teacher resource guide

the rainbow fish

arts education

njpac
discover. create. grow.

about the performance

Get ready to be charmed and mesmerized by this beautiful production, which is based on acclaimed author Marcus Pfister's beloved children's book *The Rainbow Fish*, and two other stories in the series. Audience members will be entranced by this timeless tale about the most spectacular fish in the sea.

This Rainbow Fish has glittering scales. Every fish in the ocean admires him for his beauty and invites him to play with them. But the fish is haughty and refuses to join in. He becomes lonely and isolated after rejecting another fish's request for his scales, which causes more fishes to ignore him. His beauty suddenly holds no meaning for him and he is sad. After a clever octopus gives him advice, the Rainbow Fish begins giving away his scales to other fishes until he is left with only one scale. Soon, other fishes have a glittering scale like his and he no longer feels alone. The more he gave away, the happier he became.

The production also includes two stories about the Rainbow Fish, in which he overcomes his fear to explore the deep sea, where he meets new friends. The finale introduces young audience members to the concept of opposites, such as over and under, and up and down. In an example of give and take, the Rainbow Fish shares one of his scales with a friend.

This production uses innovative techniques to bring the sea to life. Puppeteers manipulate the characters of the story by using their bodies, hands, and hand-held rods. The show is done entirely under a black light. Puppets and the set are painted with fluorescent colors that glow under this light, and anything that is black doesn't appear to the audience. Puppeteers wear all black, including black masks, so they are not visible. Because of this neat visual treat, they can manipulate the puppets to make them appear to swim, float, shrink and disappear.

About Marcus Pfister
Marcus Pfister (b. July 30, 1960 in Bern, Switzerland) is an acclaimed and prolific children's book author and illustrator with 49 books to his credit. He attended the Art School of Bern, apprenticed as a graphic designer, then worked in that field for several years. Starting in 1984, he worked on his first children's book, *The Sleepy Owl*, which was published in 1986. When *The Rainbow Fish* was published in 1992, it made a big splash internationally and convinced him to devote his time solely to children's books. *The Rainbow Fish*, which appeared in German originally, has been translated into more than 50 languages. More than 30 million copies have been sold all over the world. The book also spawned 10 more books as part of a continuing series featuring the titular Rainbow Fish in Pfister's stories.

In his books, Pfister uses a variety of artistic techniques to convey his stories. For example, he uses holographic foil to illustrate the glittering scales in *The Rainbow Fish*.

During interviews, Pfister explains that when developing a new children's book, he is inspired by the stories his kids tell him. He also uses his stories to teach children about values, such as compassion and sharing.

"*The Rainbow Fish* has no political message," he has said. "The story only wants to show us the joy of sharing. We all enjoy making presents for holidays or birthdays and the warm feeling it gives us when we do so. I want to show children the positive aspect of sharing: To share does not only mean to give away something (what is quite hard for a child), but above all to make someone else happy—and themselves happy by doing it."

Pfister has four children and lives in his hometown of Bern. When he is not working on books, he likes to play basketball and travel to rainforests, where he takes pictures of the wildlife.

Details on the production
Author/Illustrator: Marcus Pfister

Director/Production Designer: Jim Morrow

Composer: Steven Naylor

Narrator: Deborah Allen

Performers: Simon Rainville, Michael Venn

About Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia
Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia, founded in 1972 and based in the town of Windsor, has presented productions for more than 5.5 million audience members on four continents. The company regularly performs all over Canada, and has had productions in the United States, Japan, Mexico, Australia, England, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Holland, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Vietnam, South Korea and Taiwan, Bahrain, and the People's Republic of China. In addition, the theater company has won awards from the Canadian government and Nova Scotia.

about the creative team

Jim Morrow, Director/Production Designer
Morrow has directed numerous shows for the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia, including *The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*; Leo Lionni's *Swimmy*, *Frederick*, and *Inch by Inch*; and *Goodnight Moon* and *The Runaway Bunny*. He is also the director of puppetry for Symphony Nova Scotia's production of *The Nutcracker*. Morrow frequently teaches puppetry classes in North America and abroad.

