

MCOE and Probation proposal to complete Blue Heron Sculpture at Fahrens Park

Concept Statement

Merced County Juvenile Court School's concept for this sculpture is to create a real world experience for students where they will learn step by step how to review and respond to Requests For Proposals, design original artwork within the parameters of the RFP, work within a budget using a mixture of found and purchased media, collaborate with peers, and see an artwork through from concept to installation.

Background: Merced County Office of Education's Student Programs Department has partnered with the CTE/ROP department to bring a welding program to Juvenile Hall and other MCOE school sites. When interviewing Juvenile Hall students about post-secondary career options, all but 2 students expressed interest in welding. After a year of preparation, MCOE now has a fully operational mobile welding trailer, certificated welding teacher, and welding technician. The welding trailer and staff work with adjudicated youth every Monday and Friday onsite at Juvenile Hall.

When the RFP for the Blue Heron Project was released, we immediately thought of the learning opportunities this could create for our students. In addition to the technical welding skills, students will be practicing during the fabrication of the Blue Heron, they will also experience working as a team, planning and revising designs, creating and sticking to a firm budget, and meeting established timelines.

Beyond technical skills MCOE will also incorporate learning opportunities centered on the cultural and historical significance of the blue heron which include solitary strength, resilience, and adaptability. MCOE and Merced County Probation collaboratively work toward preparing young people to be successful post-incarceration. Providing an opportunity to gain real world experience. We believe that creating a piece of art which

positively contributes to their community can have a lasting impact on how our students view themselves moving forward.

Being able to work collaboratively on a single piece that is based in natural and environmental beauty gives students a lot to practice and learn about. Merced County Court School operates on the premise that every lesson and practice should prepare students for academic, social, and post incarceration success. Along with the design and creation of the Blue Heron Sculpture, MCOE will integrate science and environmental literacy, anatomy of birds, and architecture with the artistic concepts of symmetry, texture, color and material as well as the specific skills related to welding. Students will not only gain the necessary hours of work to get welding certifications, but they will also put in place a piece of public art in which they can (and should!) feel pride.

Portfolio:

Because these students have not completed artwork like this before, their portfolios are nonexistent. But they will be under the instruction of Noelle Chandler (Noelle's Arts Now MCOE page is linked [here](#), as well as student-created, hands-on facilitation murals linked [here](#)), Kristen Concepcion, mural artist and sculptor (a sample of work in large-scale visual art linked [here](#)) and Jose Rubio (metalwork examples and write-up linked [here](#)).

Technical Approach:

- Students will create initial designs in collaboration with Concepcion & Rubio early 2026.
- Students will participate in material collection at Fahrens Park with oversight from Probation.
- Students will assess and clean collected materials and re-vamp initial designs based on found materials.
- Rubio will work with students to identify appropriate materials for the completion of the sculpture and plan welding lessons that align to CTE standards and practices.
- Rubio will sequence production to include all welding practices needed to complete the Blue Heron Sculpture.
- Students will work with Concepcion and Chandler on finishes, texture, assembly, and storyline.

- Students will work with Rubio to appropriately weld the pieces together based on their design, overcoming obstacles as they do so.
- Students will complete the work at their Juvenile Hall facility to be transferred to Fahren's Park before September 30, 2026.

Mr. Rubio will base production on his current scope and sequence for the welding class to ensure that students are learning all necessary skills while creating public art.

At the end of the project, students will be able to clearly articulate their process, technical growth, environmental impact and goal of positively contributing to their community.

Budget Estimate:

- Additional welding materials: \$2,500
 - Transport and safety: \$5,000
 - Teacher time: \$2,500 (with 50% donated in-kind)
- Total: \$10,000**

Material budget may adjust based on ratio of found and purchased media.

Timeline

Month 1:	Approval & Project Start	~April 2026
Month 2:	Materials Transport & Sorting	~May 2026
Month 3, 4 & 5:	Welding & Craft	~June, July & August
2026		
Month 6:	Final Touches & Installation	~September 2026

References

Tara Hill, Director of Student Programs, MCOE
 Duane Habecker, Director of Continuous Improvement, MCOE
 Ben Rodriguez, Deputy Chief, Merced County Probation
 Chi Chi Wood, Atwater Rotary, Community Support

Evaluation Criteria

- Creativity & Vision – Innovative, inspiring interpretation of the Blue Heron.

