

Isabel Bloom Article July 2010 - Jordan Catholic receives 2010-2011 art education grant



The walls are crowded with art at Jordan Catholic School, Rock Island, thanks to Isabel Bloom's Art Education Fund!

Soothing Small Souls with Art

Ten-year-old Payton's* eyes light up on art days. Never very good in math, reading or gym, she had been floundering in school. Then, Jordan Catholic School instituted an art program to benefit Payton's 5th grade class. After a few sessions of painting and collage making, Payton's demeanor changed. She began smiling.

The art program came courtesy of [Isabel Bloom's Art Education Fund](#). Teacher Kathy Barrett - who wrote the grant for the fund - says she was stunned by the difference the program made to all of her students.

"I always believed art was important, but some of the ways in which it's important surprised me," she says. "I have seen it in my own classroom. Art promotes self esteem and confidence. It calms students down. It helps ADHD students focus. It brings fun into the curriculum."

Studies back up Kathy's observations, while also noting a connection between academic performance and art. Principal Mike Daly says he's seen higher scores in those classrooms that benefit from the program as well.

"I heartily endorse the program," he says. "We've seen improved test scores, perhaps because the kids are more relaxed and ready to learn, perhaps because creating art promotes brain development."

Either way, Kathy says her students have seen a significant improvement. She offers another example.

"Ryan* could never sit still before we started the program," she says. "He required constant correction. That has changed completely, at least on the days we have art. He is a different

person when the art teacher arrives. You can see an improvement in his self esteem as well. He feels accomplished."

Teachers and staff aren't the only grownups noticing a difference. Parents do, too. At a recent presentation by Jordan School on how the Bloom Education Fund has affected the learning environment, Doreen Adlfinger spoke about her daughter, Lucy:

"Parents like me can't wait to hear about our children's day. On Art days, Lucy's eyes and voice light up, explaining the new artists, paintings and techniques she has learned about.

"What I know is, art shouldn't be a luxury for kids. Art is something that soothes the many moods of our soul. From the bottom of my heart, thank you, Isabel Bloom Foundation and Jordan staff for bringing so much joy to my precious Lucy ... and for helping ensure that art will soothe her soul into adulthood."

Since its inception in 2007, when it served only 5th and 6th graders, Jordan's art program has grown to serve 7th-8th grades too. Mike Daly says he hopes to be able to hire a fulltime art teacher down the road, but in the meantime is grateful to Isabel Bloom for its support.

"I would like to offer a separate art class to every student here," he says. "It enriches lives. It is part of what makes us human. To appreciate art, to make art. Thank you, Isabel Bloom!"

**Not their real names.*



The Isabel Bloom Art Education Fund

In honor of Isabel's memory, Isabel Bloom LLC established the IBAEF in 2001 to provide extra financial support to visual arts programs within the primary and secondary schools of Scott and Rock Island Counties that would not otherwise receive funding.

Over the course of its existence, the IBAEF has awarded 20 grants for a total of more than \$39,000, affecting thousands of students throughout the community.

For the 2010-2011 school year, 5 area schools have received grants for projects that range from 3-D sculpting with found objects to printmaking. The schools include Jordan Catholic, Rock Island; Davenport Community Schools; Glenview Middle School, East Moline; Rockridge Community Schools; and Trinity Lutheran School, Davenport.