

# Elementary Art— Taking Advantage of Teacher Grants

Text and Photography by Kristen Rice

When I began teaching elementary art five years ago, I didn't know quite what to expect. Although I knew what theoretically students are able to do at each age, I didn't know what my students would be able to do. To my surprise, my students were able to do whatever challenge I put before them.

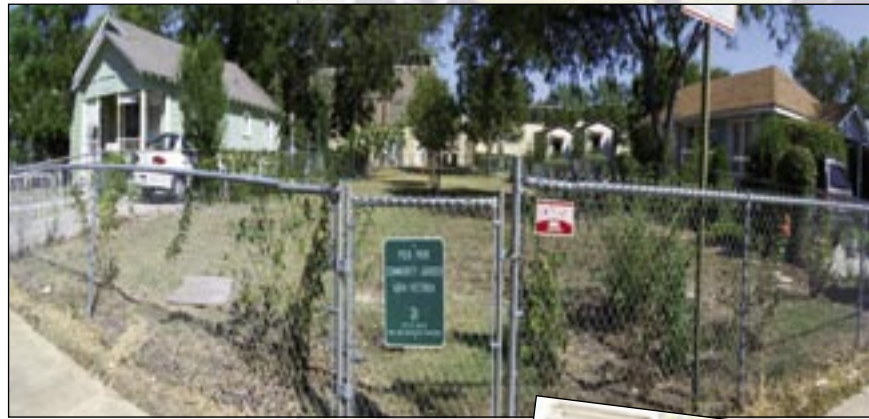
I had always wanted to work on large-scale projects with children, and when I saw how much they loved to create, I began to think about how we could use their efforts to make our school and our community better. There was a community garden across from the school that was somewhat neglected, and the people in charge granted us permission to install mosaic columns that would be created by the school's art students. The columns wouldn't interfere with any planting that people wanted to do, but they would be aesthetically pleasing once they were finished and would be very visible within the community.

An important step in the process is to find assistance with funding for the materials needed for the various projects. One potential source that I chose to pursue was from the Junior League of Dallas, Texas, the city where our school is located. The organization makes grants of up to \$1,500 available to teachers who develop innovative classroom ideas. Many areas of the United States have organizations that are willing to provide financial assistance to art teachers in their quest to help their students think outside the box. The following materials are what I submitted to the Junior League when applying for their Grants for Innovative Teaching program. They will give you an example of the type of information that teachers need to provide in order to apply for these sources of financial aid.

## Junior League of Dallas Grants for Innovative Teaching

### Project Summary

"Unity for our Community" is a civic art project that will focus on studying the past of our community and expressing our hope for the future. My fifth grade students will design tile mosaics on columns that will be installed in the community garden. Students will express their feelings about the community's history and their optimism for the future through the vibrant art of mosaic.



*Community Garden in which the columns will be installed*



*Rendering of the finished project*

### Project Description

While our community is certainly not one of the worst in Dallas, there is still much that can be improved. This project will focus on how creativity and group effort can make a positive impact upon a community. The students involved in this project will study the art of mosaic and design and will install their own mosaic on outdoor columns. The area surrounding our school is an historically black neighborhood. Our school was once a "Blacks Only" school. My students will study the impact of segregation, the Civil Rights Movement, and the issues of race in our present day. They will also discuss their optimistic hopes for the future. All of these ideas will then be interpreted into mosaic columns and placed as an entryway into the garden.

### Goals and Objectives

Having students begin to think of their creative efforts as powerful tools of change is my overall goal for this project. While many elementary art programs focus on fundamental skills, I'd like to take my program one step further and demonstrate to my students how their art is influential and their collective creative efforts can make their world a better place. Additionally, I'd like for all the viewers of this project to feel as though their community is being improved through art.



### Implementation

We will begin this project by discussing the history of our school, segregation, The Civil Rights Movement, and the issue of race in the present day. Our focus will initially be on the way our history and current conditions make us feel. We'll then shift the focus to what we hope the future will hold. Once we have covered all of this, we'll begin to interpret our feelings through line, color, and composition. Next, we'll study the art of mosaic by viewing books and other resources. We'll discuss how artists create mosaics as well as different styles of mosaics and how they are achieved. My students will then break into groups and begin to design a section of mosaic. Each class will be responsible for one column. They'll complete a rough draft in color, then will create a small "practice" mosaic. Once I feel they are ready to begin, the classes will begin to install their mosaics on their assigned column.

### Assessment

Once the columns are finished, I will assess the success of the project by the overall effectiveness of the columns. If the columns turn out as bold, colorful, and moving artistic compositions, my goals for this project will have been achieved.

### How it will improve student achievement

Children at the elementary level have the potential to be strong, effective artists, but that power is seldom displayed in a public and permanent way. This project will give my students the opportunity to show their artistic skill, and they will be able to understand the positive influence their own unique creativity can have on their immediate and global community.

