

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AWARDS OSBORN SCHOOL DISTRICT 4-YEAR GRANT TO WORK WITH CHILDSPLAY ON INNOVATIVE DRAMA AND LITERACY PROGRAM

Encanto Elementary will receive nearly \$300,000 to work with Childsplay and Arizona State University on a research-based professional development program working with teachers to integrate drama into their literacy practices.

(Tempe, Ariz.) Through the Office of Innovation and Improvement, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) has awarded Osborn School District a prestigious Professional Development for Arts Educators (PDAE) grant. The grant provides nearly \$300,000 of funding to support a partnership between the district, Childsplay and Arizona State University (ASU) to implement an arts integration professional development program at Encanto Elementary School. Of the 17 grant recipients across the country, this was the only grant awarded to a school in Arizona.

The program will build on Childsplay's Drama Frames professional development model, which has previously been supported by the USDOE and the Helios Education Foundation. The Drama Frames structure pairs drama techniques with educational objectives to provide teachers with tools for kinesthetic learning. This new program will focus specifically on language development across three language streams: Mainstream, Dual Language (English and Spanish) and Structured English Immersion.

All of the teachers at Encanto Elementary school, spanning the school's K-3 classrooms, will participate in the program over the course of four years. The model pairs one Childsplay Teaching Artist with one Encanto classroom teacher, building a long-term peer relationship that supports job-embedded learning. This program builds on a longstanding partnership between Childsplay and the Osborn School District, including an afterschool program for English Language Learners (ELL) implemented in three elementary schools in the past year.

"We've seen so much success over the past year integrating drama into the ELL experience. Drama has helped to create a positive interaction with language and a way to be successful in essential skills like comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and more," said Childsplay's Education Outreach Specialist Korbi Adams. "This upcoming project gives us the opportunity to really learn how drama supports language development across different language streams."

The program will also engage researcher Dr. Michael Kelley from ASU to collect teacher and student data related to the program. The research will look at changes in teacher practice, embodied cognition and the short and long-term impact of kinesthetic learning on language acquisition.

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“Einstein said, ‘Imagination is more important than knowledge.’ How delightful that Childsplay will help Osborn teachers learn ways to weave the whimsical into the practical,” said Osborn School District Superintendent Patricia Tate. “As students play, practice and perform, I have no doubt they will build focus of mind, body and voice that will help in other school subjects and life.”

Demonstrating its commitment to arts education, the USDOE has awarded a total of \$13.4 million to organizations across the country to share effective models of arts education that support student achievement and help arts educators improve arts instruction.

“The arts are an essential part of a well-rounded educational experience, and all students deserve access to high-quality arts instruction,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. “Great arts educators can help students grow and succeed inside and outside of the classroom.”

For more information, contact Samantha Johnstone at sjohnstone@childsplayaz.org or (480) 921-5703.

About Childsplay

Childsplay is a nonprofit theatre company of professional adult artists who perform for and teach young audiences and their families. The 38-year-old organization has drama education at the core of its mission. Childsplay has a variety of education outreach programs that reach students in schools throughout the Valley including after-school programs, classroom experiences and teacher professional development. The mission of Childsplay is “to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content, or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love, and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, those hallmarks of childhood which are keys to the future.” For more information, visit www.childsplayaz.org.

About Osborn School District

Osborn School District serves approximately 3000 students in the Central Phoenix corridor. All five beautiful schools are school-wide Title I, with students representing 46 countries and 39 languages. Encanto School is an ‘A’ rated Kindergarten through 3rd grade public school in the Osborn School District serving approximately 700 students in Central Phoenix. Encanto is home to an award-winning Dual Language Program in Spanish and English entering its 15th year of operation. Encanto’s sister school, Clarendon School, offers the same programs for students in 4th through 6th grades on an adjoining campus, and was the first Osborn school to earn an A label under AZ LEARNS. For more information about Osborn School District, please contact Patricia Tate, Superintendent, at 602-707-2001 or ptate@osbornnet.org. For more information about Encanto School, please contact Dr. Michael Robert, Encanto School Principal, at 602-707-2300 or mrobert@osbornnet.org.

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