Students will work collaboratively with the art coordinator, welding teacher, and admin to evaluate collected materials and use as much found material as possible to create Blue Heron Sculpture.

All Juvenile Hall adjudicated students, both high school and college participating in the welding program will have the opportunity to contribute to the design and creation of sculpture.

- Technical Expertise – Proven experience in metal fabrication, welding, and structural design.

Mr. Rubio (Certificated Welding Teacher) has over 20 years of experience in welding and fabrication. Prior to joining MCOE Mr. Rubio served as the Welding Tech for Merced College.

Ms. Concepcion (Merced County Court School Principal) has 30 years experience in Visual Arts and Performing Arts and 18 years experience in education and curriculum design. Two completed art projects in Collaboration with the City of Merced.

Ms. Chandler has more than 20 years experience in Visual and Performing Arts and curriculum design.

- Sustainability – Effective use of discarded materials to create something new and meaningful.

Juvenile Hall students have long participated in Community Clean Ups mainly focussing on highway and rural dumping. If awarded the Blue Heron contract, Probation will oversee the collection of discarded metal at Fahrens Park with students and transport materials to Juvenile Hall.

Juvenile Court School is also working toward students earning the Seal of Civic Engagement through Environmental Literacy. Integrated lessons on

recycling, reuse, sustainable practices, and preserving safe public spaces will be incorporated into instruction throughout planning and production.

- Feasibility – Realistic fabrication, transport, and installation plan.

MCOE and Probation have collaborated to provide students with a welding program that prepares students for post secondary careers. Our Mobile Welding Trailer and Tools will be used to complete the sculpture onsite at Juvenile Hall.

- Tasks will include inventory of collected materials
- Cleaning of all found materials
- Metal prep for welding
- Assembling of sculpture
- Preparation for transport

Ms. Concepcion, Principal of Merced County Court School, will serve as lead for this project. She will be responsible for coordinating with Probation, Art and Welding Instructors, Onsite teachers, MCOE and City leadership, and maintaining agreed upon timelines and budgets.

Mr. Rubio, Welding Teacher, will serve as fabrication and production lead to ensure that all welds are permanent and secure and that materials are handled safely.

Ms. Chandler, Visual and Performing Arts Specialist, will design and teach lessons on elements of art and principles of design, career preparation, and presenting oneself as a working artist.

- Clarity – Well-documented concept, timeline, and budget.

Detailed above.

Kristen Concepcion
Artist Criteria

- Meets the definition of artist, as defined by the ACAC policy;
 - Bachelor Degree in Studio Art: Double emphasis in Wood and Furniture Design and Printmaking, Minor in Theater Arts: emphasis tech- Set Construction/Design, Costume Design, and Make-up
 - Master of Teaching: emphasis in Art Education
 - Careers in Art include:
Secondary Art Teacher, including Visual Art, Art History, Arts and Crafts, Art for Social Justice, Community Centered Art, and Arts and Crafts
 - Art Curricula Designer/Writer
 - Elective Multidisciplinary Elective Writer
 - Local school administrator with experience designing and overseeing VAPA enrichment programs for local youth
 - 25 years of experience as an artist working in 2D and 3D art media

- Demonstrates artistic excellence, innovation, and originality as represented in past work and supporting materials;
 - Documentation of previous work included in packet
 - Recent work available to view on O Street underpass, Merced, Ca

- Demonstrates capacity for working in media and with concepts that are appropriate to the project goals and site;
 - Community centered artist who is dedicated to using art and education to build positive relationships between diverse groups in order to impact change and growth on a local level

- Demonstrates interest and capability in creating Public Art in collaboration with the City, design teams, and other project partners;
 - Positive collaboration history with multiple non profits, City of Merced/ Caltrans and the business sector
 - Believer in the ability of public art to inform and promote positive change to communities
 - Committed to using skill set to build relationships with community leaders, stakeholders, and youth
 - Supportive of creating art that promotes county wide goals of beautification and community growth