Steven Naylor, Composer
Naylor has created the music for more than a dozen shows at the Mermaid Theatre. They include *The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favorites*; *Stella, Queen of the Snow*; *Swimmy, Frederick*, and *Inch by Inch*; and *Goodnight Moon* and *The Runaway Bunny*. He also composes music for film and television.

Deborah Allen, Narrator
Allen is an actor, director, producer, radio broadcaster and voice specialist. She toured with Mermaid Theatre's production of *The Journey* in 1974. This production played to First Nations communities throughout Nova Scotia. She has extensive experience in theater, film, television and radio. Her voice credits include countless documentaries for the National Film Board, TVO, commercials and museums.

Simon Rainville, Performer
Rainville, a puppeteer, graduated from Ryerson University in Toronto in 2003. He has worked with The Caravan Farm Theatre in British Columbia and Shakespeare by the Sea in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He joined the Mermaid Theatre in 2013 after he completed training with the Mermaid Institute of Puppetry Arts.

Michael Venn, Performer
Venn graduated from the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College theater program in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, where he earned the Andre Noble Award for outstanding achievement. Venn also attended the Academy of Circus Arts in the United Kingdom. Venn joined Mermaid Theatre a few years ago after completing training with the Mermaid Institute of Puppetry Arts.

History of Fables and Animals in Fiction

The Rainbow Fish is a lovely tale that teaches children the virtue of sharing. But it is also an example of a fable, a story that typically features animals that act like humans. Fables are told as lessons about morality or what is considered to be acceptable social behavior. They address big topics like compassion, anger, grief, selfishness, cruelty, and even how to deal with death.

In the Western Hemisphere, fables as an art form likely started with Aesop, a Greek from ancient times, who is legendary for penning perhaps 200 fables, according to history scholars. The earliest mention of Aesop and his stories dates to the 4th century BCE. Other people who wrote fables included the Greek writers Lucian and Plutarch, and Horace, a Roman poet.

Besides the ancient Greeks and Romans, fables were also woven into Norse and Celtic mythologies and other cultures, old or otherwise, in the Western World. In other parts of the globe, civilizations from Africa, China, India and Japan also use animals in stories to talk about universal matters. One example is the creation of the Chinese zodiac, which features 12 animals but no cat. There are many tales in China that try to explain why the cat is not included.

The Medieval Age in Europe also saw a flourishing of fables and allegories. These fables culminated into beast epics, a long series of stories featuring animals that comment on human behavior. These usually feature the trappings of a stirring heroic tale with a protagonist, villain, and stories of adventure and daring. An example is *Roman de Renart*, a 12th century collection of stories that features a clever and cunning fox by the name of Reynard.

The 17th century French writer Jean de La Fontaine was famous for his fables, which used animals as a conduit to criticize French society, from nobles to the Roman Catholic Church.

During the 19th century, fables became a vehicle for children's literature. Notably, Beatrix Potter created beautiful stories featuring farm and woodland animals and illustrated them with gorgeous watercolors and drawings. These tales, featuring characters such as Peter Rabbit, are found in many children's nurseries.

In the 20th century, writer George Orwell used animals to powerful effect in the novel *Animal Farm* to paint a sobering portrait of Russia under Stalin. In the 21st century, writers, artists and other creatives continue to use animals to illustrate stories. These tales are not only confined to books, but they figure in comic strips, TV shows and movies. From the Disney company, famous examples abound, such as *Bambi* and *The Lion King*, a version of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* set in the African savanna. A recent animated movie that featured animals quite prominently is *Zootopia*, a tale about a country rabbit who wants to be a cop. What appears on the surface to be a lighthearted tale actually delves into racism and prejudice by using the conflict between herbivores and carnivores as allegorical symbols.

Why do so many stories feature animals?

