ARTS: A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

SPEECH FOR

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SAMPLE

Picture yourself in a room…. in a plain white room. No windows. No colors. No sounds. It seems almost impossible to imagine, but try to imagine this: What would your life be like without the influence of the arts? It’s pretty hard to picture; probably almost as difficult as it would be to empathize with a blind person or try understanding what life is like for those that are hearing challenged. We can close off access to the joy of self-expression but we have KNOWN what it feels like being a part of a group whose combined force creates a universal soul shattering vibration. We know what it’s like to observe fine art so beautiful it moves us to tears, and we’ve probably all had the experience of coaxing a little “**pling**” from a triangle in early education music classes or performing in chorus on assembly day in grade school or learning the power of knowing that if you have a blob of blue paint and you mix it with a little red paint, somehow, miraculously, you get purple!!! Now imagine a world where your children and their children grow up in a white room, void of the opportunity to experience the enrichment of the arts in their lives.

Times are tough and education finances are being squeezed so tight that the only sound we will eventually hear is the screech of the budget doors being shut. Our children deserve better. We must do whatever it takes to support the survival of music and arts programs throughout the education system in the US.

So much has been said about the necessity of the arts, and in particular music, in our lives. Plato felt that music was a “Moral Law and gives soul to the universe.” Maya Angelou taught us, “ Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness.” And Nietzsche reminds us, “Without music, life would be a mistake.” A fundamental and foundational education must include arts education. I cannot imagine a world without the opportunity to learn something that fills the soul and teaches so much more than notes and rhythm. I truly believe it would present more of a struggle for survival to eliminate arts funding. Now, how do we find the way to insure that funding is present to keep arts education programs in our system in perpetuity? It’s time to identify issues and focus on solutions. It is imperative to keep the color and the sound in our lives.