

# OGRESS REPORT

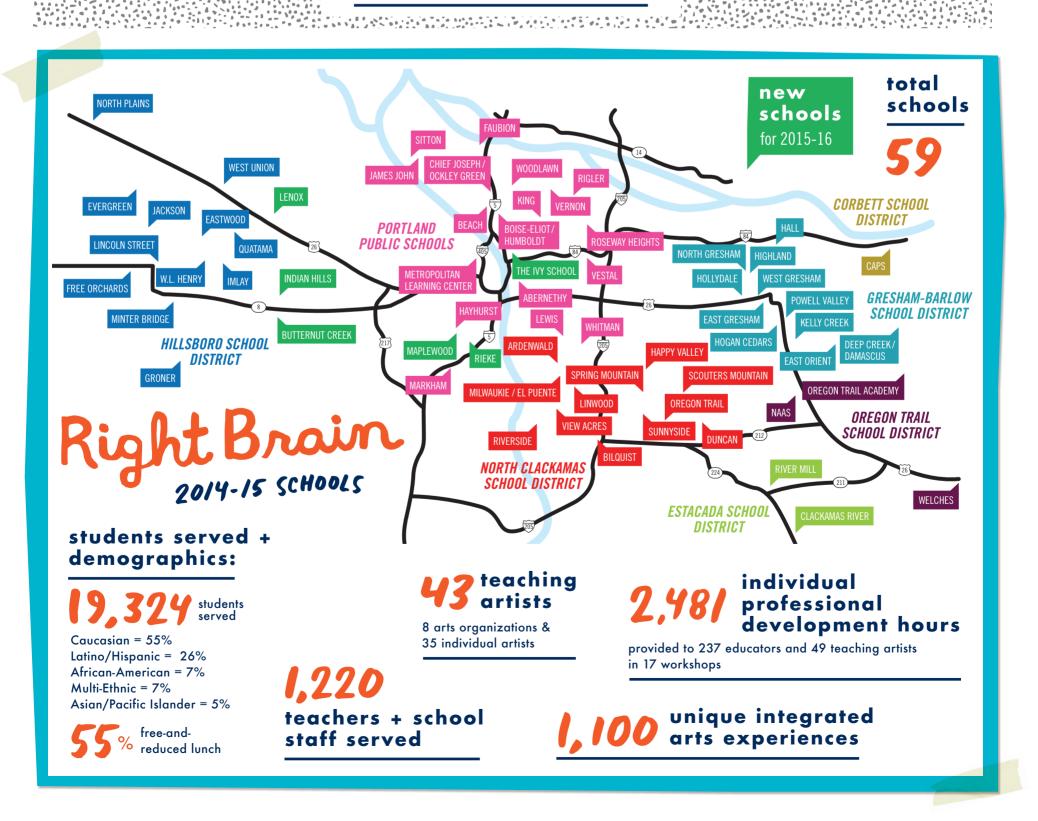




# INITIATIVE

transforms learning for all children through the arts, creativity, innovation and whole-brain thinking.

# WHO WE SERVE





**I AM AMAZED** that this is the 7th edition of The Right Brain Initiative annual Progress Report. We're in our dog year, so to speak. We started out small, have grown so much and are now reaching our stride.

In the early stages of designing what would become The Right Brain Initiative, we discovered that school districts were eager to engage students as active learners. We also knew that the arts community was a natural untapped resource to help address this need.

Through focus groups and community conversations, it became clear that arts integration would be the ideal program model—engaging the artistic process to stimulate students' creative and critical thinking.

By now, we've seen how it provides new avenues for all students to acquire knowledge and demonstrate

their understanding, regardless of age, neighborhood, or background. I've witnessed the a-ha moment of a 3rd grader who discovered geometric principles by designing his personal mandala. I've seen 1st grade students suddenly comprehend the principles of circuitry when their 3D wire sculptures lit up. That's proof for me that the arts are a powerful approach to teaching and learning.