"The best children's stories are not just entertainment. They show us the world from others' perspectives," writes British author Tom Moorhouse. "They demonstrate how relationships work, and how to accept the differences between people. They allow children to experience things far outside of their daily lives, including some difficult emotions and thoughts. Animal stories create the strangest and safest worlds, where children can learn the most difficult lessons. But the neatest trick is that these lessons are delivered as part of an exciting animal adventure. Animal stories are strange and fun and they don't feel like an education. But they are."

inspired ideas in the classroom

		Teacher Focus	Student Activity	NJ Student Learning Standards
P	**Prepare for the performance**	Sharing and kindness are beautiful. Use the word shine to be synonymous with beautiful. Beauty comes in many forms and can start on the inside. We can shine from the inside out.	**Discussion:** What makes us beautiful? Can someone be beautiful if they hurt your feelings? Can someone be beautiful if they are not kind? Is beauty something you can feel, or is it something you can see, or both? Lead students toward the concept of beauty from within and explore how kindness can be a beauty that shines from within.	**English Language Arts** NJSLSA.SL1. NJSLSA.SL6. NJSLSA.L1.
E	**Experience the performance**	Continue to discuss the concept of shining from within. Role-play kindness and examples of "beauty from within." Before the performance and on their way to the performance, tell students you will be looking for examples of students who are shining from the inside and if possible reward them with a shiny sticker and tell them they were "Caught Shining from Within."	**Project:** Discuss a list of ways to be kind to others with the students. That list will be a bank of ideas for students to complete the next part of the project. Distribute silhouettes of starfish with a sentence starter: *I shine like a starfish because …* Encourage the students to complete the sentence with how they are kind; for example: *I shine like a starfish because … …I share my toys. …I say nice things to others.* If able, students can write a few sentences on how they shine (show kindness, are beautiful from within). Ask students to present their starfish to the class and discuss what makes them shine. Discuss how they will attend a performance where they will see examples of kindness and beauty, as well as examples of when a character is not kind. Ask students to look for those examples as they are enjoying the performance.	**English Language Arts** NJSLSA.W2 NJSLSA.W4. NJSLSA.W5. NJSLSA.SL1. **NJ Arts Standards** 1.1 The Creative Process 1.3 Performance
R	**Reflect, respond and read**	Ask students to reflect on what they observed: examples of beauty and behaviors that were not beautiful. · When you first saw the Rainbow Fish, did you think he was beautiful? · When the Rainbow Fish began talking to the other fishes, did you still think he was beautiful? · What changed your mind? · What did the Rainbow Fish do at the beginning of the performance that changed your mind? · What act of kindness did the Rainbow Fish perform? · What about the small fish's reaction? · How did he/she react when the Rainbow Fish was not kind?	After a short discussion on how the Rainbow Fish changed, ask students to reflect on that change with a short activity. Ask students to divide a paper in half. On one side of the paper write "unkind" and on the other side write "kind." Ask students to draw or write parts of the performance where a character was kind or unkind under the appropriate heading. Ask students to include on their chart examples of behavior they have experienced in their life when someone was kind and unkind, and how they felt during those times. Tell students to leave out names to avoid hurting someone's feelings. If students are capable, ask them to label their illustrations and add one sentence describing the unkind and kind acts. For example, "The Rainbow Fish did not share." On the opposite side of the paper, draw the Rainbow Fish again with another sentence demonstrating how he might have changed. For example, "The Rainbow Fish shared."	**English Language Arts** NJSLSA.R2. NJSLSA.R9. NJSLSA.W4. NJSLSA.SL1.
F	**Focus**	Remind students of previous discussion and list all the different ways a friend can be beautiful and shine from the inside. Refer to the previously compiled list of acts of kindness and add to it if more ideas are provided. Also introduce appropriate responses when someone is not kind. What was the small fish's response when the Rainbow Fish was unkind? What did he do?	**Activities:** · Role-play a favorite act of kindness · Encourage students to perform acts of kindness on their own. · Ask students to write a thank-you note to someone who performed an act of kindness toward them and explain how that is an act of kindness in itself. If someone says no one was kind to them, suggest they write a thank-you note to a parent or a teacher.	**English Language Arts** NJSLSA.W2. NJSLSA.W7. **NJ Arts Standards** 1.1 The Creative Process 1.3 Performance
O	**Originate**	Create a discussion with students on how the entire fish community became different when Rainbow Fish changed. Were they having more fun or less? Encourage your classroom community to create a community of kindness.	Create a bulletin board that represents a classroom of kindness. Provide each student with a fish silhouette and ask students to finish the statement: "I will be kind by …." Ask students to choose from the list of "Acts of Kindness" previously compiled, e.g., "I will be kind by sharing the slide."	**English Language Arts** NJSLSA.W4. NJSLSA.W7. NJSLSA.SL1 NJSLSA.SL5. **NJ Arts Standards** 1.1 The Creative Process
R	**Rehearse**	Have students commit to being kind to one another by participating in a classroom pledge. Discuss what is appropriate when they see someone who is not standing by the classroom pledge of kindness.	Make a pledge that commits the students to being kind to one another. **Pledge:** I will shine from the inside out by always being nice to everyone. If someone is not nice to me I will walk away and take a deep breath. Review the bulletin board with the fish silhouettes with the students and ask them if they have seen examples of those acts of kindness performed by their classmates. Reward those acts with praise.	**English Language Arts** NJSLSA.SL5. NJSLSA.SL6. **NJ Arts Standards** 1.1 The Creative Process
M	**Make magic**	Discuss the act of kindness in forgiveness and patience. Is it okay to be mean when someone is mean to you? Were there any characters in the performance that had to be patient and forgive the Rainbow Fish? Bring more attention to the small fish's response and to the community that had to forgive the Rainbow Fish.	Ask students to role-play what to do when someone is not kind. Emphasize the role of the little fish when he/she was the victim of the Rainbow Fish's selfish behavior. How can we learn from that fish? With the students, list the different ways to respond when someone is not kind. Role-play and reenact those responses with a small group and another group can illustrate or write out those scenarios.	**English Language Arts** NJSLSA.SL1. NJSLSA.SL3. **NJ Arts Standards** 1.3 Performance

