

Cultural Arts Committee Report December 2009

Chair: Priscilla Peterson

The annual Cultural Arts Showcases took place at Carver Educational Center on September 29th, October 5th, 8th, and 15th, with the newly auditioned performers showcasing on the last day. Like last year, we had approximately 30-35 cultural arts representatives from the schools attending each day (more on the final day), plus a few librarians who wished to book performances for county libraries. I had assistance from Randy Chin (Poolesville High School) and Carol Salisbury (MCCPTA Vice-President for Programs) at the registration table.

As in the past, questions were raised during this year's Showcases about whether it is okay for a school to hire a performer not on the "approved list", meaning the MCPS Performing Arts Catalogue. Although there is no rule about hiring only performers from this catalogue, the audition procedure that these performers have gone through is for the benefit of the schools. Seda Gelenian, who runs the Showcases, is the Chair of the Superintendents' Committee for Performances in MCPS. This committee, which includes professional performers with much experience in judging, volunteer their time to audition performers who wish to be hired by the schools, to help ensure that the shows approved for the schools will be of high quality.

At the Showcases, school reps were urged to give us any information they had at that time about what their school budgets would be for Cultural Arts for the 2009-10 school year. Since then I have continued to receive updates from various schools and hope to put a new Cultural Arts Budget Survey out on the PTArts listserv very soon. Cultural Arts reps who are hoping to get their schools to increase their budgets for performances will be able to use this survey for their PTA's to see what other schools in the county are spending on Cultural Arts.

This year so far we have had over 30 new members join the PTArts listserv, which provides an easy way for members to communicate with each other about which shows they recommend, when they may be having a show at their school that others may attend, when an out-of-town performer will be available in this area to do school shows, etc. Frequently there are questions posed on the listserv by members wanting to get further information about shows that would be good for a specific need at their school - such as a performance that ties in with their curriculum and is geared toward a specific age group, etc. If your school's Cultural Arts Chair or committee member would like to join the listserv, please have them send their name, school and committee position to: PTArts-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. They are also welcome to contact me at the email address below with any questions.

The MCPS 2009-2010 Performing Arts Catalogue may be viewed online at <http://www.mccpta.com/culturalarts.html>.