To provide such learning opportunities for students, we've invested mightily in professional development for classroom teachers, principals, arts specialists and teaching artists from the get-go: full-day workshops with the nationally respected Deborah Brzoska, peer-to-peer and teacher-artist collaborations, and an investment in reflecting on our work. Also important is the support provided by the amazing Right Brain Arts Integration Coaches, through our Implementation Partner Young Audiences. Professional development is essential to helping teachers meet the ever-changing needs and priorities of students.

What if one Right Brain-trained teacher reaches 30 students each year of a 25-year career? What if a student attends a school where every teacher uses a Right Brain approach to teaching every day? In my view, that puts The Right Brain Initiative in the category of educational change agent.

In the following pages, you will learn about the multi-faceted approach to professional learning that Right Brain takes. Read on to discover how it all adds up to magic in the classroom.

Professional development is essential to helping teachers meet the ever-changing needs and priorities of students.

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Sincerely,

Marna Stalcup
Director of Arts Education
Regional Arts & Culture Council



# NEWS ...

Right Brain releases powerful data to great

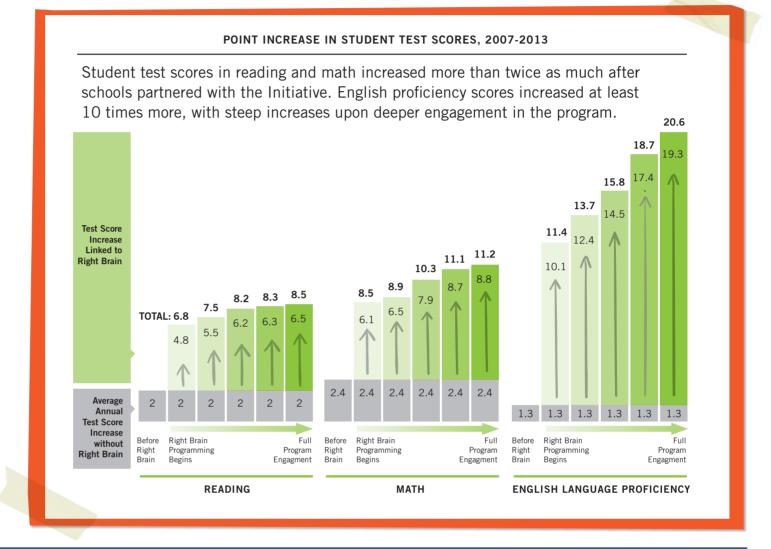
applause

**IN SEPTEMBER 2014,** Right Brain staff proudly released nationally significant data that demonstrates a link between our program and an increase in standardized test scores.

The announcement was picked up by Oregon Public Broadcasting radio, *The Huffington Post*, and Americans for the Arts, who billed this news as one of the nation's top arts education stories of 2014. A presentation of the data at the Oregon State English Learners Alliance Conference erupted in a standing ovation.

See the full report, including data about our impact on teachers and schools at <a href="http://bit.ly/">http://bit.ly/</a> RightBrain\_ProgressReport2014.

Please note that this promising relationship between Right Brain and increased test scores is correlational.





PROGRAM MANAGER Sinéad Kimbrell at Right Brain professional development, Spring 2015. Photo by Cecily Caceu.

# Leadership transitions



2014-15 WAS A BIG YEAR for staff transitions in nearly every area of the Initiative. Our founding Program Manager, Marna Stalcup, was promoted to become Director of Arts Education at the Regional Arts & Culture Council, due in no small part to her work establishing and growing The Right Brain Initiative since the program was in the research and design phase in 2007. Marna will continue to direct Right Brain, while overseeing the Arts Education & Access Funds directed toward Portland elementary schools.

With this shift, Sinéad Kimbrell was hired to become Right Brain's new Program Manager, with a focus on maintaining and expanding the quality of Right Brain's school programming. A former Irish and contemporary dancer, Sinéad established her career as an arts educator and administrator in Portland with organizations like Oregon Ballet Theatre and Homowo African Arts & Cultures. She completed a master's degree in education at Governors State University, and spent nine years managing school programs at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

In 2014-15, we also said a fond farewell to long-time evaluator Dennie Palmer Wolf, of the firm WolfBrown, and instituted a local partnership with the Portland State University (PSU) Center for Student Success. PSU led the collection of student test score data that was released in September 2014. We continued our relationship with Young Audiences of Oregon & SW Washington, which has served as Implementation Partner for the Initiative since our inception in 2008.

