

## **CREATIVE PLANET SCHOOL OF THE ARTS**

### **Nominated For Prestigious Award for Demonstrating Excellence in Arts Education**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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El Monte, CA - Creative Planet School of the Arts, a private arts elementary school for low-income students has been nominated for a Bravo Award given each year by the Music Center Education Division. The school submitted a rigorous application to be considered a contender. A committee of educators and professional artists reviewed the submission demonstrating Creative Planet's excellence in arts education and chose CPSOA as a finalist. Of the 28 finalists vying for the award (up from only 9 last year), only one will be chosen as the recipient of the \$10,000 cash prize provided by Robinsons May.

With their school motto, "*the hands to build, the minds to create and the voices to be heard...*" CPSOA has been selected among 27 well respected schools just after two years of being in operation. Having overcome much adversity in its beginnings, artistic director, Bill Rugh, has put together an esteemed staff which has managed to establish a private school that incorporates accelerated academics as well as exemplary arts education with profound results. Having seen the school grow from the start, Bruce Mayhall, Artistic Director of The Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles feels, "the level of instruction and activity for the students is extraordinary, and their response to it has been stunning in its effect. Rarely have I seen students at any level accomplish so much in such a short period of time...One feels from watching Creative Planet that our artistic future is in very strong hands." Considered by some as an elementary school "FAME", CPSOA has shown much growth by its students within its short history. Rugh, modestly states, "the students/performers of Creative Planet all know how to dance ballet, hold a yoga pose, compose music, play piano, perform Shakespeare, write a play and still test in the top 20% of the nation on their SAT's." Within its first year of operation, CPSOA was chosen as state winner of the Oscar Mayer® Talent Search School House Jam.

The children of CPSOA have performed or worked with accomplished artists such as Tony Award® winners Joanna Gleason and Tonya Pinkins, Academy Award® nominee Chris Sarandon, and also Elizabeth Berkley, Tracee Ellis Ross, George Bell, and Mallory Lewis. CPSOA supporter, Joanna Gleason states, “if the education, care and artistic nurturing of our planet Earth were put in the hands of the staff of Creative Planet, we would all understand each other perfectly and be able to say so...I have seen these kids shine, I have seen the tears of joy and pride in their parents' eyes. I have seen the promise of a future where one community influences the next not by imposing its will but by inviting in its neighbors. If you believe in higher powers, here's some proof. If you believe only in the power of man, look what he can do.”

The CPSOA students have collaborated with the Culver City Chamber Orchestra conducted by Arlette Cardenes who maintains “CPSOA is an outstanding representation of community arts alliance for children. The school’s staff and administrator are to be commended for its innovative approach.” Iris Levine, Artistic Director of the nationally acclaimed women’s chorus, Vox Femina, Los Angeles invited CPSOA to participate in one of her chorus concerts in 2003. She thinks “the children of CPSOA, through what they learn at the school, bring joy and positive messages and role modeling to the community through their incredible performances. CPSOA truly is a gift to all children and the communities they serve.” Most recently the children from CPSOA appeared in the Gay Men’s Chorus of Los Angeles’ holiday 2004 concert, “Swing, Santa, Swing” and were also featured guests in GMCLA’s 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season concert “Spotlight on Los Angeles.”

The Bravo Awards will be announced on March 1, 2005 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel hosted by famed director, Gary Marshall, who has hosted the event since its inception.

For more information please contact Santo Ragno, Director of Development of CPSOA at 626.442.1253 or visit the school’s website at [www.cpsoa.org](http://www.cpsoa.org)

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