

A CREATOR, AN ARTIST, A MENTOR, AN INSPIRATION.

Art in the CLASSROOM

FRANK JUAREZ, A WEAC MEMBER AND PRESIDENT OF THE WISCONSIN ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, HAS DEVOTED HIS CAREER TO OPENING THE WORLD OF ART UP TO HIS STUDENTS. HE IS MOVING EDUCATION FORWARD.

Frank Juarez of Sheboygan is about doing. He's about showing. He's about appreciating a teen's individuality and celebrating creativity. And every day, he's a teacher.

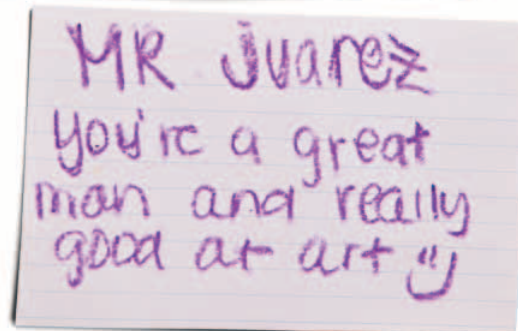
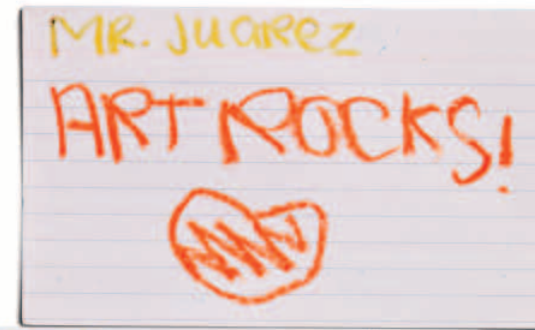
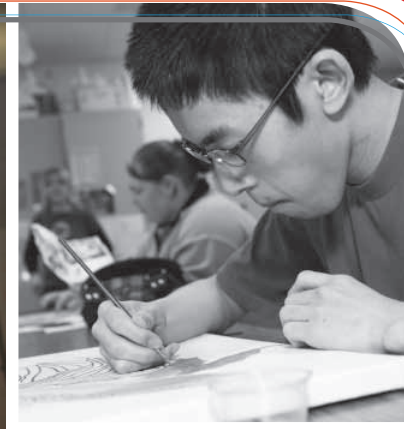
Mr. Juarez has devoted his life to art – he operates an art gallery – while at the same time sharing his world as an art teacher at Sheboygan North High School. Whether students have aspirations for careers in the visual arts or simply enjoy exploring their inner creativity, Mr. Juarez is there to inspire. That's because he knows art is essential to helping his students become well-rounded adults.

On school days, Mr. Juarez can be found in his basement-level classroom amid ceiling-high shelves of drying pottery and piles of paper projects, with drying paintings hanging from wire lines strung the length of the room. Students enter with smiles and find their places on those tall metal stools with wooden seats that seem to come standard in any pre-1970 Wisconsin school. "Mr. Juarez tells you that you should think for yourself, that it's OK to go your own way and not follow in the footsteps of everyone else," said student Annie Van Zeeland. "He's the best art teacher I've ever had."

Annie and the other students know that in addition to their teacher's dedication in their classroom, he served as a mentor to teens at risk of not graduating. Mr. Juarez truly believes that all students can learn – provided they get the opportunities and individual attention they need.



<< FRANK JUAREZ
ART TEACHER
WEAC MEMBER
SHEBOYGAN NORTH HIGH SCHOOL
SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN



Outside of his local community, Mr. Juarez is also active in a long list of state- and national-level art and education groups – including the Wisconsin Education Association Council and the Wisconsin Art Education Association (where he's serving as president). He is also responsible for a successful artist lecturer program that brings in local and regional artists to discuss career opportunities in art, like architecture and design.

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To his students, their unassuming art teacher – the oldest child in a large extended family and the first one of his family to attend college – is the real deal. He started as a commercial artist, but felt in his heart he could help others through teaching. "It changed my life when I found a way to combine art and teaching," he said. "Now, I teach my students to trust themselves and to be problem solvers. I help them know there isn't one way to do things. Self-exploration is important to teenagers. They are looking for ways to discover themselves."



JEN SWEENEY
ART TEACHER
WEAC MEMBER
FORREST STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BLACK RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

MS. SWEENEY'S TOP FIVE WAYS PARENTS CAN USE ART AT HOME

Jen Sweeney, WEAC member and art teacher at Forrest Street Elementary School, incorporates art into other classroom work. She shares the following:

Have children draw characters from their favorite book.

Ask kids to draw stories about math problems.

Recycle and create toys from household materials, such as toilet paper tubes and plastic bottle caps.

Explore color by asking children to invent new names for the colors they see.

Think about space by asking children how they would rearrange a room.

HEAR MORE 

To hear Mr. Juarez talk about the importance of art in the classroom, visit weac.org/parents.