Read more about all our recent hires at bit.ly/NewRightBrainStaff.



A STUDENT AT Jackson Elementary in Hillsboro works with Right Brain media artist Michelle Swinehart. Photo by Allie Maki Maya.

# Major funding for expansion in Hillsboro

THE RIGHT BRAIN INITIATIVE received a competitive three-year \$210,000 grant from The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) to support Right Brain's rapidly expanding partnership with the Hillsboro School District (HSD). The grant was a part of OCF's new Studio to School arts education initiative, awarded to just 18 sites across the state.

To fulfill the first year of the grant, Right Brain worked in 2014-15 with school staff to design dynamic arts programming for classrooms at Eastwood and Quatama Elementary Schools and Evergreen Middle School.

The funds also support the pilot of a districtwide professional learning community for Right Brain partner principals in the HSD. These principals began gathering in 2015 to share best practices, and receive coaching from staff at Quatama Elementary, a model Right Brain school.

Right Brain worked with 12 HSD Schools and three more will become Right Brain partners in 2015-16.



KeyBank was the leading corporate sponsor for Right Brain's expansion in the Hillsboro School District in 2014-15.

# Imagine This! symposium returns

IN JUNE 2015, we brought our arts education symposium back by popular demand, as educators from throughout the Northwest and beyond gathered for three inspiring days at the Portland Art Museum and Pacific Northwest College of Art. The symposium helps classroom teachers, arts teachers, principals, curriculum directors and teaching artists deepen their ability to integrate the arts into the K-8 classroom setting. Imagine This! is Right Brain's summer opportunity to engage educators who are not current partners of the program.

We proudly hosted Glenis Redmond, a nationally renowned poet and teaching artist with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, who traveled from North Carolina to deliver a powerful spoken-word performance and a two-day workshop series. Participants chose from dozens of workshops, hands-on studio sessions and facilitated lesson planning, addressing equity in education through dance, printmaking, drumming, writing and much more.

Please visit **TheRightBrainInitiative.org/Imagine-This** for details about the 2016 Imagine This! symposium.



Thank you to Bank of America for serving as the Presenting Sponsor of Imagine This! 2015.



PARTICIPANTS AT Imagine This! 2015. Photo by Paul Fardig



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Eloise Damrosch, RACC Executive Director; Marna Stalcup, RACC Director of Arts Education; Kregg Arntson, PGE Foundation President; Carole Morse, Right Brain Development Committee Honorary Chair; and Cynthia G. Addams, Vice President, Collins Foundation take a superhero stance at the Brain Trust launch party in September 2014. Photo by Robb Cummings.

# Individual fundraising continues to grow 🎉

FISCAL YEAR 2015 marked the end of our Imagination Fund, a campaign supported by the Maybelle Clark Macdonald (MCM) Fund, which generously matched new or pooled gifts of \$250 or more. This program launched our strategic individual giving efforts and raised \$150,000 over the course of three years. Through MCM, we introduced the Brain Trust in September 2014, a new giving program, which provides benefits for donors based on the size of their gift.

In late 2014, we were part of the *Willamette Week* Give!Guide, an annual online fundraiser that provides incentives for those who give to any of 136 featured organizations. In our fifth year in the Guide, we raised nearly \$17,000—our highest sum ever—from 272 donors. We recruited 130 donors under age 36, landing us the third-place slot of all participating non-profits.

Right Brain also piloted a series of at-capacity art trivia events at the Radio Room on NE Alberta in Portland, led by our inspiring Grassroots Fundraising Task Force. Community members gathered to win prizes, show their support for arts education and raise money at the same time. Radio Room generously donated 15% of all sales made during the night to our program.

