

Venice Arts gets Weingart two-year \$100,000 grant

Venice Arts has received a two-year grant of \$100,000 from the Weingart Foundation to expand and enhance its award-winning arts education program.

The grant will specifically support Venice Arts' new advanced Art Mentoring program components, including advanced studies, art internships and internships through the newly formed Venice Media District.

The Weingart Foundation grant assures multi-year support so the program can develop, refine and grow, officials said.

"We are so thrilled to have received this support from the Weingart Foundation," says Joanne Kim, lead photographer at Venice Arts. "As an artist-mentor, I've seen youths grow and have a greater ability to tell their stories and express their feelings, thoughts, and ideas creatively and to learn to value themselves and their own lives through working with our mentors.

"Also, we've been extending our programs throughout Los Angeles, working with youth in low-income, immigrant, and gang-violence-ridden areas, where many of them have had minimal access to the arts."

Francesca Thomas, 16, became Venice Arts' first paid art intern, in one of the programs that will be supported through the Weingart Foundation's grant. As an art intern, Francesca mentors other youths in photography.

She is currently working with Venice Arts' Culver Slauson Park program, processing film and making prints in the darkroom. She also helps to maintain a digital archive.

About mentoring, Thomas says, "It's cool working with Joanne, teaching other kids what I know."

The Weingart Foundation grant will help to fund the Art

Mentoring Programs' Advanced Studies component, developed so that highly talented teens can develop their ability to work independently as artists, build their portfolios and prepare them to go to college, or find employment.

Also supported is a new Art Intern Program — two nine-month paid after-school positions developing the Interns as artists, while providing meaningful, on-the-job training.

Finally, the Weingart funding supports Venice Arts as the Venice Media District Internship Program is launched, currently being designed with members of the newly formed Venice Media District to provide summer internships in local production and postproduction studios.

The pilot program this summer will place interns at Ravenswork, an audio post-production studio; Mission Editorial, a creative editorial boutique; and in a paid summer position in the Creative Department of Neutrogena, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson.

Art Mentoring, one of Venice Arts' core programs, enrolls a minimum of 100 low-income youths ages ten to 18 after school, weekends and during the summer months.

It offers multiple opportunities for in-depth art learning while building consistent, meaningful mentoring relationships with adults at ratios as low as 1:1 and rarely higher more than 1:4, according to Venice Arts.

Venice Arts has been running innovative programs in photography, filmmaking and digital arts, primarily for low-income children and teens, for 13 years. It has implemented national and international photo documentary projects since 1998.

Information, www.venice-arts.org/.