

## SCHOOL DESK

BY KATE PASTOR



Photo by Conor Romero

CHILDREN from the Ampark School participated in this past weekend's YoHo Open Studios and interactive program.

## Ampark School

Each child was given a word from nature — rainbow, tree, rock, for example — and asked to create a piece of art based upon it.

Their work would soon hang on the walls of the YoHo Center of the Arts in an exhibition called "Outside Learning: A collection of children's art inspired by nature," which doubled as a fundraiser for instruments for a Kenyan school Ampark students have forged a connection with.

According to Ampark's literacy coach, Francesca Michaelides Weiss, in addition to the school's fulltime music curriculum, students there are working in partnership with S'Cool Sounds, a music education program founded by Nina Stern.

Ms. Stern also partners with Cross Cultural Thresholds, an organization that aims to feed nearly 300 children of the Kibera slum in Kenya, and Ampark has gotten involved in that aspect of her work, too.

Through Ms. Stern and Josh Joffe, Ampark's music teacher, the school has linked up with students at the private Ethical Culture Fieldston School. Together they are using music to connect with students at the Drug Fighter Center School in Kenya, by recording their work and sending it over with Cross Cultural Thresholds when the organization makes a visit.

Ampark and Fieldston students have met twice to play music with each other, and students in Kenya have been videotaped accompanying the Bronx students' pieces.

The students at the Drug Fighter Center School, however, use plastic containers, cups, camel bones and egg-shaped shakers to make their tunes, and Ampark wants to raise enough

money to buy them 100 recorders.

The art exhibit in sales of Yonkers has already raised about \$460 in drawing sales and the school plans to continue selling them to those who could not make it to YoHo over the weekend.

Not all the parents and proud artists attended the show, but those that did were able to see a grand display of their children's work.

The space dedicated to the Ampark students was at the end of a long hall filled with older artists' work. In it a sign read: "From tiny leaves blowing in the wind, to a sandy beach, to images of the earth itself, great imagination and experimentation with the available materials."

Among the more than 100 drawings hung neatly side-by-side on the walls were fish of varied colors swimming in a dark blue sea, four trees standing regally next to one another, a lonely hill — and rabbits.

Kids in first through fourth grades used Q-tips to blend the colors made by their Craypas, exploring the properties of their materials as they worked. They drew on paper conveniently bordered by a piece of tape that was later removed to give the look of a clean white frame around the students' creations.

Ethan Pratts, a third grader who had come to see his work displayed, said when he was given his one word he changed it so that he could draw two rabbits jumping across green grass with the background of a purple sky.

On Saturday, third-grader Lily Velazquez's painting was one of the few that had sold for \$20. She and Paisley Shultz, also in third grade, planned to return on Sunday wearing wigs and touting lemonade to add to the coffers. Last year the pair raised more than \$100.

But PS 95 is going through its own construction and has had part of its yard usurped by construction. It is marked as on hold. MS 244 was labeled as undergoing construction, as was PS 7. A playground is currently being built on PS 7's yard.

### Savvy teachers

The Fair Media Council is taking entries for its Media Savvy Teacher Award to recognize fourth- through sixth-grade teachers using news and promoting media literacy.

Teachers can download entry forms at [www.fairmediacouncil.org](http://www.fairmediacouncil.org). They are due Tuesday, August 31.

### Merit scholar

Robert A. Esnard, a local resident who attends Bronx Science, has won the National Merit Macy's Foundation Scholarship. The scholar hopes for a career in business management.

### Walk to school

Local families, including those with children attending PS 81 and PS 24, will celebrate Earth Day by walking to school.

PS 24 parents will also have an Earth Day Fair and will set up stations and activities — a compost station, a waste toss game and an opportunity to plant a seed in a recycled milk carton — for students to learn more about earth-friendly activities.

### Open playgrounds

The *New York Daily News* recently reported that of 113 school lots that should be unlocked as part of Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC, a quarter were not fully opened.

Riverdale/Kingsbridge schools on the list were also not open to the public, but only because they were being dug up or revamped.

PS 7, PS 95, The New School for Leadership and Journalism, MS 244, are all on the PlaNYC list.

## On the calendar

(Continued from page A7)

### Ongoing programs Toastmasters Club

The Bronx Toastmasters Club invites new members to its meeting at Riverdale Neighborhood House located at 5521 Mosholu Ave., at 7:30 p.m., every second and fourth Wednesday of the month.

The club aims to help participants communicate effectively and think on their feet.

For more information, go to [bronx.freetoasthost.com](http://bronx.freetoasthost.com) or call 718-796-6671.

### Art exhibit

The Bronx River Art Center, located at 1087 East Tremont Ave., will exhibit Dialect IV, featuring work by artist Bjargey Olafsdottir and Vidal Centeno, through Saturday,

May 29.

Gallery hours are weekdays, from 3 to 6 p.m., and Saturdays, from noon to 5 p.m.

Admission is free and open to the public.

For more information, call 718-589-5819 or go to [www.bronxrivertart.org](http://www.bronxrivertart.org).

### Dementia support

The Schervier Center for Alzheimer's & Dementia Care, located at 2975 Independence Ave., is offering a Caregiver's Support Group for families and friends of people with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, at 11 a.m.

The group is geared toward spouses and adult children caring for those with memory impairment, and aims to provide a safe forum to express feelings, share experiences and learn coping strategies in a confidential atmosphere.

The group meets in the fifth-floor conference room and is free and open to the public.

Prospective members should register by calling Landy Hartman at 718-548-1700 ext. 299 or Gabrielle Strauchler at 718-548-1700 ext. 234.

### RNH pool

Riverdale Neighborhood House, located at 5521 Mosholu Ave., is holding early registration for its swimming pool until Friday, April 30.

Local residents who want to ensure they get a spot are urged to sign up before the deadline. RNH offers many different pricing options for families, individuals, couples and seniors, all with a discount for early registration.

For more information, visit their website at [www.rivertdale-online.org](http://www.rivertdale-online.org) or call the main office at 718-549-8100.

# Cuomo sues Espada

(Continued from page A1)

vides Mr. Espada, "who resides in Mamaroneck, with a housing allowance of approximately \$2,500 per month to pay for a Bronx co-op which Espada claimed as his legal residence for purposes of his 2008 senatorial campaign."

Soundview's board is stocked with close friends and family members, all or most of whom allegedly approved of the egregious spending detailed by Mr. Cuomo's investigators. Many of those individuals are also named in the suit.

"Siphoning money from a charity would be egregious under any circumstances, but the fact that this was orchestrated by the state Senate majority leader makes it especially reprehensible. In New York, no one is above the law, and this suit should finally make that clear to Senator Espada," Mr. Cuomo said in the statement.

But Mr. Espada, who said he would "respond" to the charges at greater length another time, added that it would be a mistake to take the charges at face value.

"There should be no rush to judgment until the facts emerge," Mr. Espada said in the statement.

CONSTITUENTS with questions about Social Security can call Lidia Rodriguez-Rubenstein at Congressman Eliot Engel's office, 3655 Johnson Ave., 718-796-9700, to make appointments.

## Yearling Nursery School

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