



Amplifying the Arts

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**SUNNYLANDS
CENTER & GARDENS**

The Arts at RCOE began a partnership with **Sunnylands** during the 2022–2023 school year. Their goal in coming together was to provide a unique professional development opportunity for teachers. Rather than focusing on specific curriculum or pedagogy skills to take back to the classroom, this partnership sought to address the mental health of teachers. By providing a day that offered healing practices utilizing the arts and nature, the workshop improved personal outcomes for teachers that would in turn affect their teaching practice.

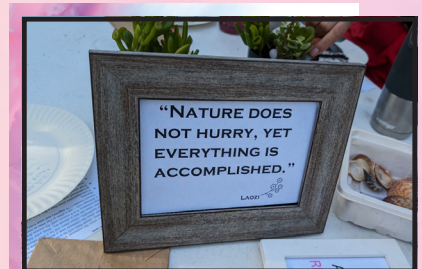


The first two years, we were lucky enough to work with teaching artists **Judy Nemer Sklar** and Gabriela and Claudia Armenta of **Danza Azteca Citlaltotac Circulo** to provide multiple talking circles, nature sculptures and a “Journey of the Heart” painting experience. In the end, we created a day that got unanimous high marks from teachers for being positive, helpful, and meaningful. We repeated the workshop the following year to more rave reviews.

The third year and for this year’s event in November, we worked with Lisa Botts of **Sukha Life Studio** and **Karen Haney Wellness** to provide a day that included presentations on emotional liberation, meditation, singing bowls, creating a personal terrarium, and aromatherapy sachets. Once again, it was an amazing day and the feedback from teachers was incredible.

Sunnylands submitted the program for the **Superintendent’s Award for Excellence** in Museum Education which is selected by the **California Department of Education** and the California Association of Museums, and we are proud to announce that it was selected as one of the winners for 2023.

The team of Michaelleen Gallagher of Sunnylands Museum and Gardens, Louisa Higgins of the Arts at RCOE, and teaching artists Judy Nemer Sklar, Gabriela and Claudia Armenta, and Karen Haney presented the program to an enthusiastic audience at the Western Museum Association’s annual conference in Tucson, Arizona.



The Arts at RCOE is proud of the role that the arts has to play in supporting mental health, which is one of our **Superintendent Dr. Edwin Gomez’s initiatives**. Moving forward, we will continue to pursue innovative approaches to arts professional development that support all teachers in our county!