curriculum standards

NJ Arts Standards

1.1 The Creative Process
All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

1.2 History of Arts & Culture
All students will understand the role, development, and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

1.3 Performance
All students will synthesize skills, media, methods and technologies that are appropriate to creating, performing and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

1.4 Aesthetic Response & Critique
All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

National Arts Standards

1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

FIND THE STANDARDS
For more detailed information on the standards, visit these websites:

NJ ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/ela

NJ SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS
state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/ss

NJ WORLD LANGUAGE STANDARDS
state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/wl

NJ ARTS STANDARDS
state.nj.us/education/cccs/2009/1.pdf

NATIONAL ARTS STANDARDS
nationalartsstandards.org

English Language Arts

NJSLSA.R2.
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

NJSLSA.R9.
Analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

NJSLSA.W2.
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

NJSLSA.W4.
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W5.
Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

NJSLSA.W7.
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

NJSLSA.SL1.
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

NJSLSA.SL3.
Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

NJSLSA.SL5.
Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

NJSLSA.SL6.
Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

NJSLSA.L1.
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

vocabulary

Allegories
A story, poem or image that a reader interprets to find a hidden point or meaning, usually religious, moral, social or political. Allegorical is an adjective denoting that something has symbolic meaning.

BCE
"Before Common Era," meaning any date prior to the year 1 CE (Common Era). BC (Before Christ) is the same as BCE. AD (Anno Domini, which is Latin for "in the year of the Lord") is the same as CE.

Black light
A special light that emits light rays in the ultraviolet spectrum. Objects painted in fluorescent colors will glow under a black light, while things painted black will not be visible to the naked eye. Black lights are typically used in theatrical performances and artistic work.

Deep ocean sea
The deep ocean is the lowest layer of the sea. This location can lie 1,800 meters deep or lower. Very little light penetrates this area but it is home to a diverse range of unique creatures that are not found anywhere else in the ocean.

Fables
Stories usually featuring animals acting and talking like humans. Stories are told to impart a moral lesson.

Fish
Creatures with gills and fins, usually cold-blooded and limbless, and live in fresh or salty bodies of water. They have vertebrae, which means they have a spine.

Holographic foil
Special paper with reflective qualities embedded on the surface.

Octopus
An animal that lives in the sea, has eight limbs and is soft-bodied, allowing it to squeeze through small holes and into tiny spaces. Scientists consider the octopus to be a relatively intelligent animal due to its capacity to store short- and long-term memory.