- Demonstrates interest and capability in engaging community representatives in a project
 - Interest and ability to effectively engage community representatives
 - Experience in public speaking, presentations, and representing interests to diverse stakeholders

- Demonstrates experience in completing works of similar scope, scale, budget, and complexity, or articulates how s/he will bring the necessary artistic and technical skills to the project;

- Ability to create large scale art projects that positively impact the community while supporting city interests.
 - Technical skills to complete the project within a timely manner
- Demonstrates interest in and understanding of the project as outlined in the Project Plan;
 - Shared interest in using art to uplift a community
 - Belief in the power of public art to encourage community pride and inspire community beautification in other areas
- Is available to perform the scope of work in a timely and professional manner;
 - Proven ability to work effectively within timelines to city standards
- Demonstrates artistic merit, including excellence in aesthetic quality, artistry, innovation, and creativity;
 - Skilled artist who appreciates and can produce works of art that demonstrate an excellence in aesthetic quality, artistry, innovation, and creativity
- Demonstrates appropriateness in scale and form and is of materials/media suitable for the site;
 - Strong understanding of use of media that is exposed to the elements.
 - Construction experience
 - Ability to design according to specs and beautification goals of The City of Merced
- Ability to reduce cost through economies of scale
 - Mindful of costs and experienced in working within a provided budget
 - Committed to using local vendors and residents as needed to complete project
 - Resident of Merced County with close proximity to designated sites
- Demonstrates feasibility of construction and installation;
 - Experience in Construction and ability to operate machinery
 - Ability to construct and install for durability and public safety
 - Insured Artist
- Demonstrates feasibility in terms of budget, timeline, safety, security, durability, operation, maintenance, conservation, legal and ethical issues;
 - Ability and commitment to work within parameters of project
 - Committed to completing long lasting public art which is durable and safe
- Builds the diversity of the Public Art Collection.
 - Committed to completing works of art that celebrate diversity and build positive community relationships between cultures, ages, and socio-economic status.

- Permanence concerning resistance to theft, graffiti, weathering, and repair costs
 - Ability to seal work for resistance to weather and vandalism

- Residency of artist
 - Proud homeowner and school administrator in Atwater who is excited to support community goals and accessibility to art

Artist Resume: Kristen Concepcion

Education

Bachelor Degree in Art from Cal State San Bernardino
Double Emphasis: Wood and Furniture Design and Printmaking
Minor in Theater Arts: Tech
Set design, Makeup, Costumes

Master Degree in Teaching from Chapman University
Art Education Emphasis

Clear Teaching Credential: Visual Arts
Supplementary Authorization in Theater Arts/Speech

Three Deminintial Art:

Virgen De Gaudalupe
Sculpture
Wood, paint, natural materials
Completed 2003

Guitar and Case
Sculpture
Wood, Paint
Completed 2008

Mixed Memories
Collaborative wood and glass piece (barn and windmill by another artist)
Wood quilt by K.Concepcion
Interior piece
Wood, paint
Completed 2020

Public Art:

Options for Youth Public Charter School
Interior Mural
San Bernardino, CA
Picture included in proposal packet
Completed 2009

Central Language Academy Mural/Fundraiser
Exterior Mural
Ontario, CA
Picture included on collage picture in proposal packet
Completed 2009

Vive Mural and interior details

Interior Mural
Pomona, CA
Pictures included in proposal packet
Completed 2012

Bountiful Merced
Exterior Mural
Merced, CA
Picture included in proposal packet
Completed 2023

Career Experience related to Art

Art Teacher
Visual Art Curriculum Designer/Writer
Elective Curriculum Designer/Writer
Fashion Design
Purse Design and Production
Mural Artist
Site Specific Designs for Special Events
Floral Design

Artist Statement :

Kristen Concepcion is a multimedia artist and educator who has dedicated her career to impacting positive change to local communities and youth. Concepcion's mural work began with the idea that schools should not look like institutions, but rather should inspire curiosity and creativity. Concepcion completed a full interior transformation of Options For Youth Public Charter School in San Bernardino, Ca trading a beige monochrome design to a vibrant environment that welcomed students and staff to an exciting place to learn and grow. Concepcion has continued to create artwork for and at schools since.