Become part of the Brain Trust at  $\underline{\text{bit.ly/JoinTheBrainTrust.}}$ 

# Investing in teachers

# THE CATALYST OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE

TO THE PARTY OF TH

**ANYONE WHO HAS** been part of public school systems knows that educators face great challenges. Funding has come up short for many years, educators must consistently adjust to new standards and achievement tests, and student populations shift while class sizes grow. Yet, with the available resources, we must provide the most magnetic possible learning experiences for kids.

In 2007, Marna Stalcup was hired by the Regional Arts & Culture Council to work with the school districts and the rest of the community to design and launch an effort that would leverage the resources of the local arts community to support our schools. The vision was—and is—to transform learning for all children in Portland area K-8 schools through the arts. Right Brain's focus is arts integration, which fully weds mediums like poetry, video and music with subjects like math, reading and science to get kids thinking creatively and critically. It helps classroom teachers channel the arts to address their ongoing priorities, including Common Core State Standards.

As Marna describes it, "Arts integration brings life, excitement and engagement into classrooms."

Successful arts integration requires us to shift our concept of what classroom learning looks like, and that begins with an investment in teachers. Most elementary teachers come to the profession without much instruction in teaching the arts. That's where Right Brain professional development comes in.

Deborah Brzoska, who is Right Brain's Professional Development Partner, helped design the Right Brain approach that includes full-day trainings, on-site coaching, classroom collaborations with teaching artists, and reflection. As teachers become students themselves, they learn new skills, try them out in the classroom and then reconnect

Right Brain takes teachers back to that sweet place that inspired them to be educators in the first place.

-MARNA STALCUP, DIRECTOR OF ARTS EDUCATION, RACC

with their peers to reflect and ask questions. This cycle of learning inspires and empowers teachers to expand their practice for the long-term, ultimately reaching hundreds of students over the course of a teaching career.

In 2014-15, Right Brain provided full-day workshops to nearly 300 educators. Since our inception, our teaching artists have collaborated with teachers to provide more than 50,000 arts experiences for kids. It's programming that awarded us our fourth and highest-ever grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2015.

By training teachers to infuse creative thinking into their daily instruction, classrooms become places of exploration. Arts integration permeates the entire building, and creates an environment where all students thrive. This engaged learning helps children think more deeply, discover what they are curious about, and become active drivers of their own learning experience.

Read on to learn about the four elements of our professional development program for educators, as well as stories about how this work has made a difference in our partner schools.



Deborah Brzoska

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

A NATIONAL LEADER in the arts education field, Deborah Brzoska has been with Right Brain since its inception in 2008. She designs and facilitates professional development trainings for Right Brain teachers, principals and teaching artists. Deb carries deep Portland roots as the former chair of the dance department at Jefferson High School and as founding principal of the award-winning Vancouver School of Arts and Academics in Vancouver, Washington. She has also been a school change coach for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Currently, she delivers professional development for educators across the country on behalf of The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and serves as National Implementation Specialist for the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities' Turnaround Arts Schools.



# RIGHT BRAIN PROGRAMMING

### **WORKSHOPS**

#### EACH FALL AND WINTER,

teachers and principals from Right Brain partner schools immerse themselves in a full day of hands-on learning. In an extensive three-year sequence of workshops, they explore new ways of teaching by engaging in movement and collaborative art making challenges.

Workshops provide classroom teachers with tools they can integrate into their regular teaching, and arts teachers receive additional training. By the end of the third year of the series, schools walk away with a plan for school-wide implementation of arts integration.

2014 teacher surveys show that 75% of teachers who attend professional development workshops use Right Brain strategies on a regular basis, so we know this work is taking hold.

### **COACHING**

ARTS INTEGRATION Coaches work on site during schools' first three years in the program. Coaches guide the process of planning an artist residency, and after teachers attend our professional development workshops, coaches can help teachers integrate new tools into their classrooms, share ideas and collaborate.

We also support principals, whose advocacy for the arts can permeate an entire school building. Principals attend professional development workshops, and they are part of each school's Right Brain planning team, building an investment in arts integration across the school.

