

## A Brief on ICAF

While many problems beset our nation and the world, the underlying root cause in most cases is a sheer lack of creativity or empathy. Creativity sparks ideation, discovery and invention, whereas empathy develops mutuality, compromise and collaborative innovation.

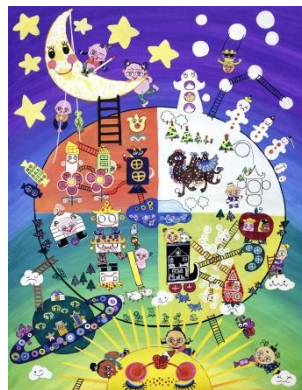
America faces a creativity crisis and an empathy drought. College of William and Mary professor KH Kim says, "In *The Creativity Crisis (2011)*, I reported that American creativity declined from the 1990s to 2008. My new research reveals that the Creativity Crisis has grown worse since 2008." While creativity is declining, violence is rising. More than 215,000 American students have experienced gun violence at school since the Columbine High massacre in 1999, as reported by the Washington Post.

Though urgent for prosperity and peace, creative and empathetic development must start early—before the well-documented “4<sup>th</sup>-grade slump” in creativity blocks children’s potential or the ingrained prejudices discolor the “mirror neurons” responsible for empathy.

Since creativity and empathy are both rooted in the arts, arts education becomes essential as do national or global programs for students to develop empathy and find commonality in others unlike them, thus uniting to improve life on this pale blue dot in the multiverse.



Ella Gordon-Latty (age 12, New Zealand)



Bolor-Erdene (age 10, Mongolia)



Anna Carolina Dos Santos Israel (age 12, Brazil)

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit registered in the District of Columbia in April 1997, the International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) serves American children as their national arts organization and their peers worldwide as the global arts organization.

We tell adults that children are creators, not merely pupils or just consumers, that their imagination is the most precious resource in the universe, and that their art is the most honest and purest form of human creative expression. We tell children that creativity and empathy are the most salient attributes of successful learners and leaders.

We democratize creativity and develop empathy universally through the *Arts Olympiad*, the world’s largest creative development program for schoolchildren, and the *World Children’s Festival*, the “Olympics” of children’s imagination. Our *Healing Arts Programs* revive natural disaster victims’ faith in nature and our *Peace through Art Programs* restore trust in humanity of children in conflict zones. Our *ChildArt* magazine, published ad-free since 1998, deepens young readers’ global competencies.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Arts Olympiad

Schoolchildren today face the risk of declining creativity and childhood obesity. E. Paul Torrance (“father” of creativity) discovered that around the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade, evident displays of creativity often diminish as children become more conforming, less likely to take risks, and less playful and spontaneous than in earlier years. Once this “4<sup>th</sup>-grade slump” in creativity gains a foothold, it can consolidate and affect adulthood. Fostering creativity is urgent now because unlike the twentieth century when progress was chiefly intelligence-based, prosperity in this century is primarily creativity-driven. The World Health Organization calls childhood obesity a global epidemic. In the U.S. alone, more than 12 million children, one in every six, are obese. Digital preoccupation can make things worse.

The Arts Olympiad, our free program, introduces students to the “Artist-Athlete Ideal” of the creative mind and healthy body (*mens sana in corpore sano*). This paradigm liberates the natural tendency toward creativity and good health by linking imagination with embodiment by awakening the student’s “inner artist” or “inner athlete.” By bringing children to new domains through the arts, the traps of creativity slumps and obesity risks can be avoided.

Reduced creativity and increased obesity are easy to recognize but difficult to treat through conventional means that do not directly engage and empower students. Since mental health and physical health are connected, obese children may find it difficult to gain the perspective necessary for breaking the cycle of obesity. Obesity leads to a higher propensity for other diseases and to emotional difficulties which arise from the inability to think creatively.

The current 6<sup>th</sup> Arts Olympiad is taking place in schools worldwide until the end of 2018. While ICAF promotes the U.S. Arts Olympiad, our international partners organize the Arts Olympiad in their respective countries. The program targets students aged 8 to 12—the age group most vulnerable to the “4<sup>th</sup>-grade slump” in creativity and to obesity.

Inclusive classrooms, students’ identity development, and removal of implicit bias are among the benefits to schools that implement the Arts Olympiad.

We expect that one million students in the U.S. and one hundred other countries will participate in the 2018 Arts Olympiad and produce original works under the program.