Concepcion had her first opportunity to participate in community revitalization when she was approached to create a large-scale painting and supporting features for a historical location in Pomona, Ca. Artec Partners had been diligently working to transform the city center of Pomona from a high crime and depleted area to an exciting, innovative and safe environment where art, education, entertainment, and industry could thrive. *Progress* (picture included with application pack) was completed in 2010 in Vive, previously the location of the Daily Progress Newspaper. The completion of *Progress* led to further commercial and residential partnerships with Jerry Tessier, president of Artec Partners.

Since relocating to the Central Valley, Concepcion has worked with the City of Merced, Caltrans, the Atwater Educational Enrichment Foundation, Tree Partners Foundation, and Atwater Rotary in creating work that celebrates and supports the local community.

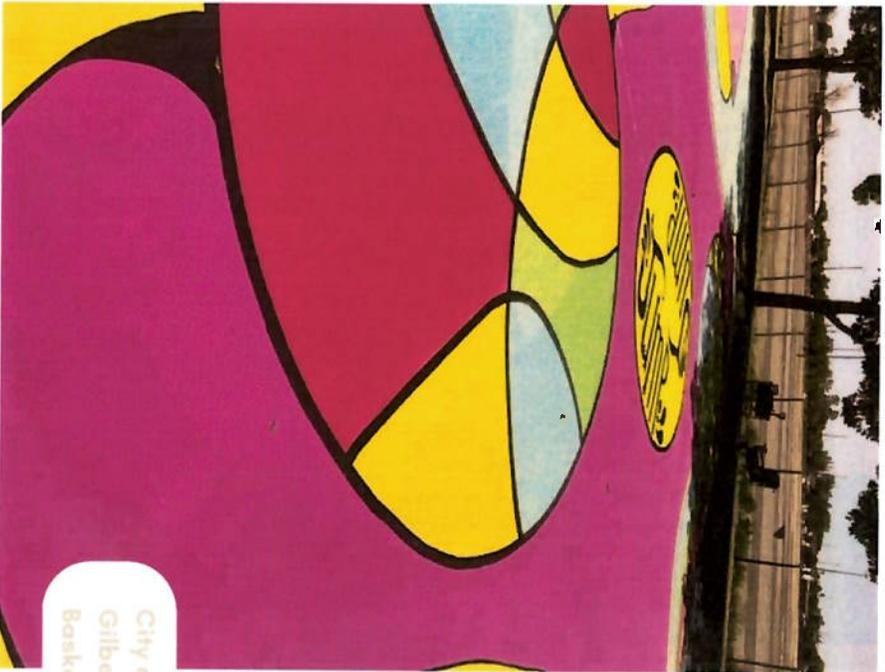
Professional References

Jerry Tessier: President, Artec Partners
<https://www.artecopartners.com/about-jerry>
(909) 629- 5359

