



Save the ~~Whales~~ . . . Arts

by
Marianne Scott

Now don't get me wrong, saving the whales is a very worthy cause! It's just that I can't think of a family who doesn't have a child, grandchild or neighbor affected by today's efforts to trim school budgets. Shift gears with me for just a moment. Your local school budget has become your *Whale*. The whale has put everyone in a situation to rationalize and decide what is important. Class sizes and districts are being reconfigured. Early retirement is encouraged and extracurricular activities and the arts are being scrutinized for their cost factor and relevance! Do we really need to have art classes and a band in order to educate our youth? Can we do without a football or basketball team as well? I suppose we can do without art and athletics in our school systems.

However I fully believe that the arts and athletics would still find a way into the everyday lives of our youth. AND, rightfully so! So the question becomes, do we level the playing field and make them available to everyone through our educational system? Or, leave them to the devices of a system that would all likelihood offer such extra's to those who can pay? Another haunting question is, do the arts or sports (in a sense) save those who don't excel in academia? Likewise, does academia save those who don't excel in arts or athletics. Or can academia, the arts and athletics enjoy equal time as contributing factors when molding young minds and bodies? Is there still middle ground for the *Whale*?



Case in point; a gentleman who enjoyed woodworking and stained glass in retirement, dies. A family catalogs and wraps pounds of stained glass, hoping someone else will be able to use it. The collection of stained glass is passed on to an Art Educator who implements it into her curriculum. As a result, art classes of all ages and abilities are engaged in a project few will ever have the opportunity to experience. A theme is developed and researched, patterns are sketched and re sketched, colors of possible glass are selected. Learning how to cut and wrap glass is perfected. In all of this, teamwork and planning is paramount. Participation takes form in the shape of being extremely hands-on all the way to allowing the most physically impaired student the opportunity to place just the right piece in just the right spot. Participation is all inclusive. The result - an amazingly wonderful entry way to an Elementary School that reflects a multitude of pride, research, and inner reflection. (Continued on page 2)



Remembering The Gifts

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What an amazing gift and what an excellent way to save the Whale. A retirement hobby becomes a part of the impetus for a creative collaboration of young minds, guided by one who sees the Arts as a vital and relevant learning process. Many of you have been or are now a part of your own Save The Whale scenario. Your saving gift might have encouraged a young seminary student. You might have shared your gift of creative writing. Per-

haps you remembered those who served churches on lower salaries. Or was it you who sent a handwritten note to the Sunday School Teacher who shows up each Sunday and makes a difference in the life of a child! Perhaps you supported ministry with your prayers and gifts when the economy would indicate otherwise. To you, we say "Thank You" and want you to know what a vast difference your gifts make to those who serve and have served.

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