## 6<sup>th</sup> World Children's Festival

Creativity enriches life but it can just as easily be channeled for destruction. Negative creators can be motivated by revenge, to advance a tribe at the expense of others or to humiliate a rival. On its own, creativity is “morally neutral”—it is dangerous to think otherwise. Pablo Picasso stated that “the genius of Einstein leads to Hiroshima.” However, once imbued with empathy, creativity becomes a positive force for a peaceful civilization.

Through school art contests, our *6<sup>th</sup> Arts Olympiad* will identify the most artistically creative and imaginative students. These Arts Olympiad winners, representing their U.S. school districts and nearly one hundred countries, will convene on the National Mall in Washington for three days in July 2019 at their *6<sup>th</sup> World Children's Festival (WCF)*. The U.S. National Park service will finalize the WCF schedule in late 2018. Free and open to the public, previous WCFs have attracted over 50,000 attendees and visitors. The WCF workshops and activities are based on STEAMS education, which ICAF has pioneered to integrate STEM disciplines with Art for ideation and imagination and Sport for teamwork and perseverance.

The WCF develops mutual empathy by providing new learning through a synesthetic experience. Learning is a biological activity that arises when neurons create new connections in the brain and strengthen these interconnections. But the brain does not automatically code new information because it sieves and filters it and may decide to discard it altogether. To make new information noteworthy, the WCF is designed to engage multiple STEAMS modalities that form a pattern of neural activation which is encoded deeply enough to be treasured.

The WCF opens with the “Health & Environment Day” to emphasize commonalities, followed by the “Creativity & Imagination Day” to enhance talent and potential, and culminates with the “Peace & Leadership Day” to inspire positive social change. Our plans for the WCF include children collaboratively designing and producing the “*World Children's Earth Flag*” for the first human mission to Mars. Children will realize what they can produce together—as creative and empathetic global citizens—they can never produce the same alone.

Children will go back into the world, inspired and ready to spearhead positive social change in their communities.



## ICAF Impact

Since ICAF was founded in 1997, approximately 5 million children have participated in and benefited from the Arts Olympiad and ICAF's other programs. An estimated 2,500,000 children and adults have attended our festivals and exhibitions held in major cities worldwide. Nearly one million children, parents, teachers and librarians comprise the total readership since 1998 of our *ChildArt* quarterly.

On a daily basis, a thousand or more children across the globe learn about ICAF from their peers or online, gaining confidence in themselves as creators because their imagination is the seedbed for discovery and innovation.

By fostering children's creativity and developing their empathy, ICAF fulfills six of the 27 Social Development Goals (SDGs) of 2030 UN. Our work reduces poverty, promotes good health, brings quality education, ensures gender equality, reduces inequities, and build peace in communities and the world at large.

The Arts Olympiad and the WCF are exemplary cases of U.S. cultural diplomacy because we engage the world's children and win them over. U.S. military families in the Greater Washington Area serve as host families for our international delegates to the WCF. The U.S. Olympic Committee has granted us an exclusive license to use the 'Arts Olympiad' mark. ICAF is independently ranked among the 25 Top Children's Charities in the U.S.

- To learn from the children about our impact, please peruse this [magazine](#).
- For the previous WCF, watch this [music clip](#), peruse this [magazine](#) or visit this [website](#).

## Research and Thought Leadership

Not only is ICAF a world leader in children's art, we also spearhead educational reforms. Here is a sample of our published research:

- On repairing our world: [SchoolArts](#)
- On building peace: [The Lancet](#)
- On developing creative communities: [The Creativity Revolution](#)
- On global cultural change: [Journal of Urban Culture Research](#)
- On global competencies: [Journal of the Association of State Boards of Education](#)
- On global digital divide: [International Monetary Fund](#)

## Funding

Businesses that have supported the ICAF or sponsored the WCF include Adidas, Chevron U.S.A., Inc., CVS Health, Galeria Kaufhof, Faber-Castell, Hilton Hotels, LEGO, Safilo USA, S.C. Johnson & Co., Target Corporation, Wacom, and the Walt Disney Company.

Private foundations that have most recently provided grants to ICAF include Claire and Theodore Morse Foundation (Los Angeles) and the Singing Field Foundation (New Hampshire). Most of ICAF funding comes from creative and empathetic professionals.

