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Several grants result in art program for Central Greene students

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Three Waynesburg Central Area Elementary students collaborating while creating art during the after school program. (Photos by Lisa Heap)

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During the 2018-19 school year a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit organization, Art Expression Inc., taught an arts enrichment, after school program to Central Greene School District students.

Over 50 students from Margaret Bell Miller Middle School and Waynesburg Central Elementary participated in the programming, which began in October 2018 and ended in April 2019.

Lisa Heap, an art therapist, taught the lessons at both schools. She was assisted by five teachers: Traci Benke, Ashley Deurlein, Lisa Kalsey, Colby Love and Myra Stevenson.

Heap presented one series of workshops called ARTistic Dreamers, in which students met weekly and tried different art mediums such as painting, clay, printmaking, fiber art and collage. Students were also introduced to noteworthy artists, new art terms and activities that foster self-expression and creativity.

The Art Expression workshops were funded by several grants from local and national entities.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) provided \$10,000 in funding. UBS Global Wealth Management provided \$5,000 in matching funds and the Community Foundation of Greene County awarded \$2,500. The Community Foundation received its support from the Peters Family Memorial Fund and the Rotary Club of Waynesburg Charitable Fund.

The Pittsburgh-based EQT Foundation also provided \$5,000 in support for arts programming solely for Margaret Bell Miller Middle School.

The NEA provided funding for programming at Waynesburg Central Elementary School in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 and also supported similar programming in Charleroi Area and Trinity Area school districts.

“We are proud and grateful to receive this prestigious grant from the National Endowment for the Arts,” says Angela Lowden, founder and executive director of Art Expression Inc. “Our organization is dedicated and committed to supporting youth through the arts. We are appreciative that the NEA and the matching contributors have enabled us to conduct programming for underserved populations in Southwestern Pennsylvania’s Washington and Greene Counties.”

Art Expression offers over 10 different arts curriculum, which range from open studio experiences to those that emphasize STEAM learning or specialty programs that also feature activities such as athletics, exposure to history and culture, or a chance to learn about the work of famous artists. Its mission is to provide social and emotional learning through the arts and provide academic enrichment in an inclusive setting.

Since its inception in 2001, the organization has served over 11,000 children in school districts, community organizations and shelters for the homeless in Greene County as well as six other counties in Western Pennsylvania.

Art Expression is still actively seeking additional matching funding for its National Endowment for the Arts Grant. To learn more about Art Expression or to donate to its programming, visit www.artexpressioninc.org.