### CLASSROOM ARTIST RESIDENCIES

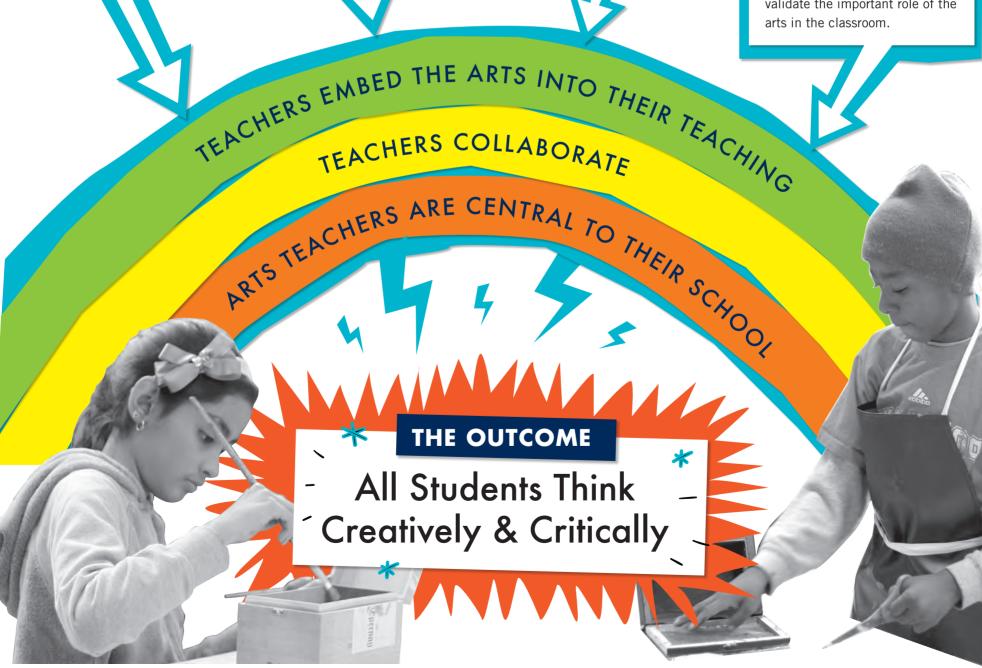
AT RIGHT BRAIN partner schools, all classrooms get knee-deep in arts integration when Right Brain teaching artists visit the school. Teachers, artists and principals sit down together to design an experience that seamlessly combines an artist's discipline with the school's curriculum and learning goals. These experiences are delivered collaboratively by the artists and classroom teachers.

Residencies bring new art forms to students—like drumming and dance and printmaking—and allow teachers to practice designing an integrated arts unit. Teachers learn skills directly from the dozens of Right Brain teaching artists and arts organizations that they can refine with their students long after the artist has left the classroom.

# REFLECTION & RESEARCH

**RIGHT BRAIN'S** reflection process helps educators gain insights into student learning through conversations with their colleagues. Coaches facilitate reflections at our partner schools at the end of a Right Brain artist residency. Our annual Spring Colloquium convenes staff from partner schools and Right Brain teaching artists, in an off-site seminar and celebration of arts integration. Using a structured reflection process based on work at Harvard's Project Zero, educators respond to details they noticed from student work samples and recordings of student interviews.

Right Brain staff and stakeholders also commit to ongoing evaluation, both to learn how we can continue to grow the quality of the program, and to validate the important role of the arts in the classroom.



# **TEACHER TESTIMONIALS**

# TEACHING TRANSFORMED

## **Megan Smith**

1st grade teacher,
Oregon Trail Academy
Boring, Oregon
Oregon Trail School District



**1ST GRADE TEACHER** Megan Smith radiates with energy when she talks about her classroom. But her mood softens when she reflects upon her first experiences with arts education. She likens it to the black-and-white instruction one would usually associate with a math class. "I made mistakes," she said. "In class I would be told, 'A tree does not look like that....' So I just said, 'Nope, the arts are not for me.'"

Megan admits that she didn't see the value of Right Brain in the first couple of years her school partnered with the program. "I didn't get it. I was like, 'I don't know how this is going to be useful and I just don't have time."

