

Creativity Unbound: New Exhibit Features the Art of Learning | CEHS

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Visitors to the Sorenson Center for Clinical Excellence on Tuesday, February 4 were greeted with music and the buzz of children's voices as the Lyndsey Wilkerson Gallery celebrated the opening of its newest exhibit, "Creativity Unbound."

For the next month, the gallery will feature student artwork from K-8 schools in the Logan, Cache County, and Box Elder School Districts in a celebration of the importance of the arts to both learning and self-expression. Those in attendance at the grand opening enjoyed a performance by the North Park Elementary Honor Choir, and students were thrilled to see their masterpieces displayed.

"It's so exciting for them to see their artwork in a gallery," said Sheree Given, art specialist at Wilson Elementary School in Logan.

Many of the projects featured in "Creativity Unbound" explore science, language arts, math, and social studies concepts. Given said this kind of arts integration can create new channels for learning and connection. "I've seen kids get a concept by creating it when I know that they don't get it in their classroom," she said. "There's something about creating that is so powerful."



Art specialists like Given are fostering a more vibrant learning environment for elementary school students across Cache Valley as part of USU's Beverley Taylor Sorenson Endowed Program for Elementary Arts Education, which offers year-round professional learning opportunities in arts integration for K-12 teachers, arts specialists, and USU students. "The arts nurture creativity and imagination and build community inside and outside the schools," said program director Aurora Hughes Villa. "Students are motivated to engage more fully in the core content subjects when the arts are integrated into the curriculum." Through mentorship, practicum-style arts integration courses, and opportunities for community-based arts projects and events, the program strives to increase the quality and quantity of arts learning experiences for elementary students and teachers in the Cache Valley area.

Beverley Taylor Sorenson was a powerful advocate for arts education. In 1995, Sorenson visited Lincoln Elementary School in Salt Lake City, where she witnessed firsthand the dramatic impact of a quality visual arts program. She dedicated her life and her resources to promoting arts education, starting a program in just six schools that has now impacted tens of thousands of lives.

Sorenson's legacy of promoting arts education lives on with the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Arts Learning Program (BTSALP), which places specialists in visual art, dance, music, or theater in elementary schools to collaborate with classroom teachers. The program is currently in 380 elementary schools in Utah, serving over 200,000 students. BTSALP works in collaboration with USU's Endowed Program for Elementary Arts Education as part of a statewide university network of similar programs.

Hughes Villa is excited for this opportunity to showcase what the program is all about. "We have so many exceptional art teachers in northern Utah doing amazing things with our students," she said. "The exhibition is a wonderful way to highlight the students and advocate for the arts in our schools."