

April 2, 2015

We are very grateful for the UPA Art in Schools Grant for King School in 2013-2014. The materials we purchased will continue to be used for a long time.

In the summer, we met to discuss plans for tying meaningful educational activities to the creation of a sculpture by Preston Jackson for King Park. The sculpture commemorated many important events in Civil Rights History. In October, our proposal was granted. We used the money to purchase a classroom set of guitars, hire 3 guest artists to help teach about civil rights and guitars in music, 1 guest speaker, art materials for creating sculptures and quilt squares, and books and materials for our library to be used by classroom teachers.

Sarah Tavis, the visual arts teacher, and I began teaching lessons about civil rights in January of that year. Prior to that we created and ordered our teaching materials and secured our guests. The students learned about the struggles and triumphs during the civil rights movement through song and visual art. Classroom teachers also used books and dvds to continue the study in history and social studies.

At the end of the month, we put on an all school assembly that involved all the students in singing, looked at the art, listening to guest speakers and playing guitars. The students were very engaged.

Preston was not able to attend at that time, but the students were taken to see the sculpture and shown pictures of it during the assembly.

We continue to use these materials now with the students. This year, I did another unit on guitar with fourth grade and taught civil rights songs to all of my students. The guitars will continue to be a wonderful asset for my classroom for years to come. I have even spoken with The Upper Bout, a guitar store in Champaign, who is interested in helping to teach and work with our students in the future.

We truly appreciate the funds and support of the Urbana Arts Commission. With your support, students are able to have meaningful experiences that connect the arts to their culture. This helps them to see the powerful connections between our society and art.