden at Farm Lab in Encinitas.

Since 2022, Center ARTES fellow Dr. Kristin Moss and Farm Lab Site Administrator Julie Burton have been collaborating to create service-learning opportunities that put college students' creative skills to work to support organizations' innovative education projects. In Fall 2025, students in AMD 421 Art and Social Change were presented with a unique creative challenge by community partner Farm Lab: to build creative scarecrows for the outdoor educational setting. This year's projects built on the success of past collaborations that range from murals to signage and educational materials.

Farm Lab is a sustainability campus and regenerative organic farm that models and supports wellness and environmental stewardship through their farm-to-school program. In addition to providing on-site education for elementary students, the campus also produces fresh vegetables for school lunches for the entire Encinitas Union School District. But Farm Lab loses almost 20% of each crop to pests, and insecticides are not an option for the school food program.

CSUSM students were charged with collaboratively designing non-traditional "scarecrows" incorporating biomimicry and using upcycled/recycled materials to deter common crop pests. Using durable designs and materials that mimic the movements,

sounds, and elements found in nature, the students created scarecrows including a sparkling jelly fish scarecrow to deter mice and rabbits on the ground, pinwheels and windsocks that intimidate airborne predators, and even a special guard tower for the resident rodent control cat named Dusty.



Left: CSUSM students designed a tower for Farm Lab's resident cat to support his pest control efforts. Right: The students' jelly fish scarecrow was designed to scare off ground animals.

DR. KRISTIN MOSS ON COMMUNITY COLLABORATION



CSUSM students designed creative scarecrows to protect Farm Lab's crops from critters.

Center ARTES fellow Dr. Kristin Moss champions community collaboration as a mutually beneficial experience between institutional partners who share common values and goals. Through a unique, hands-on educational experience, students develop teamwork and creative skills while responding to actual needs within the community.



"I love that community partnerships get college students involved outside the classroom and show them how they can use their creative skills to start making a difference in the community even before they graduate. These students are well positioned to become leaders in their own communities."



PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

With a team of vibrant community arts and education advisors, Dr. Merryl Goldberg founded Center ARTES in 2003. Thanks to generous funding from the Stuart Foundation in 2018, California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) launched a San Diego County-wide campaign focused on providing access for all children to a better education by improving literacy in and through the arts. In 2020, Lucy HG Solomon and Dr. Christiane Wood joined Dr. Goldberg at Center ARTES to expand the center's reach. Center ARTES has received philanthropic funding from visionary organizations including The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation, Illumina Foundation, Dr. Seuss Foundation, Panta Rhea Foundation, and Coastal Community Foundation.

Center ARTES has established a research-based collective impact model with its home base at California State University San Marcos, engaging faculty, students and staff in multiple colleges. Through ever-building partnerships, including with the County Office of Education, school districts, arts non-profits and the community, we seek to ensure that each and every child has the opportunities that arts bring to successful careers and lives. Our work is also used statewide through organizations such as CREATE CA, California Alliance for Arts Education, The Residency Lab, and the California Arts Council.

For more information, research and downloads, please visit: csusm.edu/centerartes



ABOUT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN MARCOS (CSUSM)

Founded in 1989, California State University San Marcos is a forward-focused institution, dedicated to preparing future leaders, building vibrant communities and solving critical issues.

The University enrolls over 17,000 students. With approximately 2,000 employees, the institution is a Great College to Work For® (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*). As a recipient of the annual HEED Award since 2014 – a national honor recognizing U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion – CSUSM is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment.

Center ARTES has long recognized access to the arts as a key element in future success for youth. Center ARTES' goals for accessible arts education align with CSUSM's commitment to our students. In 2025 CSUSM was recognized as the nation's leader in social mobility, ranking No. 1 out of more than 1,400 schools in CollegeNET's Social Mobility Index. To learn more about how the university empowers students with genuine advances in their education, please visit <https://www.csusm.edu/socialmobility/center/index.html>

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