An Invitation to Repair the World

Ashfaq Ishaq

Arts-based interventions that motivate students from the inside, fostering their creativity and imbuing it with empathy, can bring peaceful resolutions to conflicts and celebrations of diversity. This overarching objective of the International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) is operationalized through the Arts Olympiad, the world’s largest art program for children in which you are invited to participate at no charge.

Empathy Imbue

Human creative development comes with two quirks: First is the well-documented “fourth-grade slump” that poses the risk of diminishing creativity and which students can overcome through arts education. Second is the idea that creativity alone is “morally neutral” and can result in Machiavellian terrorism or cutting-edge Ponzi schemes. When creativity is imbued with empathy, it turns positive and advances human civilization.

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Empathy has its roots in art. The word is derived from the German term *einfühlung* (literally “feeling into” something), which can describe what a beholder might feel when viewing a painting. The aesthetic pleasure from the art arises from taking in, or “feeling into,” the work. Empathy is hence a vicarious experience of the feelings of others, and at its finest, those of one’s enemy.

Exhibition Competition

Schools arrange exhibitions, often in cooperation with area schools that are also participating in the Olympiad. Prominent cultural and educational leaders as well as student representa-

Continued on page 41.
The deadline magazine, published in the United States, has invited all children to participate at no charge in The Sixth Arts Olympiad (2017–2020), the world’s largest art competition with two quirks: First is the well-documented “fourth-grade slump” in art education. Second is the idea that creativity alone is not enough to bring peaceful resolutions to conflicts and celebrations of diversity.

The Arts Olympiad Exhibition on the Ellipse at the World Childrens Festival will travel to host cities to grow awareness of the importance of educating the next generation to be creative and empathic. ICAF’s ChildArt magazine, published ad-free since 1998, also nurtures students’ creative and empathic development, as well as global education through the arts. The ICAF is independently ranked by More4Kids among the Top 25 Children’s Charities in the United States. Let’s work together to repair our world and brighten it.

Ashfaq Ishaq is the founder and chair of the ICAF. childart@icaf.org

WEB LINKS
www.icaf.org
www.WorldChildrensFestival.org

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Activities choose the most outstanding works to be mailed to ICAF. Schools also have the option of arranging a digital art competition (finalist entries are e-mailed). The deadline for submissions is December 31, 2017. The Sixth Arts Olympiad Lesson Plan can be downloaded from our website [see Web Links].

Winners are invited to represent their school and district or state and country at the World Children’s Festival [WCF], which takes place every four years in Washington, DC. The Sixth WCF will take place at the National Mall around June 2019.

Repairing the World

Following the WCF, the Arts Olympiad exhibition will travel to host cities to grow awareness of the importance of educating the next generation to be creative and empathic. ICAF’s ChildArt magazine, published ad-free since 1998, also nurtures students’ creative and empathic development, as well as global education through the arts. The ICAF is independently ranked by More4Kids among the Top 25 Children’s Charities in the United States. Let’s work together to repair our world and brighten it.

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Youth Art Month

Youth Art Month (YAM) is an annual observance each March to emphasize the value of art and art education for all children and to encourage public support for quality school art programs. To learn more about how you can get involved in and support Youth Art Month activities in your area, contact your state chairperson. Information is available through the Council for Art Education website or your state art education association.

Councilforarteducation.org