

New group hopes to increase support for local arts education



(December 23, 2013) On Dec. 3, Arts Council Napa Valley along with the Napa County Office of Education and the California Alliance for Arts Education hosted an early morning breakfast to garner support for arts education in Napa County schools.

Napa County Superintendent of Schools Barbara Nemko, along with the Principal Advisor to the State Superintendent of Schools Craig Cheslog, Napa Valley Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Patrick Sweeney and Executive Director of the California Alliance for Arts Education Joe Landon, began the conversation with more than 50 Napa County educators, arts organizations, nonprofits and community leaders in attendance.

The event was held on the historic Napa Valley Unified School District Auditorium stage.

In response to the statewide changes in education focus, the California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE) launched the Local Advocacy Network project, which supports local advocacy efforts in more than 30 California communities.

The newly formed Napa County Alliance for Art Education, sponsored by the Arts Council Napa Valley through a startup grant from the CAAE, will convene leaders together and work to sustain and build a base of community support for arts education as an essential component of a comprehensive education for every child in Napa County.

Recognizing the benefits of arts education in developing and strengthening critical thinking, communication skills, collaboration and creativity in each child, a leadership team is forming from the Dec. 3 breakfast to set goals for 2014 and beyond. This new team will focus on developing a countywide plan to advocate, network and support arts in education.

We are fortunate that our local school districts support the arts and recognize its value for each student and that community leaders discern the importance of arts education's vital role in preparing students for a successful future.

However, there is much more we could be doing. Please join us as we advocate for quality arts education opportunities for all students in our valley. For more information visit ArtsCouncilNapaValley.org or email us at programs@artscouncilnv.org.

Olivia Everett is president and CEO of Arts Council Napa Valley and Robin Hampton is a Napa County Local Advocacy Coordinator.