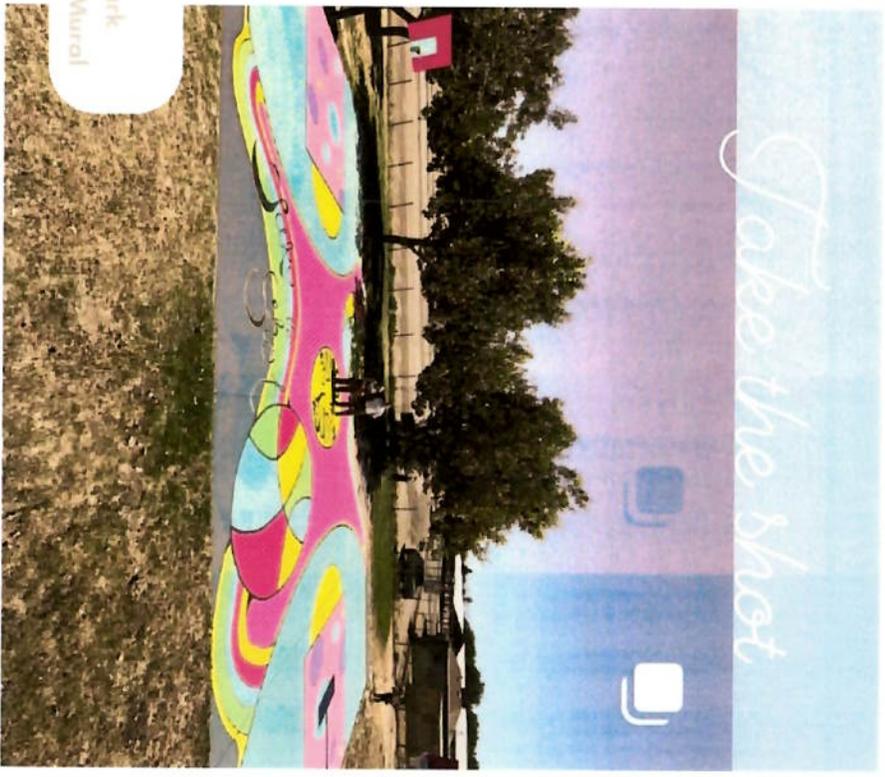
Wendy Gillespie: Principal, Options For Youth Public Charter Schools
(760) 285- 7571

Murals & Large Scale Art





City of Merced
Gilbert Macias Park
Basketball Court Mural



Take the shot



City of Merced
"O" Street Underpass Mural



City of Atwater Mural
Atwater Rotary

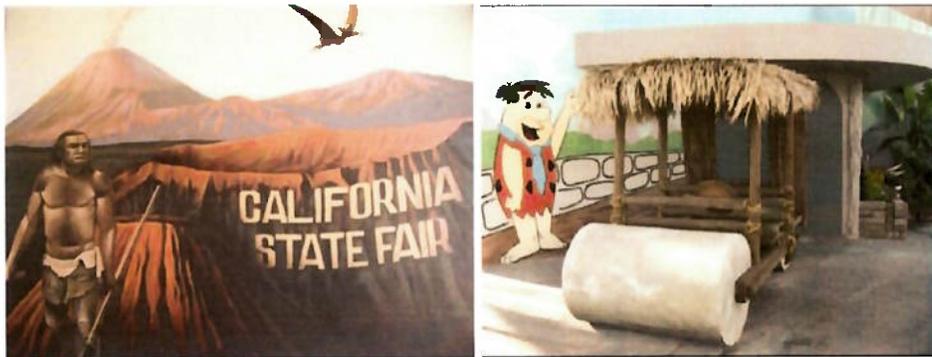
OFY School Classroom



Jose Rubio

I have been a lifelong artist for as long as I can remember, always drawing and working with my hands. As a child, I spent countless hours sketching comic book characters and refurbishing old toys, developing both my imagination and craftsmanship at an early age. Creating was instinctive for me—it was how I understood the world.

In 2003, after returning from my service in the United States Army, I applied for a position as a painter with the California State Fair. I initially worked on functional projects such as painting handrails and light poles. Motivated to do more expressive work, I asked my supervisor for the opportunity to paint murals. He agreed, and I was soon working within the artist division. This experience reignited my passion for art and affirmed my desire to pursue it professionally.



In 2004, my journey led me to the Art Institute of Orange County, where I studied Industrial Design. While my models and projects were displayed throughout the campus, I came to realize that industrial design was not my true calling. My passion was rooted in custom automotive design that allowed me to combine art, engineering, and hands-on fabrication. To pursue this path, I enrolled at WyoTech in West Sacramento.



After completing my training, I returned to Orange County in 2008 and began pursuing my career as a custom car builder. I was hired as a metal fabricator, working on vehicles for Toyota and Scion, creating promotional builds as well as custom projects for private clients. This work demanded precision, creativity, and problem-solving, further strengthening my skills as both an artist and fabricator.



