

# Spark creativity with arts and crafts



**Dea Begert**  
CANYON VIEWS

As parents, we are often looking for fun ways to spend quality time together with our children while teaching them valuable life skills. Spring is a great season to encourage your children

to explore their creative skills, especially since March is National Craft Month. Crafting activities offer students a host of benefits, and are an easy way to bring the family together especially over spring break.

The concept of arts and crafts was initially created back when people had to make everything by hand, such as their clothing or other household items. Today, more than 62 million people in the US participate in crafting every year, from woodworking and jewelry to painting and needlepoint, according to the Craft and Hobby Association.

Ben Franklin's famous quote, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn," holds true for many children who learn best by doing. Craft activities are great educational tools that allow students to develop fine motor skills, discover concepts and observe scientific processes through ac-

tion. Crafting can also help your child's development in several key areas:

### Success in School

Arts and crafts projects can often enhance language arts, social studies, science, and math skills. For example, craft projects could involve counting, measuring or geometry skills that might also be taught in your student's math class. A study by the non-profit Americans for the Arts noted a correlation between students who participate in the arts and those who are recognized for academic achievement.

### Increased Imagination

When you allow your child to come up with their own visions and creative ideas for crafty things, you'll be amazed with the results. Michigan State University researchers found that when kids were encouraged to develop a sense of innovation with arts and crafts, there was a strong link to business inventions later in life.

### Character Building

Children can get distracted easily, so start with a small craft project to show your student the sense of pride and accomplishment they experience when finishing. Make sure your child follows

all instructions for the project, which will help to develop their focus and patience. No matter how the final product looks, teach your child about the benefits of commitment and reward them for seeing the project through to the end.

### Reduced Stress

Arts and crafts gives your kids a creative way to express their emotions. Research now shows crafting is a great outlet for children and grownups alike to relieve stress. One study in the journal Art Therapy reported reduced anxiety in adults who colored pictures.

As parents, I'm guessing you have some time-honored craft ideas from your own childhood—perhaps finger painting or homemade playdough. Today there are many web sites offering entertaining, educational and inexpensive crafting suggestions. Here are just a few on my list:

**Thank You Cards:** Make homemade thank you cards to show appreciation for birthday gifts, holiday presents or other occasions. Any kind of construction paper, pictures from old magazines and glue will do the trick. Mother's Day and Father's Day are coming up soon, so encourage your kids to make cards in advance of these special days.

**Bulletin Boards:** A simple project for

students of all ages. Pick up some corkboard at a craft or hardware store and let your children personalize the board with a reusable calendar, a school to-do list or photos of their favorite things.

**Kindness Spotlight:** Ask your child to make a photo frame for the refrigerator by gluing four ends of Popsicle sticks together, then a magnet on each corner. Have your student decorate the frame with stickers or other material and write "How I Help Others" on the bottom. Display photos of your child performing acts of kindness in the finished frame.

**Book Blankets:** Encourage your children's interest in reading by having them make personalized book covers for textbooks or binders. Recycle old fabrics, placemats or other materials you find around the house for the covers.

There are so many craft project possibilities! Not only are hands-on crafts a wonderful way to get your students into an active project, but crafting with your children offers a great learning and bonding opportunity for the whole family.

Dea Begert, of Happy Valley is a second-grade teacher for Oregon Connections Academy. She can be reached through the academy at [www.OregonConnectionsAcademy.com](http://www.OregonConnectionsAcademy.com) or by calling (800) 382-6010.

## Arts, culture grants open to application

**Tom Mayhall Rastrelli**  
Appeal Tribune

The Oregon Arts Commission and Oregon Cultural Trust are accepting applications for Career Opportunity and Cultural Development grants.

Literary and performing artists may apply for Career Opportunity Grants of up to \$1,500 from the commission and may apply for additional funding of up to \$7,500 from the Oregon Community Foundation. These grants are the result of a new partnership between the commission and the foundation. They fund artistic, business or professional development opportunities that further the careers of established Oregon literary and performing artists who are more than 30 years old and producing new work. To apply, go to [oregonartscommission.org](http://oregonartscommission.org). The deadline is April 5. For information, call (503) 986-0082.

Applications are also open through 5 p.m. April 22 for the trust's Cultural Development Grants. Record fundraising in 2015 means a record amount of money will be available. Qualifying cultural programs and projects must fit one of the following categories: access, preservation, and capacity. They must take place between Aug. 1, 2015, and July 30, 2016. To apply, go to [culturaltrust.org](http://culturaltrust.org). For information, call (503) 986-0088.

## 7 Silverton firefighters honored for service

**Christena Brooks**  
Special to the Appeal Tribune

Seven local fire fighters were given special honors at Silverton Fire District's awards banquet last month.

Max Hughes was named Firefighter of the Year, receiving recognition for helping with public education and training events in addition to regularly responding to emergencies from the district's main station. "He is an outstanding firefighter, and we can all count on him to help day or night for anything we need," said Capt. Ed Grambusch.

Battalion Chief Fred Bridgehouse was named Officer of the Year. A 36-



**Max Hughes** **Fred Bridgehouse**

year volunteer, Bridgehouse responds from the Scotts Mills Station and plays an active role in recruiting new firefighters. Matt Smith, a firefighter/paramedic, was named Emergency Medical Technician of the Year. He's been with the district since 2013. Brady Woodward is Rookie of the Year. Responding out of the Abiqua Station, she has played an active role in training and education. She was also re-

cently certified as an EMT.

Captain Jim Terhaar earned the lifetime membership award after serving as a volunteer for the last 25 years. "He is also very active in donating his personal expertise and materials to the overall benefit of the district," Grambusch said.

Excellence in Service awards were presented to Lt. Ray Dandeneau and firefighter Keith Veit. "These two dedicated members were responsible for coordinating the annual food and toy drive which provided over 15,000 pounds of food and thousands of toys for children in the area," Grambusch said.

## Seeking teacher of year nominees

**Natalie Pate**  
Appeal Tribune

Every year, the Oregon Department of Education honors teachers and their impact on students' lives through the Oregon Teacher of the Year award.

The award recognizes "an outstanding teacher as a representative of all ... educators in our state and gives Oregonians an opportunity to share information on teachers who are making a difference in their communities," according to a recent press release.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2017 Oregon Teacher of the Year

award, according to the release. The deadline for nominations is May 13 and the award will be announced in the fall.

Anyone can nominate a teacher for the award, but teachers may not nominate themselves. Candidates should be "exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled teachers who have the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues," according to the release. They should inspire students of all backgrounds, play an active role in their community and school, and be poised and articulate representatives of all Oregon classroom teachers.

Once selected, the winner and his or her school are each awarded a \$5,000 cash prize, according to the release. Two runners up also each receive an award of \$2,000. Oregon's Teacher of the Year will continue to teach in the classroom and will have opportunities to speak and

present around the state.

Additionally, according to the release, he or she will have the opportunity to apply for the National Teacher of the Year award and attend several out-of-state events including the International Space Camp, the National Teacher of the Year conference, and the National Teacher of the Year Recognition Week in Washington, D.C. where he or she gets to meet the President of the United States at the White House.

"In classrooms all across the state, outstanding educators are inspiring students to learn, lead, collaborate, invent, discover, and explore," Deputy Superintendent Salam Noor said in a prepared statement.

To nominate an educator for the 2017 Oregon Teacher of the Year and for more information, go to [oregonteacheroftheyear.org](http://oregonteacheroftheyear.org).

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