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What is the value of a museum field trip for young kids?

Bridgeport, CT (February 9, 2022) – Getting on a bus and spending time in a place as magical as an art museum is an event long remembered, *especially* if it happens at an early age.

Students at Read Elementary School in Bridgeport are used to visiting museums in late elementary school, however this school year, the museum field trip came to Read’s youngest learners, their Pre-K through second grade students. Innovative and new, this museum experience was brought to Read aboard a bus that was retrofitted and converted into a mobile museum gallery this past 2021 by cARTie, Connecticut’s non-profit mobile art museum bridging inequities in education and arts access across the state.

Read Vice Principal, Sherene Kennedy, shares: “We were very impressed with the interactive exhibits created by students. The student created artwork was inspiring and allowed our students to engage with art mindfully and gain art appreciation. Exposure to this enriching experience at an early age will definitely have a positive impact on students.”

According to Adrienne Carter-Brown, Read Pre-K Teacher and cARTie Programming Committee Chair, “museum experiences have the potential to contribute to early learning as it pertains to social, cognitive and emotional development of young children; these experiences can positively impact overall academic success and continue to foster motivation to learn.” Carter-Brown continues, “cARTie’s mission is to increase arts equity by providing access to art programs through a mobile museum experience.”

Clare Murray, Co-Founder and Executive Director of cARTie, studies the benefits of museum field trips for young children as part of her doctorate in art and art education at Teachers College, Columbia University. From her review of research as well as evidence collected from school teachers, students, and principals involved in cARTie’s pilot year of programming, Murray explains “positive and prolonged early exposures to museum-based learning hold potential to nurture critical and creative thinkers who may be more motivated to engage with the arts and make changes in their communities.”

“Introducing young children to the art museum environment early and making sure they feel welcome and represented is laying the foundation for cultural engagement, civic engagement, and so much more,” Murray says. “We know our youngest years are some of our most formative, so it behooves us to get young kids excited by the learning potential of museums early.”

Certainly, one of the most exciting experiences a student can have is a museum field trip. Unfortunately, the costs and logistics of museum field trips have become prohibitive for many students with already limited access to the arts, regardless of COVID complications. cARTie aims to address this, delivering the museum field trip directly to our youngest learners in Pre-K through second grade, parking its mobile art museum right beside elementary schools’ front doors and leading classes of students on novel, child-centered, interactive adventures every hour. Subsidized by the generous contributions of individuals, government agencies, and foundations, cARTie’s school partnership offerings for the 2022-2023 school year include two full school-day visits reaching up to five PreK-2 classes each day per school for less than \$4 per student per visit. More information and reservation forms may be found at www.cARTie.org.

About cARTie

cARTie is a non-profit mobile art museum designed to bridge inequities in education and arts access across Connecticut. cARTie uniquely reimagines museum education and makes sure all Connecticut youth see themselves represented in the works of art and featured artists on display. cARTie activities are two-fold: (1) to offer inclusive internship and exhibition opportunities to a diverse population of high school arts students and (2) to provide critical museum-based learning opportunities that enrich and deepen early education, while meeting core standards, to PreK-2 students who otherwise may not have access to robust arts programming. To learn more about cARTie, please visit www.cartie.org and follow cARTie on Facebook and Instagram @CTcARTie!