Outside of my professional work, I have always continued creating independently, using any materials I could get my hands on. Art has never been confined to a single medium for me—it is an ongoing practice driven by curiosity, craftsmanship, and expression.



The opportunity to create a statue in a public park for the community in my home county would be a great honor. Contributing a lasting work of art to a shared public space represents the culmination of my lifelong dedication to creativity, service, and community.

Thank you,

Jose Rubio

*Noelle
Chandler*

Arts

Arts Now MCOE

Access ~ Engagement ~ Interaction

Merced County Office of Education envisions a countywide effort that ensures

- all youth have access to high-quality arts education and experiences
- all teachers have resources and support to engage their classrooms in the arts
- all community members have the opportunity to interact with public art.

Recent Accomplishments (2022-2023):

“Shelter and Place”: Summer 2023

A MULTIMEDIA HUMANITIES + ARTS PROJECT

SUPPORTED BY THE CALIFORNIA HUMANITIES

English

WHO:

- **Students from the Migrant Education Program at MCOE**

WHAT:

- **Students engaged with humanities faculty and arts professionals to complete a series of artwork**
- **Student artwork was based on an interview with a family member or friend about their experience in the Central Valley during the pandemic**
- **Students recorded a podcast to highlight important portions of their interview**

WHEN:

- **Students created work over the course of two weeks, a week in June and a week in July**
- **Student work (including a QR linking to the podcast) was displayed from 8/18-8/21**

WHERE:

- **Student work was created at the UC Merced**
- **Student work was displayed for free in downtown Merced at the Multicultural Arts Center**

WHY:

- **The California Humanities chose to support this work because of the lasting effect of the humanities on participants**
- **Students gained skills in interviewing, storytelling, public speaking and art-making while developing community on the UC Merced campus**

"Crafting a Creative Merced County"

SHELTER AND PLACE

Migrant Education Student Art & Multimedia Showcase
Culturally Significant Storytelling and the Creation of Art

**FREE
EVENT**

View art, experience stories and listen to interviews about the pandemic experience from rising 9th graders in the Migrant Education Program through MCOE.

- August 19th
- 12 - 4pm Pop-Up Show
1 pm Talkback
- The MAC in Downtown Merced
645 W. Main Street, Merced CA











Interested in bringing a multimedia humanities and artmaking experience to your campus?

Email NChandler@mcoe.org (mailto:NChandler@mcoe.org) with questions.

“Poetry Out Loud”: Winter 2022/2023

a statewide poetry recitation initiative supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation in collaboration with the Merced County Arts Council

WHO:

- Olivia Bruner of Merced High School

WHAT:

- Olivia and her competitors at 3 high schools across Merced County memorized, practiced and performed classic and contemporary poetry in

[skip to main content](#)

English

WHEN:

- January 2023

WHERE:

- The Merced County POL Performance was virtual in 2023, but will be in-person in 2024!

WHY:

- Poetry recitation builds critical public speaking skills
- Poetry recitation supports neural pathway development through repetition and rehearsal
- Poetry recitation encourages creative interpretation and new lenses through which to view classic and contemporary literature



Start “playing with poetry” now and send your students to the January 2024 competition: POL date is January 27!

Email NChandler@mcoe.org (<mailto:NChandler@mcoe.org>) or fill out [this form](https://forms.gle/SFgaJUfLRVtFZCfz7) (<https://forms.gle/SFgaJUfLRVtFZCfz7>) to start receiving the monthly Arts Update!

“ECELA: Engaging California English Learners through the Arts”: 2022-2023 School Year in Los Banos USD

an arts integration professional development program by the LA County Office of Education

WHO:

- Administrators, teachers, staff and students at Los Banos and Miano Elementaries

WHAT:

- Staff and students were treated to in-class professional development in the form of drop-in “art talks” and accessible virtual modules and video lessons
- Strategies were developed to support ELD students in developing written, read and spoken academic language skills

WHEN:

- 2022-2023 marked the first year of implementation at school sites in LBUSD

WHERE:

- Los Banos Unified School District

WHY:

- “Art Talks” support student language development by providing continuous low-stakes assessment of their abilities and encouraging them to engage authentically with language
- “Art Talks” utilize art as text, increasing accessibility for readers of all levels and languages
- Integrating visual and performing arts into the classroom increases engagement, encourages the “5 C’s” (collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, communication and character development) and translates directly into higher test scores and happier students

Get a monthly "ECELagram" (inspiration for interactivity) by signing up to receive the monthly Arts Update [here](https://forms.gle/SFgaJUfLRVtFZCfz7) (<https://forms.gle/SFgaJUfLRVtFZCfz7>).