Puppets
Small figures, typically of a human being or animal, made of various materials and manipulated by hand. Examples include the Muppets and characters found on *Sesame Street* to puppets used for shadow plays.

Theater
A place for performance, to show movies, spectacles, plays or talks. In the Western world, plays from ancient Greece form the bedrock of Western theatrical tradition.

Theater props
Objects used to convey the setting in a performance. They can be real objects, like a lamp, or they could be basic shapes made of wood or cardboard that a performer can transform into another object via whatever action is played out. A cardboard box can become a table or cat, depending on how the actor interacts with it.
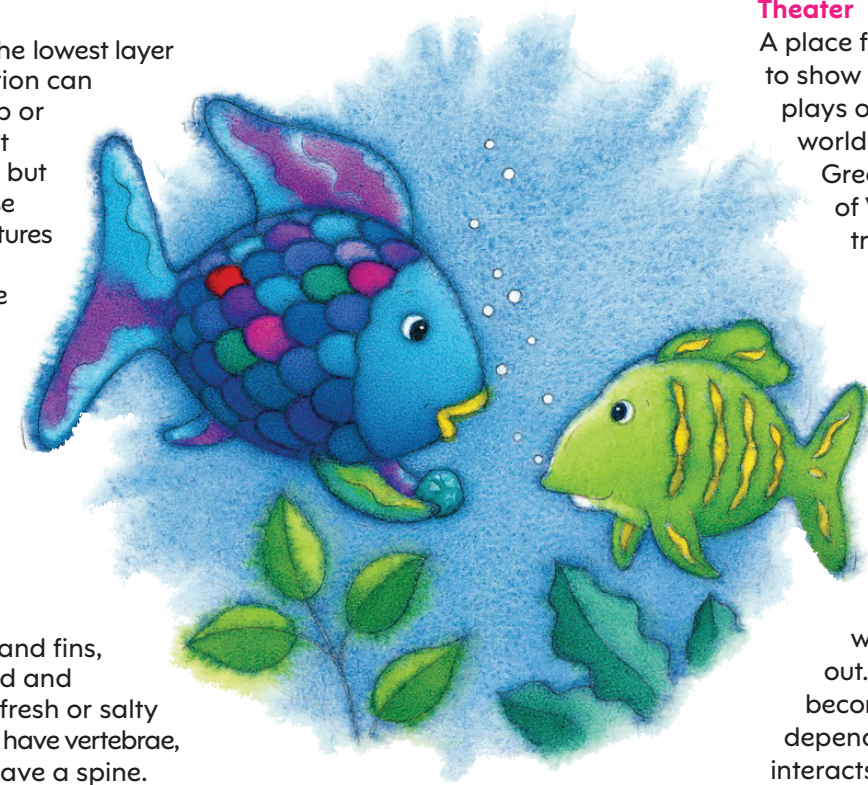
resources

Websites

Marcus Pfister
marcuspfister.ch

How the book was created
marcuspfister.ch/evolution.htm

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia
mermaidtheatre.ca

The Rainbow Fish show information
mermaidtheatre.ca/rainbowfish/

Philosophy behind *The Rainbow Fish*
teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/TheRainbowFish

Why is animal fiction important? By Tom Moorhouse
blog.oxfordowl.co.uk/why-is-animal-fiction-important/

The story behind the Chinese zodiac
chinahighlights.com/travelguide/chinese-zodiac/story.htm

Aesop's fables
read.gov/aesop/

Beatrix Potter
peterrabbit.com

George Orwell's *Animal Farm*
bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/an-introduction-to-animal-farm

Video

The Rainbow Fish read by Ernest Borgnine
youtu.be/=r9mryuEKkKc

The Rainbow Fish movie
youtu.be/=ifXlc0QI2kY

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia: Introduction
youtu.be/=7cfUT6cEJBw

The Rainbow Fish promotional video:
Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia
youtu.be/=oftrDecUJdw

Aesop's *The Tortoise and the Hare* (Disney 1934)
youtu.be/=MeZe2qPLPh0

Aesop's Fables (full audiobook)
youtu.be/=aaMLVsH6ikE

Books

The Pout-Pout Fish
Deborah Diesen, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013