Things began to shift in the spring of 2014, when Megan worked with



Right Brain teaching artist Nikki
Flinn of Acts of Wonder to integrate
theatre with literacy. Students
used principles of performance
to dig deeper into the meaning
and characters of classic fairy
tales. By physically embodying the
characters of these stories, she
saw her students more engaged
in the classroom than ever before,
learning and making sense of the
content in profound new ways.

Watching Nikki work, Megan experienced a radical shift. "What

Nikki did in my classroom is literally the most amazing thing I have ever seen. It has totally changed my perspective on my own teaching," she said.

"I used to say, 'The kids don't have time for drama, they are supposed to be reading!' Now I know that the more they play when they read, the more they read. I am now a believer in drama."

Megan gained concrete tools from Nikki and a structure that allowed her to feel safe trying new things on her own in the classroom. "I would have not even known how to take that risk before Right Brain. Now I can say, 'It's not scary!' If it doesn't work, I can make a mistake in front of these kids and it's totally cool, we will move past that."

Ultimately, she was surprised that she was able to get the same results that Nikki did. And she was able to translate theatre to the students' writing process. The kids embodied a character through theatre and they wrote from the perspective of that character with added depth.

Based on the success of these experiences, Megan totally re-envisioned the structure of her school year. She made plans to start with theatre.

"The arts are not a distraction. They really aren't. I have no idea how I have time for this, but I've made time for it because it actually works. It's had a major impact. Major."

# BUILDING A CULTURE FOR THE ARTS



# **Karen Murphy**

Principal, North Plains Elementary School
North Plains, Oregon
Hillsboro School District

**NORTH PLAINS,** Oregon is a remote town more than 25 miles northwest of Portland. Karen Murphy is the energetic principal of the town's elementary school. In addition to Karen's work as an educator, she has been a singer with the Dickens Carolers for almost 20 years. "The arts are really a priority for me as a human being," she said.

When she became principal at North Plains in 2013, she found there wasn't as much art as she was accustomed to. "It saddened me greatly."

Because of Karen's stance on the arts, it's likely no accident that the school district identified North Plains to partner with Right Brain. In the fall of 2014, three of Karen's teachers began attending Right Brain professional development workshops. They then designed a residency with Korekara Taiko, a Japanese-American drumming group on the Right Brain artist roster.

This experience was a big deal for her entire school community and her eyes well up when she talks about it: "One child was so insistent that he be here for the Taiko recital, he delayed his family vacation plans so he could participate."

But it didn't end there. The teachers used this work as a springboard to create full units about the Japanese-American experience. Teachers who attended Right Brain trainings began integrating the arts at a higher level and inspired their colleagues to do so, as well.

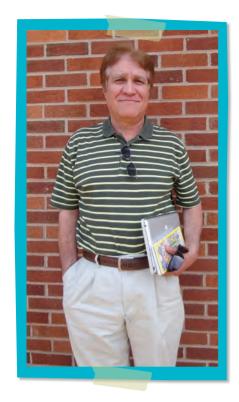
Karen says the increased quality of instruction is palpable. As she makes

visits throughout the building, she uses a rubric to assess the depth of the learning experiences she sees. She noticed that the only time her students achieved the highest level of thinking was when her staff were utilizing Right Brain strategies or the arts.

These days, North Plains has more arts programming throughout the school. One teacher started an after-school arts integration club. Other staff initiated a field trip to see a high school production of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. "Our children have never had experiences like this," she said.



Right Brain has effectively given Karen a structure to help her turn North Plains Elementary into a building where creativity is part of the culture. "Right Brain is a catalyst. It gave us a purpose and a reason to be weaving the arts in."



# CULTIVATING A CREATIVE ALLIANCE

### **Gustavo Molina**

2nd grade teacher Beach K-8 School Portland, Oregon Portland Public Schools

**GUSTAVO MOLINA** was raised and educated in Mexico City, and he carries a distinct perspective about the role of creativity in education: "If you know about the culture of Mexico and the history of the Mayans and the Aztecs, they were artistic galore. Building and creating is stuck into our society. In Mexico, there is dancing, poetry, art, all the time in every school."