Email NChandler@mcoe.org (<mailto:NChandler@mcoe.org>) to learn more about ECELA opportunities!



"Merced County Honor Choir": Spring 2023

2nd annual collaborative concert at Merced Theatre

WHO:

- High school vocalists from across Merced County, as well as elementary choirs
- Winners of the Merced County Arts Council's annual High School Art Contest

• Players from Merced Symphony who accompanied over 100 students in "A Million Dreams" from The Greatest Showman **English**

[Skip To Main Content](#)

WHAT:

- A free one-time opportunity for high school vocalists from all high school choirs to come together and make music
- A family-friendly community music offering in an accessible location

WHEN:

- April 1, 2023. Read on for the 2024 date!

WHERE:

- Merced Theatre in Downtown Merced

WHY:

- It is a critical part of a young artist's development to work with a wide variety of directors and conductors when preparing for future artistry
- Public showcases give the community a glimpse into what schools are offering by way of participating choral programs
- Including elementary choirs keeps younger students active and engaged throughout their educational career

2024 Honor Choir date is January 20th!

Email NChandler@mcoe.org (<mailto:NChandler@mcoe.org>) to get more information or volunteer a choir for participation!





Miss Noelle



Arts Connected to Science

ACTS

Arts Connected to Science

PK-5 EDITION

Join Adrienne and Noelle for a day of connecting art and science processes for the best reason of all: increasing curiosity, critical thinking skills and love of learning for PK-5 students all over Merced County! No devices or experience required.



MARCH 13, 2024

8am-3:30pm

Light breakfast provided,
lunch will be on your own.

\$175

REGISTER HERE: ↷



<http://merced.k12oms.org/83-235341>

Questions?

Adrienne Nau (MCOE Science Coordinator)
anau@mcoe.org
209.381.5971

Noelle Chandler (MCOE Arts Program Specialist)
NChandler@mcoe.org
209.386.6047



Steve M. Tietjen, Ed.D.
County Superintendent of Schools



Arts Connected to Science

Despite their differences, science and art education have the same basic principles of operation: they help us make sense of the world. Both science and art reject notions of rote memorization in favor of curiosity, creativity, experimentation and problem-solving.

In this workshop series, participants will have the chance to practically and theoretically experiment with hands-on, inquiry-based concepts and activities aligned with the arts and science standards for their grade.

Educators who go through ACTS training feel comfortable adjusting activities to different ability levels, creating engaging and satisfying multidisciplinary lesson plans, and using process-based assessment to determine mastery.

ACTS training is run by Adrienne Nau (Science Coordinator) and Noelle Chandler (Arts Program Specialist).

Each series includes an in-person meeting (date 1, at the MCOE PDC), a hands-on fieldwork experience (date 2, location TBD) and a virtual meeting (date 3, via Zoom). The in-person meetings and virtual meetings are interchangeable and participants may attend both or either, while the fieldwork experience is highly recommended.

