

Thank you. First I'd like to thank my husband, Ed, and my 3 children, for supporting me as I returned to school at the College of Saint Rose, and for allowing dirt to wait when art wouldn't. The kids have been my crash-test dummies at times, and have been patient with a long line of babysitters as well. I'd like to acknowledge my colleagues, especially Nancy Pelesz, my partner-in-crime, for collaborating with me on a lot of projects, especially being a volunteer coach, along with Judy Joyner. These were teachers who gave their free time to meet weekly with a team of students preparing for the Olympics of the Visual Arts. Brian Fried, my former principal at Millbrook Middle School, supported and encouraged all my projects and grants.

I'd like to talk a little about the Olympic of the Visual Arts. Not very often, I come across something that is just perfect. The OVA is that. There is not a thing I would want to change about this program. It is a "rich-task" project that offers students so much opportunity to learn and work together as a team. It was amazing to watch my teams working, even, as in the case of my daughter's architecture team, realizing they needed to specialize to get the job done, they formed themselves as a small architecture office with everyone responsible for different aspects of the project. It is a terrific program and is so rewarding to everyone who participates.

In closing, my expectation as an art educator is that not everyone will be an artist, or even that all art will be appreciated, but that students will learn to create by practicing the process of creation. When our graduates are well prepared, they contribute more than the wealth they generate to our communities. They contribute creative solutions to the problems of the day, making their world, and ours, a better place in which to live. Thank you for this recognition.

Anita Fina Kiewra