Gustavo was trained to teach in Mexico. He later moved to Los Angeles

Right Brain turns schools into believers in the arts.

-GUSTAVO MOLINA

and then Portland, where he found work at Beach, a bilingual K-8 public school in North Portland. He was surprised to discover that in the United States, reading and math are viewed as distinct subjects, isolated from each other and from the arts. "It was a shock for me," he remarked. "Of course, we know that math and language arts are related to art; you cannot separate them."

Right Brain and Beach

became partners in 2009, and at first, some teachers weren't sure what to make of it. But as teachers completed Right Brain workshops and collaborated with teaching artists, they became confident about trying new art forms. Through Right Brain, Beach teachers brought an incredible range of disciplines to the school—Ghanaian drumming, Latin dance, digital storytelling. They erected giant murals. "I definitely saw a change in my colleagues," Gustavo said.

In time, momentum grew to a point that staff formed a coalition to advocate for creativity. "There was an alliance," he said. "This core of teachers would say, 'Hey, we need art. It's an important part of our lives.'"

And what was the result of all this momentum? Teachers saw new things radiating from their students. Gustavo tells a story about one child who entered his class with low self-esteem. The student transferred to the school mid-year with poor Spanish skills; a challenge at this bilingual school. But once he began working with Oregon Ballet Theatre through Right Brain, his behavior began to shift. He went home and taught his little sister what he learned in school about dance. "He was an introvert when he came to my class. When he left, he was totally the opposite. He became more confident. Amazing, right?" Gustavo said. "I see a lot of the students now being more focused and vocal and active."

Through Right Brain, Gustavo found new teaching tools, colleagues to collaborate with, and validation. "Right Brain gave me more strength to say, 'You are on the right track. Don't give up."

# THE ARTS

# BRING LEARNING TO ALL STUDENTS

# **Benjamin Fong**

5th grade teacher

### **Gabriel Gonzales**

4th grade teacher

WL Henry Elementary School Hillsboro, Oregon Hillsboro School District



**BENJAMIN FONG AND GABRIEL GONZALEZ** are on a mission. They work at WL Henry, a fiercely proud English/Spanish bilingual school where 100% of students are on the free and reduced lunch program. They are committed to doing whatever it takes to get all their kids learning, feeling supported and excited about coming to school.

Several years ago, the two teachers, both lifelong musicians, began inspiring one another to bring music to their kids. "The kids at this school are second language learners of English and Spanish, so it's great for them to practice language through music," Benjamin said.

When the school became a Right Brain partner, they attended workshops

and learned how to add movement to the music, and reach all their students, regardless of language capacity. "Right Brain opened my eyes to tapping into some other mediums," Gabriel said. "I felt like a fool that we weren't pushing the boundaries more."

In Spring 2015, the teachers worked with Right Brain teaching artist Bobby Abrahamson, who has a background in using photography to



give voice to those who aren't typically heard. Students created portraits with accompanying text that connected their personal experiences to literature and history. Many of them reflected upon the fear and frustration that comes with having family members who are undocumented, and what they would do to fight the injustices of society. "In the future, I hope my family gets paid equally as other people," wrote one 5th grader.

