

The East Cobb County Council of PTAs Celebrates the Arts!

As parents and teachers, we cherish our students' creative endeavors -- from the homemade gifts and cards they make, to the countless dance, band, orchestra and choral performances we attend. We turn the images into coffee mugs, frame the brightly colored pictures and share the photos and videos we take with friends and relatives. Their art, in whatever medium they choose, is a reflection of who they are. We celebrate that every year!

Each fall, PTAs serving our schools across the country participate in the National PTA Reflections Program, and our East Cobb County Council of PTAs (ECCC PTA) and East Cobb schools also embark on this journey together to celebrate our children's artistic ability. For over 45 years, the National PTA has promoted arts appreciation as part of its endeavor to ensure that all children receive a quality education, including in the arts.

Students from kindergarten through 12th grade are invited to enter their original works of art in six categories: dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts. During the fall, students work tirelessly on their entries, which are judged at the local school level on how well they represent the year's theme, which currently is "Let Your Imagination Fly." Winning entries from each of our 35 local East Cobb schools advance to represent their school at an additional level of judging, coordinated by the ECCC PTA. For the ECCC PTA Reflections Art contest, judges select two winners per grade and category, and those entries advance to the Georgia PTA competition. Subsequent winning entries move on to the National PTA Reflections contest.

Last year, 6 students from East Cobb public schools (East Side Elementary School, Murdock Elementary School, Rocky Mount Elementary School, Sope Creek Elementary School, Tritt Elementary School, and Hightower Trail Middle School) advanced to the National PTA competition. In that round of judging, 3 East Cobb students won awards from the National PTA Reflections contest (from East Side Elementary, Rocky Mount Elementary and Hightower Trail Middle School). This year, over 1,000 East Cobb area students participated in the Reflections program at their schools, and more than 500 winners advanced to the ECCC PTA level of the competition. After conducting its own contest, the ECCC PTA submitted over 128 winning entries to the Georgia PTA Reflections contest. We are hopeful again that East Cobb students will win at the GA PTA competition level and move on to compete in the National PTA Reflections contest.

The ECCC PTA will hold a Reflections Award Ceremony for the students who won at the ECCC PTA competition level in early February.

Taking part in the Reflections program is a powerful way for students to engage in and explore the arts. Every child created his or her masterpiece with great care and attention, and we celebrate their participation in this important program. As a community, let us continue supporting our students as they express themselves creatively by showcasing their art in our workplaces, by volunteering as judges and as Reflections committee chairs, and by supporting the Reflections program. As Maya Angelou once said, "You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."

For more information on the Reflections Program, please visit:
<http://ecccpta.org/reflections>.

Elli Heaton and Cindy Goolsby, ECCC PTA Reflections Co-Chairs.

Bios:

Elli Heaton is a Vice President for the East Cobb County Council of PTAs and Co-Chair for Reflections. She is the former President of the Murdock Elementary School PTA and resides in Marietta with her husband, David, and children, Andrew and Jackson, who are students at Murdock Elementary School.

Cindy Goolsby is the Co-President and Reflections Co-Chair for the East Cobb County Council of PTAs. She lives in Lakewood Colony Subdivision with her husband, Ira, and two daughters, Danielle and Sara, who are students at Keheley Elementary School.