

This Will Knock Your Smocks Off

According to the prestigious National Art Education Association (www.naea-reston.org), "Art is a language of visual images that everyone must learn to read. In art classes, we make visual images and we study images. Increasingly, these images affect our needs, our daily behavior, our hopes, our opinions and our ultimate ideals." Equally as important as any other subject matter in a well-rounded curriculum, art education helps students cultivate lifelong skills and meaningful learning whether it be in schools, museums, private lessons or workshops.



Hector deCordova, artist and founder of The deCordova Studio and Gallery in Greenport, comes from a strong art educational background as a former student of the High School of Music & Art, Parsons School of Design/Interior Architect and Art Students League. Leaving behind a successful career in interior design, deCordova has devoted the past fifteen years to painting. Aside from his personal artistic endeavors, deCordova shares his life's passion with both children and adults as an art educator. Primarily instructing on the East End through BOCES, the Parrish Art Museum and the Art Barge, deCordova commences his summer teachings for the Children's Art Project. His work with the Children's Art Project dates back to 1998, in which he received a grant that enabled him to teach twenty children at the Bridgehampton Childcare Center. Additionally, the students' work was exhibited at the Elaine Benson Gallery in Bridgehampton and Saks Fifth Avenue in Southampton.

As a member of the non-for-profit community organization Organizacion Latino Americana (OLA) of Eastern Long Island since its inception in 2002, deCordova proposed and received a grant from the Town of Southampton to conduct an outstanding program. Able to serve ten to fifteen participants ranging from ages eight through twelve for a two-week workshop, deCordova affords the children an opportunity to create artwork and exhibit their talents. With careful student selection and consideration, deCordova set out to support cultural and ethnic backgrounds on the East End. He remarks, "I wanted to make sure that we had some racial and ethnic diversity in the group. We have children from Southampton, Greenport, Bridgehampton, and East Hampton."

This intensive workshop is once again being held at the Bridgehampton Childcare Center, as students receive a total of eight instructional hours. Gaining experience in drawing and watercolor painting, students will work from various subject matters including florals, landscapes and fruit. Going beyond the scope of artistic process and production, deCordova explains that, "The purpose

of the painting workshops, as well as the show, is to bring children of different backgrounds together in order to foster greater understanding and mutual respect and acceptance of each other."

Upon completion of the workshop, the children's works will be framed and displayed at the deCordova Gallery in Greenport followed by an exhibition at the Veterans' Hall at the Southampton Cultural Center. In celebration, an opening reception will be held on Friday, August 24 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Hall.

As for deCordova's intention of providing the children with such a rich experience, he said, "Art is a powerful medium for building and unifying a community. By working in an intensely creative environment and by bringing parents and relatives together in one space at the art exhibit will hopefully allow families of diverse backgrounds to celebrate their common bonds rather than focus on their differences. One of the reasons we have hatred in this world and yes, even on eastern Long Island, is that we don't get to know each other. Maybe this is one way of finding a common bond - our children."

- Marisa Demarco

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