



For immediate release

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**Sheridan Elementary School
Presents Restaurant Row: An Artistic, Culinary, Multicultural Experience
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Back in December, fifth grade students of the Sheridan Elementary School in Allentown started on a long journey. As the students came into the classroom they saw an empty desk in the middle of the art room and Mr. Ricketts dressed up as a head waiter. The empty desk was for a patron- their teacher to be seated for a meal. The classroom teachers went along with this as the students helped the “absent-minded waiter” figure out what was missing from the table. Plates, cups, glasses, silverware, even flowers! But usually the final thing that the students finally figured out was the menu. So it began.

This was no ordinary journey. This unit although based in the arts it was integrated with technology and computer application skills, using the internet, health and the five food groups, mathematics, vocabulary, design and layout skills, and sculpture as well as art history.

Chuck Ricketts, the art teacher, began with a menu unit that incorporated Microsoft Word. Using various applications- word art, creating tables, changing fonts, choosing borders, scanning images and drawings, along with inserting images into a document, the students worked as “restaurants”.

Each team of students developed their restaurant names using corporate techniques like multi-voting. After agreeing on a name, the “owners” thought of what items would be on a menu and drew those items into their individual journals. Students worked on the computers on a rotational basis. When two students were at the computer, they were responsible for remaining on task and completing the project assigned.

The students had to make decisions as to what they wanted as the appetizers, drinks, salads and soups, entrees and, of course desserts according to the type of restaurant they were. Some of the restaurants went on the Internet to other countries like France to see what a restaurant would have as far as food and table settings.

After the students created their menus, the goal of the following weeks was to educate the students about the life and works of Claes Oldenburg. Specifically targeting Oldenburg's pop culture works that created monuments out of ordinary food products. The students were challenged to think about the subject of Oldenburg's sculptures. The students created smaller sculptural pieces in the style of Oldenburg's works that corresponded to their drawings. This increased the students' knowledge of sculpture as an art form and the ceramic making process. The unit finally ended last week as the restaurants developed their own business cards using Microsoft Publisher.

This standards-based exercise was conducted with close to 125 students having produced "a collection of inventive art works based on their experiences and critical and creative processes. The students have presented works that display a variety of both teacher assigned and individual ideas; and they communicate their own ideas and feelings through a variety of subject matter, art forms symbols, media, design and composition and expressive qualities."

With the help of an exceptional student teacher, Tom Parke from Kutztown University, this unit has finally come to its culminating activity. The now thirty restaurants will be represented in one place- the school's cafeteria for judging. Many students will dress up for the occasion as waiters, owners, security people, and chefs just to enhance their possibilities of the grand prize.

The judges were gathered by the Public Relations Chairperson of the Kutztown University Chapter of the National Art Education Association. A group of Art Education students that are members of the association are giving up their free time during their semester break to judge the student work on March 9th.

The "Four-Star" restaurants from each of the five classes will be awarded Student Achievement Awards from the Old Country Buffet that entitles each person to one complimentary meal at the Old Country Buffet family restaurant. Many thanks go to Carey Andrews, Community Representative for the Old Country Buffet, for the awards.

The journey was a long one but in the process, the fifth grade students have gained a broad base of interrelated skills and knowledge they'll never forget.