

# FOCUS

ON JERICHO  
TEACHERS  
AND THEIR ISSUES

January 2007

## The Opening of "R&D" Season

Applications for Research and Development Grants (or R&Ds) for the 2007-2008 school year were distributed and discussed last week at faculty meetings across the District.

For those new to Jericho, these R & D grants are awarded to teachers (who apply for them) for the research, planning, and implementation of projects that are too complicated and/or elaborate to be completed during regular lesson planning. Many involve collaboration between colleagues. They can be interdepartmental, interdisciplinary, or involve the cooperation of faculty members from other buildings. Grants are awarded in three phases. The following is a basic break-down:

**Phase I (Non-Competitive)** In order to participate, a "Letter of Intent to Participate" must have been submitted to Dr. Hunderfund's office by Jan. 25. The actual number of days awarded to interested applicants is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{2/3 \text{ of the total number of days available for 2007-08}}{\text{The number of faculty who express an interest and are approved for funding for Phase I}} = \text{The number of days available for each faculty member}$$

Last year, Phase I R&Ds were 3.75 days

On February 5, the Curriculum Committee will notify the faculty as to how many days are available for Phase I proposals.

Proposals are due to Principals and Curriculum Associates by Tuesday, February 27.

On October 12, the product and a log of dates and times when the work was completed. These dates must be after July 1.

**Phase II (Competitive)** One third of the available days will be awarded for "creative, mandated, or necessary" research and development grants. These proposals have specific requirements and must be submitted in accordance with the guidelines stated in the packets (distributed at the faculty meetings).

These applications are due (to Dr. Hunderfund's office) by March 27 at 3:30 pm. Keep in mind that certain signatures are required, so give your principals and/or CAs enough time to actually read your proposal(s). In mid April, revisions will be discussed with applicants and in the end of April the Curriculum Committee will make their recommendations to the Superintendent. On May 1 and 2, 2007 the faculty will be notified of Phase II funding decisions. All Phase II work is due to Dr. Hunderfund by May 1, 2008.

**Phase III** If there are any days left over, another non-competitive round will be made available to all faculty. Last year there were no days left over.

**Note of clarification** You can request up to 10 days on any one R&D but you have a total limit of 20 days personally. Therefore, please be careful if you are on more than one proposal that your total does not exceed 20 or you will put one or more of your proposals in jeopardy of being turned down. Also, the maximum awarded for a new course last year was 10 and, the maximum for a semester course was 5.

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## FOCUS

is the monthly newsletter of the Jericho Teachers Association. We welcome input, articles, viewpoints, and questions from all members. If there is an issue you would like to see addressed or if you would like to contribute please e-mail

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## N.Y. Teacher's Students Learn 'Peace by Piece'

(this article appeared in USA Today)

By Olivia Barker, USA TODAY

JERICHO, N.Y. — Amid the soothing strains of the first movement of Beethoven's *Pastorale Symphony*, paintbrushes sweep across paper like bows sliding across violin strings, creating ribbons of green, blue and brown. When more delicate notes play, the brushes tap like xylophone mallets, and as the tempo quickens, they stab the sheets as if wielding conductors' batons.

"You're hearing the music with your ears. It's going into your heart and out through your arms," says Susan Menkes, the maestro leading the 21 brush-wielding fifth-graders.

But on the way out, as Menkes might add, music — and art — take a detour through the mind.

Such an interdisciplinary approach has allowed Menkes, an art teacher at Cantiague Elementary for eight years, to position her passion near the top of her relatively affluent community's agenda, despite today's test-centric climate.

"We have tried here, while meeting all mandates, tried to embrace the arts," says Hank Grishman, superintendent for this Long Island district 25 miles west of New York. "And Susan is core to that."

She's nicknamed Mrs. "Magic" Menkes, and her fingerprints (often paint-splattered) touch all subjects, from reading to social studies. "It's about the integration of art into everything we do," Grishman says.

To wit: Menkes traveled to Japan on a Fulbright scholarship in 2002. A "Peace by Piece" mural, a joint project for 84 of her fifth-graders and 85 Japanese students, hangs in Cantiague's lobby, and a reproduction was

sent by request to the White House. Her goal was to "have kids develop respect for those who aren't like themselves," says Menkes, 56, "in my own little way."

On a crisp blue fall morning, her commitment to multicultural understanding is on colorful display. Hundreds of striped and cross-



*Susan Menkes sits in a collection of pinwheels that her students made as part of a "peace in our school, our community and our world" project.*

hatched pinwheels, "flowers" created by each of Cantiague's 415 children and planted in the schoolyard, whirl in the light wind. Class representatives and finally Menkes herself step up to a microphone and announce: "I plant this pinwheel for peace in our school, our community and in our world."

Menkes' inclusion classes have both gifted students and those with learning disabilities. Regardless of academic or developmental ability, everyone, in Menkes' eyes, is an artist "in some way," she says.

Menkes, with a personality as buoyant as her bouncy red hair, is "the one who encourages us to jump up and do more than we thought we ever could do," says Nina Glodstein, 10 .

No wonder, then, that her classroom banner reads: "You're the artist, so you decide!" Menkes' room can't be missed. There's no number posted out front, but the door is framed in notched turrets of gold foil. Scroll-like signs above and on the door welcome "all royal subjects to a royal subject: art!" explored within the walls of Menkes' "Magic Art Castle."

The Beethoven project is an homage to Kandinsky, one of Menkes' favorite artists. "Every color had musical meaning to Kandinsky," Menkes explains, a poster of the artist's *Little Painting With Yellow* on the easel next to her.

Heaven Mitchell, 11, sees an "upside-down cat" in the piece, which "makes you dance with your eyes."

Daniel Schneider, 10, calls it "unusual art." Menkes clarifies: "It's non-representational art."

But that doesn't mean it's not thoughtful or emotional, Menkes explains. Impassively swiping at her sheet, Menkes demonstrates what not to do when Beethoven flows from the boom box. "Your thoughts aren't messy, your feelings aren't messy. So your paintings shouldn't be messy."

After the children gingerly walk over to the drying rack, palms balancing their works like hot pizzas, Menkes asks them to describe their Kandinsky-channeling. Voices call out: "Calm!" "Relaxed!" "Free!"

"It felt peaceful," Daniel says, sitting cross-legged on the rug.

"So it ties into the theme today," Menkes points out. Heads nod in recognition.

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