Celebrating World Children’s Day, November 20, 2022

Garyfalia Terizaki

I am an early childhood educator and member of the Reggio Inspired Network of Greece. I had the pleasure of working with the Artivism team last fall 2021 and spring 2022. When we heard about Artivism’s open call for the spring 2022 poster design, I incorporated the poster as a project into my teaching plan. Kindergarten students were taught through art for about 2 months in the fall of 2021 the power art has to make a statement. They learned about art as a human right, freedom of expression, and the Knotted Gun at the United Nations in New York.

Later in the spring of 2022, these students learned about peace and how they can make their voices heard through their art. When war broke out in Ukraine, these children heard the word “refugees” repeatedly. We read the book Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring, by Argyro Pipini, illustrated by Iris Samartzis. It tells the story of an empty house “they left behind,” and their new home, a house “they built” in a march for peace in Ukraine. Students worked together, and teamwork was nurtured. They were free to express themselves and learned the value of creativity. This upcoming year I intend to work with immigrant and refugee children, among others, at the Trifylia Public Library in Kalamata, Greece. There are children from ten countries, including Poland, Brazil, Bulgaria, Nigeria, Albania, and Romania.

Art will be used as a means of expression and communication. In contrast, the other art forms communicate their messages in non-verbal ways. Literacy needs words that have their own rhythm. Since we cannot buy books in the children’s language from our homeland, we propose to create a project where the children write and illustrate a book or covers. They will collaborate, writing in their own words and language. These books will allow the children to work as a team, share their ideas, and encourage discussion. I plan to create a festival on International Children’s Book Day, April 2, 2023, where the children will share their stories in their own languages.

Educators are the key with the power to transform society. We educate not only children but also their caretakers. When I came to this realization, I loved my profession even more, and I want to work with children and adults in my new position at the library of Kalamata.

Artivism 2022 Spring Poster

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by Argyro Pipini, illustrated by Iris Samartzis.

A monthly newsletter highlighting and connecting initiatives/projects that transform society through the power of art

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