

# The History of Art Club Submission

## Why Liberty Lake?

Liberty Creek Elementary School does not have dedicated art teachers, curriculum, or classes.

Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, Liberty Creek Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) started an afterschool art club for first and second graders. One PTO parent is managing the entire program. Participation was limited to children whose parents were able to sign up immediately as it filled up quickly. There is no art club open to Kindergarten students.

Each class at Liberty Lake does have the opportunity to participate in Meet the Masters, an art program sponsored by the PTO, but only once per trimester. This means Liberty Creek kindergarten students have a total of three hours of art per year.

According to [NHNSCR](#)<sup>1</sup>, “[until the age of six] is critical in shaping a child’s physical, cognitive, and emotional development. During this time, the brain makes billions of new connections between neurons, creating the network that will support learning, memory, emotional regulation, and other essential skills. . . . As we continue to learn more about the complexity of the brain’s growth and function, it is essential to provide young children with the experiences and resources they need to thrive.”

And yet, Liberty Creek kindergarten students are receiving only three hours of free and accessible art education.

In the book [Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us](#), authors Susan Magsamen<sup>2</sup> and Ivy Ross<sup>3</sup>, explain how art is not an entertainment luxury, but that activities from painting and dancing to expressive writing, architecture, and more are essential to our lives.

The book’s summary and reviews read “[Art] can deliver potent, accessible, and proven solutions for the well-being of everyone. Magsamen and Ross offer compelling research that shows how engaging in an art project for as little as forty-five minutes reduces the stress hormone cortisol, no matter your skill level, and just one art experience per month can extend your life by ten years. . . .playing music builds cognitive skills and enhances learning; the vibrations of a tuning fork create sound waves to counteract stress; virtual reality can provide cutting-edge therapeutic benefit; and interactive exhibits . . . strengthen[ing] memory. Doctors have even been prescribing museum visits to address loneliness, dementia, and many other physical and mental health concerns. [Your Brain on Art](#) is a portal into . . . how the arts. . . build healthier communities . . .”

Our students deserve healthier communities. Art will help.

## What’s our idea?

Art Club that:

1. Is free
2. Meets at least monthly
3. Is student-centered
4. Has consistent membership and attendance over the course of a certain period
5. Connects an art discipline with non-arts curriculum
6. Has targeted age-appropriate and sequential curriculum
7. Meets WA State Arts Learning Standards
8. Supports collaboration between early learning educators, schools, families, artists, and organizations
9. Increases culturally relevant student learning in and through the arts
10. Strategically increases public access to arts integration
11. Creates a foundation of art exposure, appreciation, and excitement that prepares students for art opportunities as they grow

Art Club uses the expertise, philosophy, and books of esteemed art educator [George Szekely](#)<sup>4</sup>: “By observing children at play and using props and situations familiar to them, teachers can build on children’s energy and self-initiated discoveries to inspire school art that comes from the child’s imagination. The foundation of this teaching approach is the belief that the essential goal of art teaching is to inspire children to behave like artists, that art comes from within themselves and not from the art teacher.”

In books, [Play and Creativity in Art Teaching](#), [Encouraging Creativity in Art Lessons](#), [Teaching to Support Children's Creativity and Artistic Independence](#), [From Play to Art](#), and more [Szekely's](#) "central premise is that art teachers are not only a source of knowledge about art but also a catalyst for creating conditions that encourage students to use their own ideas for making art. . . .[Play and Creativity in Art Teaching](#) offers plans for the study of children's play and for discovering creative art teaching as a way to bring play into the art room. While it does not offer a teaching formula or a single set of techniques to be followed, it demystifies art and shows how teachers can help children find art in familiar and ordinary places, accessible to everyone. This book also speaks to parents and the important roles they can play in supporting school art programs and nourishing the creativity of their children."

### How will we meet the goals of Art Club?

1. Is free: securing partnerships through grants and donations of time, materials, and resources
2. Meets regularly: partnering with Liberty Lake Library, Covered with Art Studio, TAC at the Lake, Ridgeline High School, HeatherThymeArt Studio and others to schedule meeting time and space so that Art Club students, families, artists, and volunteers experience consistency
3. Is student-centered: implementing Szekely's philosophy and book [How Children Make Art: Lessons in Creativity from Home to School](#), allowing children to bring their own ideas, and emphasizing the uniqueness of children's art materials, creative spaces, and art processes
4. Has consistent membership and attendance: encouraging children and families to being an Art Club member who commits to a four week long program and providing these families with a reliable schedule in advance
5. Connects an art discipline with non-arts curriculum: remembering that art is everywhere and expressing that to students by:
  - a. explaining when a concept involves a non-arts discipline (e.g. geology, language arts, astronomy, etc);
  - b. actively seeking opportunities to elicit exploration around non-arts curriculum (e.g. mixing glue solutions, melting crayons, feeling heartbeats, etc.); and
  - c. encouraging children to ask questions and find answers using all their abilities
6. Has targeted age-appropriate and sequential curriculum: using Szekely's [How Children Make Art: Lessons in Creativity from Home to School](#) as the basis for a school art program that is meaningful to students including home art and play activities while ensuring that participation is consistent will allow Art Club to build on concepts (i.e. how art impacts brains and learning; individuality and creativity; patience and teamwork) over the school year
7. Meets WA State Arts Learning Standards: Creating (children will use a variety of materials, senses, and processes) Presenting (children will identify their works and share them with others through an art showcase), Responding (children will identify art in the world around them), Connecting (children will identify art in history, culture, their own families, and more)
8. Supports collaboration between early learning educators, schools, families, artists, and organizations: securing positive and symbiotic relationships with interdisciplinary teams by providing consistent and clear communication; not only inviting, but engaging more people at the table; respecting one another's time, priorities, and perspectives
9. Increases culturally relevant student learning in and through the arts: seeking input from families and organizations including Spokane Arts to collaborate with artists that describe themselves as Native/Alaskan Native, artists of color, and/or LGBTQ+
10. Strategically increases public access to arts integration: sharing Art Club and ideas on social media, through collaborations with the City of Liberty Lake, the Liberty Lake Library, local artists, publications, and organizations, and inspiring children and families to recognize and celebrate when and where they see art
11. Creates a foundation of art exposure, appreciation, and excitement that prepares students for future art opportunities: nurturing and challenging child artists to create their own art and their own definitions of art