



# Amplifying the Arts

Volume 3, September 2020

The **Our Town Cultural Arts Program** brings the cultural arts into elementary school classrooms in the Murrieta Valley Unified School District, engaging students in the traditions and cultures of the citizens who make up our community and the students who sit in our classrooms. The program addresses the social, emotional, and academic needs of students by inviting community leaders, who are Teaching Artists of diverse backgrounds, as guest speakers. The Our Town Cultural Arts Program develops social awareness, perspective-taking, empathy, and respecting diversity. Over a six-week period, a Teaching Artist presents their culture in a classroom for 45 minutes, once a week. Every week, a new culture is presented. The presentation will include participation in an arts-related activity such as learning a new language, a dance, a visual arts project, or a song in another language.

The program also develops the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make caring, constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse cultures. By creating these connections to our past and our community members, students feel a sense of pride in themselves and an appreciation for the community they live in. The program creates experiences and develops appreciations that will last a lifetime.

The Our Town Cultural Arts Program is part of the Horizons Unlimited Arts Program in the Murrieta Valley Unified School District. All students from every culture, geographic location, and socioeconomic level deserve quality arts opportunities in dance, theater, music, and the visual and media arts as part of the core curriculum. Research has shown that exposing elementary-aged students to the arts will inspire a lifelong appreciation of the arts, instill creativity, and motivate students to want to come to school. The Horizons Unlimited Arts Program developed out of the need to provide elementary-aged students with equitable access to in-school arts instruction and cultural awareness as students develop the social-emotional skills needed to be successful in school and beyond.

The program was created and is administered by Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, Carol Hernandez. Their motto is "Inspiring every student to think, to learn, to achieve, to care through participation in the arts." For more information, please contact Carol at [chernandez@murrieta.k12.ca.us](mailto:chernandez@murrieta.k12.ca.us) or check out the video overview of the program at <https://youtu.be/fQHjCbSXZU>.