### How the funds will be used

The money from the Dallas Education Foundation Teacher Mini-Grants will be used to buy stained glass, which will be cut into tiles for the mosaics. There are 8 columns, one for each class (which have already been purchased), and approximately 400 square feet of surface area to be covered. Part of the stained glass has already been purchased, but additional funds are needed to purchase the amount of glass needed. **PGQ**

*Kristen Rice teaches at K.B. Polk Elementary in Dallas, Texas.*

*Discover more details on how Kristen Rice planned and helped her students implement designs for the public-art mosaic columns created for display in a local community garden space in the Spring 2010 issue of Profitable Glass Quarterly.*

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### Proposed Budget

Item	Quantity	Cost Per Unit	Total
Square Fiberglass Column	4	\$365.05	\$1,424.20
Bags of Mosaic Tile (to cover 107 Sq. Ft.)	150	\$6.00-\$14.40	\$1,152.40
Thinset Bonding Mortar	2	\$30.00	\$60.00
Grout (25-pound bags)	2	\$12.97	\$25.94
Tile Sealer	2	\$15.00	\$30.00
<b>Grand Total:</b>			<b>\$2,692.54</b>

## League of Dallas Grants for Innovative Teaching

**Purpose:**

Grants for Innovative Teaching is a project of the Junior League of Dallas that is designed to encourage and support excellence in teaching. The grants will enable teachers to implement **ORIGINAL** and **CREATIVE** projects not funded by school budgets.

**Funding:**

The JLD, thanks to the generosity of Chase Bank, will be able to award at least \$75,000 in grants to educators in elementary (including kindergarten), middle and high schools in the DISD for the 2008-2009 academic year.

**Guidelines:**

Only **one** application per teacher will be accepted.  
 One teacher may apply for a grant up to \$500.00  
 Two teachers may apply together for a grant up to \$1,000.00  
 Three teachers may apply together for a grant up to \$1,500.00  
 Projects must be implemented between September 1, 2008 and April 30, 2009.  
 The Junior League of Dallas does not reimburse for sales tax.  
 Requests for food or refreshments will not be funded.

**Grant Process:**

Grant applications will be available online at [www.jld.net](http://www.jld.net) (located under Community Programs – Requesting Our Support) on March 8, 2008. **The application deadline is May 9, 2008. Applications sent by mail must contain 5 copies of the Signature Page, Project Summary Document, and Budget Worksheet.** Facsimile applications will not be accepted.

Applications will be reviewed by the JLD Grants for Innovative Teaching Committee over the summer. Recipients will be notified in August and grants will be awarded in late September (specific date to be determined) and will be distributed through the school's activity fund.

The JLD Grants for Innovative Teaching Committee will make site visits to observe and evaluate the projects during the school year. Grant winners must submit an evaluation of the project by May 3, 2009.

**Additional Information:**

For more information and tips on applying for a grant, download the "GFIT Application Tutorial" from [www.jld.net](http://www.jld.net) (located under Community Programs – Requesting Our Support).

For further assistance, call Julie Bagley, 2007-2008 Committee Chair, Grants for Innovative Teaching at (214)357-8822, ext. 218 or email at [gfit@jld.net](mailto:gfit@jld.net).

**APPLICATION DEADLINE IS FRIDAY MAY 9, 2008**



## GRANTS FOR INNOVATIVE TEACHING Grant Application Signature Page

**Name of Project:** \_\_\_\_\_ "Unity for Our Community" \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Requested:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ 1500.00 \_\_\_\_\_ \*Requests over \$1,500.00 will not be reviewed.

**School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Address:** (include city and zip code) \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal's Full Name** (include Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.): \_\_\_\_\_

**School Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lead Teacher's Full Name** (include Dr., Mr. Mrs., Ms.): \_\_\_\_\_

**Lead Teacher's Summer Contact Information** **Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2<sup>nd</sup> Teacher's Full Name** (if applying for \$501-\$1,000)

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade/Subject taught: \_\_\_\_\_

**3<sup>rd</sup> Teacher's Full Name** (if applying for \$1,001-\$1,500)

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade/Subject taught: \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Students Impacted by Project:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you applied for a grant from Grants for Innovative Teaching in previous years?** \_\_\_\_\_ **yes** \_\_\_\_\_

**Has this project been funded by Grants for Innovative Teaching in the past?** \_\_\_\_\_ **yes** \_\_\_\_\_

**If yes, state the number of years and the amount of funding you have received.** \_\_\_\_\_

**By affixing my signature, I certify and agree to the following:**

1. If I am awarded a grant, the money granted will be spent to support only the above project. Any money not utilized for this grant will be returned to the Junior League of Dallas.
2. A record of all expenditures, together with copies of legible receipts, will be maintained and submitted timely to the Junior League of Dallas on the appropriate forms.
3. Any equipment purchased with grant money is the property of DISD and the school in which I am teaching at the time I receive a grant.
4. The Junior League of Dallas may use information regarding this project for publicity purposes.

**Signature of Lead Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2<sup>nd</sup> Teacher's signature**

(if applying for \$501-\$1,000) \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3<sup>rd</sup> Teacher's signature**

(if applying for \$1,001-\$1,500) \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



