

TRUST FOR OUR FUTURE

Mini-Grant Application by Lou Dorogi and Sarah Cowperthwaite

PROJECT TITLE: A Splash of Color—Mosaics at MTA

CURRICULUM AREAS: Visual Arts and Social Studies

SCHOOL: Mt. Ararat High School

Number of Educators: 2

Number of Students: 25

Sarah Cowperthwaite

5 Cleave Street

Topsham, ME 04086

cowperthwaites@link75.org

Lou Dorogi

12 Alexandra Drive

Gardiner, ME 04345

dorogil@link75.org

BACKGROUND

Art & Society is a unique course taught at Mt Ararat High School that seeks to combine the disciplines of social studies and visual arts into a multi-modal, hands-on art history course. The inter-disciplinary nature of *Art & Society* is structured using Gardner's multiple intelligences and students learn about the eras in art history from prehistoric times to modern art by participating in a variety of hands-on activities. This is one of the few courses at Mt Ararat High School that addresses all of the intelligences to include Naturalist, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Verbal-Linguistic, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Logical-Math, Musical and Spatial. Because of this, students in *Art & Society* experience a variety of lessons and activities that paradoxically move them out of their traditional comfort zones yet reinforce the learning styles and intelligences that they are comfortable with.

Over the past few years, students have participated in a series of activities that require them to create art projects in public spaces that relate to the styles or types of art found within each era of art history. For example, after studying Art Nouveau during our spring semester, groups of students were assigned doorways in various locations around the school with the intent of decorating them in the Art Nouveau style. The doorways were popular with both students and staff and elicited many positive comments as people walked past the doorways. At the end of the first semester, the entire class is required to recreate an art museum in a space provided by the library. Students take on the role of curators and design exhibits, select appropriate artwork created during the semester and write summaries and descriptions of the artwork. While wonderful projects that raise awareness of what students are doing in *Art & Society* and ask students to demonstrate their understanding of art history in unusual and public activities, the activities are *temporary*. At the end of the school year, the Art Nouveau doorways were dismantled and the art museum was taken down by February Break. Our painting of ceiling panels during our unit on the Renaissance and the role of patronage creates a more enduring work. Student groups approach their patrons and discuss their concepts for creating and painting a diptych of ceiling panels for a particular classroom. All of these activities involved in public places have been wildly popular; the number of teachers wanting to be involved or serve as patrons for *Art & Society* projects has grown steadily each year.

PROPOSAL

While students and staff have expressed support and appreciation for the projects created by *Art & Society* students, we would like to take an existing project for our unit on Roman mosaics and turn it into another public art project. Currently, students create a small mosaic tile using joint compound and glass tesserae that reflects an interest of theirs. We would like to expand this from a personal, individual project to a group, school-oriented, permanent activity with a theme that reflects the culture of Mt. Ararat High School. Our students would be divided into groups and assigned a space in a public location around the school (after obtaining permission from and talking to relevant administrators and/or department heads). Roman art and architecture often had a very public presence and function from the amphitheaters to the triumphal arches to the statues glorifying the might of the Empire. Using the medium of mosaics, which were often found in private homes, we would like to create public works that reflect the culture, mission and/or values of Mt. Ararat High School.

ALIGNMENT WITH MISSION, GOALS, EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS, COLLABORATION WITH COLLEAGUES and IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING

We believe this proposal meets with the mission of the TFOF mini-grants, because it expands upon the innovative, interdisciplinary, multi-modal teaching found in *Art & Society*. Students will be working in small, collaborative groups to create a distinctive and public mosaic that reflects the culture of Mt. Ararat High School.

This project will have an impact on student learning by providing students with a hands-on project that relates to our unit of study on the art and architecture of ancient Rome. It will also impact student learning, because students will be creating a permanent, public work of art that reflects the values and culture of Mt. Ararat High School. In essence, they will be creating a legacy that will remain behind long after they graduate.

Evidence of the success of our project will be quite visible. There should be five new mosaics decorating the often sterile environment of Mt. Ararat High School. Certain art projects such as the *Alice in Wonderland* work in the front stairwell, the flags around the world near Foreign Language and the mural opposite the elevator all have imparted a distinctive and decorative flair to the building. The mosaic project would build upon these earlier projects, but with a completely different medium and a completely different focus on the culture and mission of the school.

As mentioned earlier, a number of teachers have readily volunteered their classrooms and doorways for other *Art & Society* projects. As more and more teachers and students are exposed to the work from the class, the number of teachers willing to serve as patrons and host artwork and art projects in the classroom continues to expand each year. We believe the public nature of these mosaics with their message about our school's culture and values will be enjoyed by the school community and we would willingly present the project and the role of the TFOR mini-grant to an audience of our peers as well as the required presentations to the Executive Board of the Trust and the School Board.

SUSTAINABILITY and FUNDING

Over the past two years, we have experimented with the mosaic activity in the ancient Rome unit. After initial thoughts of using thousands of tiny pieces of paper for tesserae, we opted for using small glass and stone tesserae. The tesserae were applied to a layer of joint compound on a piece of wood or sheetrock. The mosaics were later grouted and covered with a layer of urethane to provide stability. The tesserae for this activity have been the incorrect size for the scale of our work and have been of poor quality.

In proposing to create a public mosaic, we would like to experiment with proper glass tesserae. We have not currently worked these materials into the nominal supply budget for the course. If the project is a success, we plan on including glass tesserae, permanent adhesives and proper grout for future supply budgets.

FEASIBILITY

We are completely confident that this project can be completed with the proposed materials in a timely fashion. In the past two years, students in *Art & Society* have worked individually to create mosaics during the allotted time. This proposal will use smaller tesserae, but students will be working in groups of five so we have no doubts that the project can be accomplished during regular school hours. In addition to assigned class time, if a group is behind schedule we can assign group members to Academic Support Time (AST) at the end of every Blue Day to complete the project. It has also been our experience that students become very dedicated to their individual projects and often opt to spend additional time after school on them.

Anticipated Start Date: late November, 2012
 Expected Completion Date: early January, 2013

In the unlikely events students are not able to complete this project within the framework of our *Art & Society* course under the direction of two instructors, the Art Club could take over the administration and completion of this project.

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Mosaic Mercantile Cut Mosaic Tiles	3 lb bags	\$32.99	x 5	\$164.95
Glass Mosaic Frits and Chunks	set of 12	\$57.99	x 3	\$173.97
Stained Glass Assorted Tiles	4 lb bags	\$29.66	x 5	\$148.30
Iridized Venetian Glass Tile	3 lb bags	\$23.99	x 5	\$119.95
Mosaic Stone Cement	2 lb tub	\$ 6.23	x 5	\$31.15
Tile Scorer/Nipper	tool	\$ 8.89	x 2	\$17.78
Dry Grout	5 lb bags	\$ 9.50	x 3	\$28.50
Glass Lozenges	1 lb bags	\$ 3.50	x 10	\$35.00
		SUB-TOTAL		\$729.60
		Estimated Shipping		\$45.00
TOTAL				\$774.60

Assurances:

1. If funded, I agree to use the grant funds only for the purposes for which the grant has been written. I understand that the Trust for Our Future has the authority to withhold and/or recover grant funds in the case such funds are misused.
2. I agree to provide the Trust for Our Future with a final report which includes the use of grant funds.

Thank you for your timely consideration of our proposal.

Sarah Cowperthwaite

Lou Dorogi