About Fish: A Guide for Children
Cathryn Sill and John Sill, Peachtree Publishers, 2017

*A Fish Out of Water (*Beginner Books*)*
Helen Palmer and P.D. Eastman, Random House Books
for Young Readers, 1961

Hotel Bruce (Mother Bruce series)
Ryan T. Higgins, Disney-Hyperion, 2016

Nerdy Birdy
Aaron Reynolds, Roaring Brook Press, 2015

The Bad Seed
Jory John and Pete Oswald, HarperCollins, 2017

The Elephant Who Tried to Tip Toe
Andrew Newman, Conscious Stories LLC, 2015

The Snail and the Whale
Julia Donaldson, Puffin Books, 2006

Monkey Puzzle
Julia Donaldson, Pan MacMillan, 2016

Mouse's Christmas Gift
Mindy Baker and Dow Phumiruk, Zonderkidz, 2018

njpac staff

(partial listing)
John R. Strangfeld, *Chair, NJPAC Board of Directors*
John Schreiber, *President & CEO*
Alison Scott-Williams, *Vice President, Arts Education*
Jennifer Tsukayama, *Assistant Vice President, Arts Education*
Betsy True, *Senior Director, Artistic Faculty & Curriculum Development*
Cathleen Plazas, *Senior Director, Curriculum and Program Evaluation*
Mark Gross, *Director, Jazz Instruction*
Jamie M. Mayer, *Director, Curriculum & Professional Development*
Rosa Hyde, *Senior Manager, SchoolTime & Assemblies*
Timothy Maynes, *Senior Manager, Business Operations*
Victoria Revesz, *Senior Manager, School and Community Programs*
Roneasha Bell, *Manager, On-site and Community Programs*
Kyle Conner, *Manager, Sales & Partnerships*
Ashley Mandaglio, *Manager, Professional Development*
Danielle Vauters, *Manager, School and Summer Programs*
Becca Grek, *Coordinator, Program Registration & Operations*
Kristine Mathieson, *Coordinator, School and Summer Programs*
Daniel Silverstein, *Coordinator, On-site and Community Programs*
Patricia Sweeting, *Coordinator, Performances & Engagement*
Kendra Williams, *Coordinator, Faculty Evaluation & Training*
Thomas Skidmore, *Part-time Coordinator, Program Evaluation & Statistics*
Tara Baker, *Administrative Assistant/Office Manager, Arts Education*
Denise Jackson, *Administrative Assistant to the VP and AVP, Arts Education*
Christy-Leigh Grosman, *Graphic Designer*

Teacher Resource Guide Committee
Diana Crum, Susan Pope, Maria Desousa, Carina Rubaja, Eric Shandroff, Danielle Mastrogiovanni, Megan Namnama, Dania Ramos
Sharon Adarlo, *Teacher Resource Guide Writer*

the arts in your school

In-School Residencies: Drama + Social Studies. Dance + Math. It all adds up in NJPAC's In-School Residencies in which professional teaching artists partner with educators to bring the arts into the classroom. Each 7- to 10-week program culminates in a student performance or an interactive family workshop. All programs address state and national standards. NJPAC is the regional provider in New Jersey for international arts programs like the NJ Wolf Trap Program and Dancing Classrooms Global.
Assemblies: NJPAC presents engaging school assembly programs that are presented by professional artists that invite students into the enchanting world of live performance. NJPAC's assembly series promotes cultural awareness and invigorates learning by presenting works that are connected to your school's curriculum.
Professional Development: NJPAC Professional Development engages classroom teachers, arts specialists and teaching artists as integrated teams that combine arts pedagogy, content, classroom management and social behavioral strategies to ignite and inspire arts-rich classrooms. Working as a team empowers teachers to share practice and strategy. Our goal is to inspire artistic and intellectual capacities in students, building competence and confidence in both students and teachers.

study the arts at njpac

Saturday Programs: NJPAC's Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level—from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in film, contemporary modern dance, hip hop, jazz, musical theater and symphonic band.
Summer Programs: Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in one of seven programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

arts education

njpac

discover. create. grow.