

Fine Arts at Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy

Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy has built a strong Fine Arts Program since the multi-campus school in Dorchester and Mattapan opened in 2008. For 90 minutes each week, students receive in-class instruction in the Arts – and in turn produce music, art, and theater of exceptional quality. Feedback about the program from Pope John Paul students and parents alike has been “phenomenal,” says Mary Swanton, Fine Arts Director. “One mother wrote to me after watching her son stand up on stage and sing with all his heart. She couldn’t believe the difference music had made in her son’s life!”

The goals of the Fine Arts Program at Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy are straightforward, Swanton says. “We want to instill a love of the Arts in each child and help children discover their own potential through the Arts.” Here’s how the program works.

Music and Theater

Every student in the school attends weekly Music classes for 45 minutes per week. The Music Program includes classes in bells, percussion, glockenspiels, recorder, tin whistle, violin, music history, and theater arts. A signature program takes place in the 5th grade, when all students are required to learn how to play the violin.



Each month, students participate and perform in monthly Liturgies, with selected grades representing each campus as leaders of song. About 50 middle-school students enjoy participating in liturgical dance, and all students at Pope John Paul perform in two shows per year – to the tremendous enjoyment of parents, families, and the community. Students have also been invited to take part in various events, such as playing the violin for the President of Ireland on her trip to the United States last year. On Dec. 19, a select number of students from the

school will perform a medley of instrumental and vocal Christmas carols at Boston’s Strand Theater at a holiday event sponsored by the Honorable Thomas M. Menino, Mayor of Boston. (To read more about the 13 students from Pope John Paul’s Dorchester Central campus who performed for the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, go to <http://www.popejp2catholicacademy.org/pdfs/press/060509.pdf>.)

The Pope John Paul Music Program is partnered with the New England Conservatory, Berklee College of Music, the Discovery Ensemble, and the Boston City Singers. Throughout the course of the year, students at the Academy attend wonderful performances, concerts, and workshops by these organizations. These enrichment programs include orchestras, soloists, chamber groups, vocal quartets, string quartets, jazz ensembles, children's operas, and more.

Art

Students produce artwork that incorporates water colors, stills, arts and crafts and art history in the classroom. Last April, eight Pope JohnPaul students received highest honors at the Boston Public Library Art Competition. These students were recognized by Mayor Menino.

Coming Soon to the Academy!

- 6th grade students will work together to perform *Godspell* later this year.
- The Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy String Ensemble will begin. (Any student who has completed the 5th grade violin program will be eligible to participate.)
- Auditions will be held for the second year of the Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy Choir.



For more information, go to:

<http://www.popejp2catholicacademy.org/>