MAR
2
2026

Read Across America Day

⦿ ALL DAY

Physical Address:

MCOE Downtown Professional Development Center
1715 Canal Street, 2nd Floor
Merced CA 95340

Office Hours: M-F 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Lunch 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Mailing Address:

Merced County Office of Education
632 W. 13th Street
Merced, CA 95341

Contact Information:

Noelle Chandler (mailto:NChandler@mcoe.org)

Arts Program Specialist

Phone (209) 386-6047 Fax: 381-6774

See Xiong (mailto:SeXiong@mcoe.org)

Staff Secretary

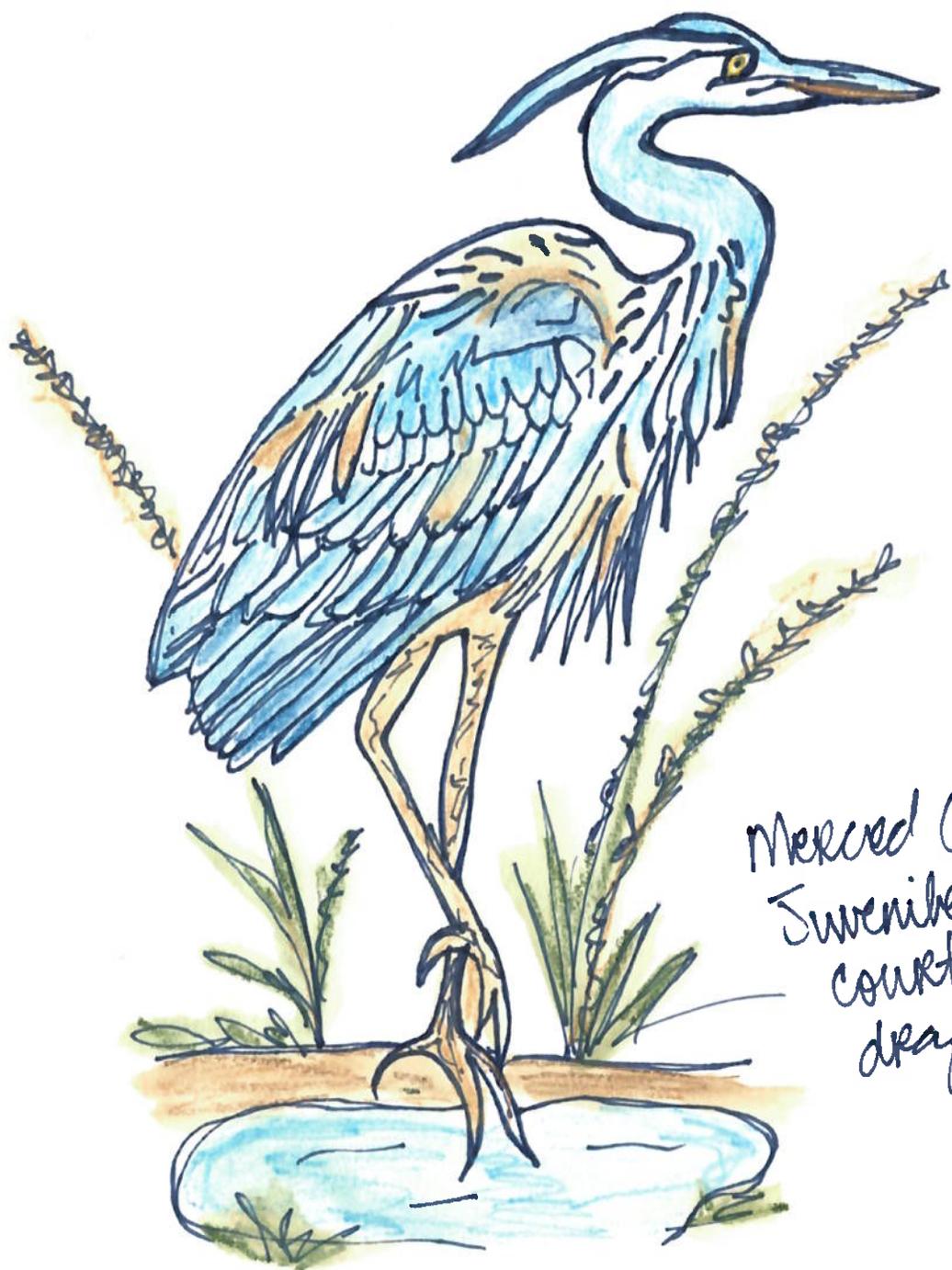
Phone (209) 381-4509 DTPDC / Fax: 381-6774

Skip To Main Content

English



English



Merced County
Juvenile
Court School
draft.