

‘Every human needs the arts’: Nevada County Arts Council recognized, celebrates National Arts in Education Week

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High schooler Ori Rutledge, an intern with The Union, leans against a wall at Nevada Union High School, to show the scale murals students created to help liven up the hallways. The Nevada County Arts Council is celebrating this week, promoting arts programming in schools, as well as arts projects going on in Nevada County more broadly.

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A Nevada Union High School mural helps brighten up

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This week the Nevada County Arts Council is celebrating – and being celebrated.

It's the annual, National Arts in Education Week as designated by [Congress in 2010](#).

As such, the arts council is promoting a wide [variety of arts programs](#) occurring in Nevada County schools, like the [Poetry Out Loud](#) program whereby high school students work with the arts council to improve their public speaking and poetry skills.

“It’s an aggregated way of marketing and exposing what entities are doing” in the county, said the arts council’s Executive Director Eliza Tudor.

Kimberly Ewing, a humanities teacher in the Nevada City School District and arts coordinator for the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools, is pushing teachers to go a step further.

At a Seven Hills Middle School staff meeting Tuesday she offered to pay \$5 to any teacher in the school district willing to incorporate an art project into their curriculum in observance of the week.

“The arts are a part of learning, and they need to be more integrated,” said Ewing.

The teacher and administrator said she’s yet to hear from any teachers in the district about her proposal. But Ewing is serious about incorporating arts projects and lessons into teachers’ curriculums – spanning subjects from math and chemistry to history and language arts. She wants to collect teachers’ art projects on a website where such information can be shared for future use.

“The one thing about being a good teacher is you got to share your wealth,” she said.

Ewing is taking this week to do further advocacy for the priority of arts education in Nevada County schools.

“Every human needs the arts to find themselves sometimes,” she said, particularly in a county enriched with artistic talent. “The arts helps (students) understand their own humanity.”

Ewing said she’s doing fun and creative projects in the classroom this week, including an imaginative game to improve student reading ability.

HONORING ARTS LEADERS

Tudor and the council’s education chair, Brian Buckley, are being acknowledged by the California Alliance for Arts Education as Arts Now Heroes, according to a news release from the council.

Tudor said the award came from the previous work at the council, [assessing the reach of arts education](#) in Nevada County and the [economic impact report](#) of the arts in western Nevada County more broadly.

Much of this work, Tudor said, was done without financial assistance from outside groups, and with the help of expert volunteers.

“We weren’t just waiting indefinitely for another (institution) to say, ‘Hey, here’s the money, go and do this,’” she said.

Now Tudor said the council is reaping the benefits of coordinating with school administrators and city officials and producing statistics on the effectiveness of the arts.

“We positioned ourselves as the perfect partner,” she said.

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