

Spark! of excitement

I've worked for the arts in education since moving to Fresno 28 years ago. I don't recall a more remarkable year of change than 2014.

The arts play a critical role in a child's education and prepare students to be engaged, well-rounded citizens. Students in the arts are three times less likely to drop out and three times more likely to graduate from college. That's a big deal in California where the creative economy generates \$275 billion yearly and provides one in 10 jobs.

Large-scale change happens when leaders embrace a vision supported by the entire community. I'd like to thank those leaders — our school superintendents, board members, principals and teachers who are re-investing in the arts for every child.

Another leader deserves special recognition —Darius Assemi of Granville Homes. Mr. Assemi truly understands the connection between the arts and prosperity for all. Thanks to Mr. Assemi's vision, the new Spark! initiative has already funded arts programs in 10 underserved schools. Granville has been a huge supporter of arts education at the Fresno Arts Council, Art Museum, Philharmonic and throughout the community.

Look for more news about Spark! and expect Mr. Assemi and Granville to continue their generous support of the arts.

Robert Bullwinkel

Arts Program Manager

Fresno County Office of Education

Copyright

© 2015 www.fresnobee.com and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.fresnobee.com>