Bobby printed every one of these powerful portraits on banners that they



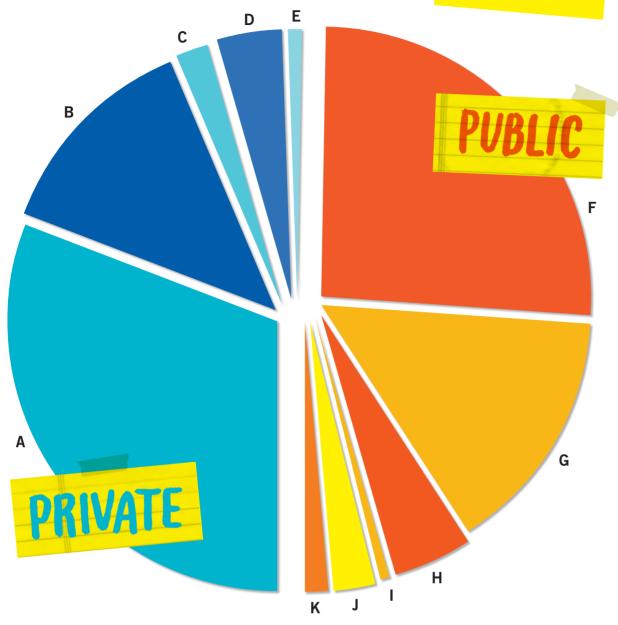
debuted in the Hillsboro Civic Center Plaza. This process allowed Benjamin and Gabriel to help kids find their voices in an artistic medium they couldn't tackle alone. And it enabled them to share their students' perspectives, and celebrate the richness of their school, with all of Hillsboro.

Gabriel concludes: "All teachers should get a taste of bringing this into the classroom. The rewards are invaluable."

Translation: "I have a fear of being separated from my family."

# **FUNDING**

2014-2015



- A FOUNDATION \$330,652
- B CORPORATE 135,318
- C IN-KIND \$21,576
- D INDIVIDUAL DONORS \$40,944
- E OTHER & EARNED INCOME \$7,557

TOTAL PRIVATE FUNDS: \$536,047

- F SCHOOL DISTRICTS \$275,048
- G CITY OF PORTLAND \$158,350
- H CLACKAMAS, MULTNOMAH, WASHINGTON COUNTIES \$ 50,000
- HILLSBORO ARTS & CULTURE COUNCIL \$5,000
- J FEDERAL \$28,056
- STATE OF OREGON (OREGON ARTS COMMISSION) \$12,000

TOTAL PUBLIC FUNDS: \$528,454

TOTAL FUNDING FOR 2014-15: \$1,064.501

### **CORPORATE SUPPORT**

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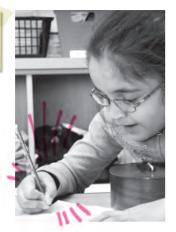
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Rebecca Burrell, Outreach Specialist Phoebe Ebright, Development Manager Sinéad Kimbrell, Program Manager Maya McFaddin, Program Assistant

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\*These volunteers gave more than 15 hours of their time during the year

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Amy Botula. Implementation Coordinator Cary Clarke, Executive Director Briana Linden, Program Implementation Manager



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Subashini Ganesan (Natya Leela) Caren Graham Rick Huddle Rick Meyers Sarah Nagy Pamela Norris Caroline Oakley Karie Oakes Mo Phillips Greta Pedersen

Ben Popp

Peggy Ross

Sarah Ferguson

Lisa Wilcke Carla Wilson

Aaron Nigel Smith

DEBORAH BRZOSKA, **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNER** 

### **TEACHING ARTISTS** Individual Artists

Bobby Abrahamson Jan Abramovitz Marjorie Anderson Katie Basile Wendy Dunder Nikki Flinn

& Pierson Rintz (Acts of Wonder) Daniel Granias Diane Jacobs Julie Keefe Ashley Klump Kathryn Kramer Waters Nicole Penoncello Donna Prinzmetal

### Arts Organizations

Michelle Swinehart

BodyVox NW Children's Theater Obo Addy Legacy Project Oregon Ballet Theatre Oregon Children's Theatre Korekara Taiko

### Young Audiences

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**2015 PROGRESS REPORT** 

# THE RIGHT BRAINITIATIVE \*



The Right Brain Initiative is a sustainable arts education partnership of public schools, government, foundations, businesses and the cultural community. Help us bring creativity to all 110,000 K-8 students in the Portland metro region.



# Get Involved

Volunteer
Join our email list
Become a member
of the Brain Trust
Host a house party
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# The Right Brain Initiative.org

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The Right Brain Initiative is a program of the Regional Arts & Culture Council, a 501(c)(3) arts services agency serving Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties, Oregon.

Young Audiences of Oregon & SW Washington serves as Implementation Partner.