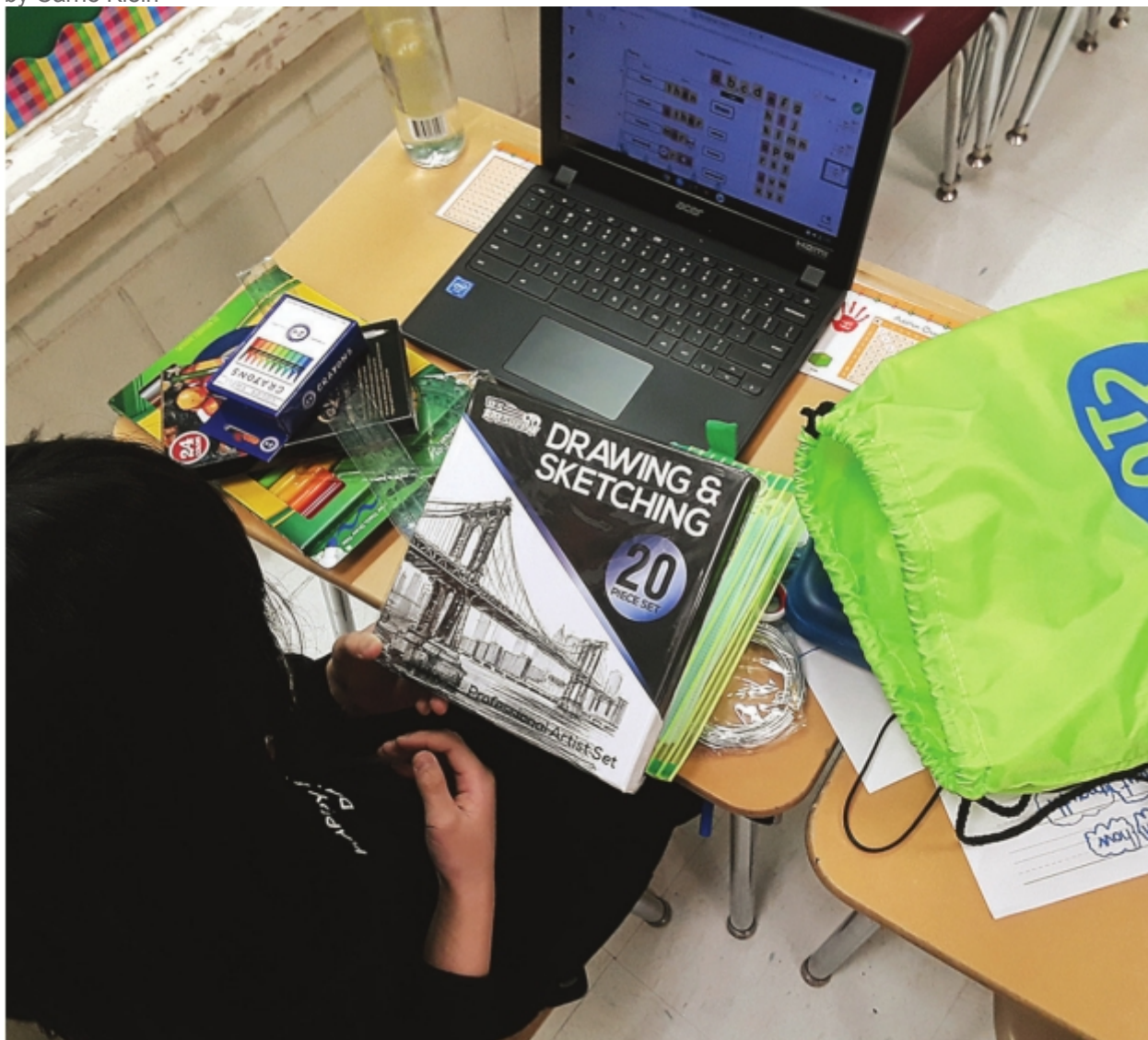


Free Summer Art Sessions Planned

The Boston Guardian Fri, 05-07-2021

by Carrie Klein



Boston students and teachers have endured a challenging year of remote learning and teaching.

But at the end of April, Boston Public Schools returned to offering five days a week of in-person classes for K-8 students.

"The learning loss we're talking about in Boston is apparent," said Sara Mraish Demeter, founder and executive director of Art Resource Collaborative for Kids (ARCK). This summer, ARCK is partnering with Operation P.E.A.C.E. to offer in-person arts and movement sessions for students in Fenway and Dorchester. "The program is really to help kids recover and heal from the trauma that was endured over the past year due to covid and racial injustices," Demeter said. "We want to help kids to feel safe, heard and seen, and be able to build their trust and confidence in our community."

Sessions will take place outdoors and run four days a week throughout July and August.

Daily activities are planned to "get kids moving, reengaged, and excited about socializing with each other again in a safe way," said Mallory Rohrig, program director at Operation P.E.A.C.E.

Enrollment is free and open to students at all Boston Public Schools. Additional details will be announced in mid-May on arckboston.org.

ARCK and P.E.A.C.E. are organizing and sponsoring the program together. "This is the true meaning of collective impact, having two organizations work together to share resources and capacity due to limited funds for arts education," Demeter said. The two nonprofits are also collaborating on Miles of Murals, a public art walk and festival that will take place in Fenway Park in August.

Operation P.E.A.C.E. runs programs for youth, families and seniors, and has offered free virtual tutoring and homework help to assist students throughout the pandemic. ARCK, founded in 2012, provides under-resourced students with creative programs including arts education.

It supplies art materials to schools and offers teacher training in partnership with Lesley University.

In March, ARCK delivered 600 art kits to its partner schools, for students to use at home or in the classroom. Throughout the pandemic, ARCK has become very familiar with running virtual programs. "When we first started, students' Zoom cameras were turned off," Demeter said.

As ARCK focused on making students feel safe and comfortable, students began to turn on their cameras and share their artwork. "Our students have voices and we want to hear them," Demeter said. "We want to give our students the opportunity to access tools that will help them thrive and unleash their full potential to be agents of change in our community."

This summer, Boston Public Schools will also offer programming through 5th Quarter Learning. Since 2010, more than 47,000 students have participated in the free program, which has been replicated in other cities and shown to reverse some of summer learning loss. Applications for 5th Quarter are open until May 15th.

From: <https://read.thebostonguardian.com/the-boston-guardian/2021/05/07/?article=3768551>