

Using Art to Unite Students



Photo: Courtesy of ARCK

by Mark Fuechec

A nonprofit founded by Beacon Hill resident Sara Demeter is helping Boston students learn about themselves and their community through arts education and public art projects.

The organization, called Art Resource Collaborative for Kids (ARCK), worked with seventh graders from Gardner Pilot Academy and the Lilla G. Frederick School to create the interactive installation titled “I Am... You.” The art appeared at last week’s HUBweek, a festival celebrating innovation.

Demeter said the success of the project was in its collaborative aspects.

ARCK promotes social, cultural and emotional inclusion for students, she said. The project allowed them to reflect on different identities and cultures, and gave them room to accept others and share.

“The goal was to promote empathy and to build bridges between the youth and the rest of the community,” said Demeter. “This project allowed the youth to be part of this bigger picture.”

ARCK uses art as a vehicle for social impact, according to the website. The organization’s teaching artists collaborate with classroom teachers at partnering schools to design a 36-week curriculum that explores cultural identity, community participation and social and global awareness.

Last week’s “I Am... You” took place at the end of the first 12-week module, a more intro-

spective and reflective period where students are encouraged to share their differences. Over the next two months, students will be working on their next mural project focused on immigrant rights and social justice along the border.

“‘I Am... You’ was kind of the stepping stone that laid out the foundation for the next mural project we’re doing,” said Demeter. “The sequel will look at the bigger picture. To explore crossing the border to help us appreciate immigrants.”

With the completion of “I Am... You,” students are now thinking about the theme of borders and immigration to come up with their own ideas.

“In their humanities class they’ll be writing about borders they’ve crossed in their own lives,” said Bethany Strohm, ARCK’s program coordinator. “This will elicit empathy thinking about their own border crossings.”

One of the most interesting parts of the “I Am... You” project was bringing together two different groups of seventh graders who had never met each other, said Will Whelan, ARCK teaching artist.

“Before they went I talked to the kids and asked if they were excited to meet the kids from [Lilla G. Frederick School],” he said. “They were kind of shy, they didn’t want to deal with all these ‘strange kids.’ But they were great. I saw them talking and getting excited about working together. It was a really cool experience for them.”



Photo: Mark Fuechec

Renovations for Hatch Shell are Underway

by Mark Fuechec

The Hatch Memorial Shell is closed to the public as the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) invests \$2.2 million into roof repairs.

The Shell, located along the Charles River Esplanade, is a center for large outdoor performances and open-air events during the warmer months, but it has suffered from its exposure to the elements.

Nearly 30 years of water has accumulated since the last repair work was done, with water seeping through the terrazzo panels and running along the interior roof. This has caused the panels to heave.

“The damage has built up over a long time,” said Mark Steffen, press secretary for the Department of Conservation and Recreation. “It’s underneath and unseen, but it’s really putting the theater at risk.”

The bulk of the work will be in replacing the panels, which began with a laser scan to determine their dimensions.

“We’ve done a 3-D laser scan of how those panels connect to the concrete that lies beneath them,” said Steffen. “We’re doing this laser scan so that new panels can be manufactured off site and brought in the spring. We hope that [by] May or June of next year

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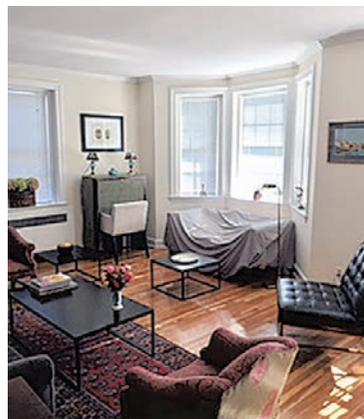


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