## Sample of Achievements

- 1997 – ICAF incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the District of Columbia
- 1998 – Produced the first-ever national children's art festival in U.S. history
- 1999 – First ladies of Costa Rica, Liberia, and Ecuador open the first World Children Festival on The National Mall
  - *Visions of the New Millennium* exhibition at the UN Headquarters in New York City
  - The White House New Millennium Celebration art exhibition and activities
- 2000 – Hosted "The First Ladies Forum" at the UN Millennium Development Summit in New York City
- 2001 – The Drucker Foundation and Frances Hesselbein honor the ICAF for its innovative leadership
- 2002 – *Peace through Art Program* organized with support of the Cyprus Fulbright Commission
- 2003 – Mayor of Washington, DC proclaims 9/11/2003 as "Children's Peace Day" at the 2nd World Children's Festival
  - First-ever children's art exhibition at the World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings in Dubai
  - Co-organized with Qatar Foundation its first-ever educational symposium in Doha
- 2004 – The Arts Olympiad included in New York City's Candidature File for The Games of the XXX Olympiad
  - *Exemplary Humanitarian Service Award* at the World Culture Open in Seoul
- 2005 – *Destruction, Reconstruction and Prevention* program at the World Bank
- 2006 – *Arts Olympiad Exhibition* at Palace of Stupinigi at the Turin 2006 Winter Olympics
  - *Children of Katrina* exhibition at Museu da Cidade in Lisbon
  - *European Children's Festival* at the Olympia Park in Munich
- 2007 – "World Children's Award" instituted at the 3rd World Children's Festival, which children confer on LEGO as the very first recipient
- 2008 – Aspen Institute's *Cultural Diplomacy Forum* in Paris
- 2009 – *Children of Katrina* exhibition at the *Education Without Borders* in Dubai
- 2010 – International children's panel at Global Competitiveness Forum in Riyadh
  - Healing Arts Program in Haiti and Chile for child victims to cope with traumas
- 2011 – W.K. Kellogg Foundation receives the "World Children's Award" at the 4th World Children's Festival
- 2012 – *Arts Olympiad* exhibition at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa
- 2013 – *Children's Tribute to Nelson Mandela* exhibition at THEARC in Washington, D.C.
- 2014 – Cannes Lions Competition for designing the World Children's Festival logo
- 2015 – 5<sup>th</sup> World Children Festival at The Ellipse next to The White House
- 2016 – Research project on ICAF's history and experiences launched
- 2017 – *ChildArt* magazine issue on brain and art with Johns Hopkins' Brain Science Institute. Reviewed in Leonardo
- 2018 – *ChildArt* magazine issue on architecture with the American Institute for Architects

Having worked directly with children around the world since 1997, we have come to believe:

- that schools should grow imagination, foster creativity, and develop empathy.
- that contemporary art museums should devote a room for children's art.
- that works by children should adorn offices and workplaces everywhere.
- that exposure to children's art can awaken the creative "inner child" in professionals.

## Professional Testimonials



*"The Arts Olympiad, produced every four years by the International Child Art Foundation, presents each of us a unique opportunity to involve young artists from our Congressional Districts in an event with important national and international implications."*

- Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Congressional Arts Caucus

*"What you are doing reflects such a refreshingly integrated view of children's development—a much needed perspective in a time when children's growth and learning often seem to be approached in a very reductionistic, fragmented way."*

- Dr. Martha Farrell Erickson, University of Minnesota



*"We can all learn from the children of the world and realize that our next generation has the passion, creativity and empathy to shape the future and build a better world."*

- Vice Admiral John P. Currier, United States Coast Guard

*"For all of us, the beauty and thoughtfulness of these works offer powerful evidence of the breadth and depth of the global conversation that is cultivated and perpetuated through children's art. Thanks so much for sharing these images with us and for the important work you do."*

- Dr. Jessica Hoffmann Davis, Harvard Graduate School of Education



*"We are thrilled to bring a LEGO building experience to the world's largest celebration of creativity and imagination on the National Mall. What ICAF does to encourage a child's inner creativity is something we passionately admire and are proud to support, because we believe children who are exposed to creative activities from a very young age go on to become the world's most meaningful contributors."*

- Michael McNally, LEGO Brand Director



I am grateful to organizations like the International Child Art Foundation that gives us the opportunity to see the world through the eyes of our nation's young people. I encourage you to continue to support programs that help children to discover their talents and believe in themselves.

— Hillary Clinton —



## Alumni Testimonials

*"I had never had anything happen to me like my experience with the ICAF (and haven't since). That may have also been what planted the seed in my parents' and my head that art was a thing that I could one day do for my livelihood."*

- Eric Huber, filmmaker in Bluff City, TN



*"The ICAF has had a significant effect in making me more confident, more creative. I cannot thank ICAF enough."*

- Dr. Hina Inam, Cardiothoracic Surgeon in Karachi, Pakistan

*"The fact that children from all the world are expressly invited to contemplate these horizons, to channel their creative energy and their most personal interests within a frame of international collaborative work, is, I believe, one of ICAF's key contributions, for which we should be immensely grateful."*

- Dr. Alejandro Goldzycher (Ph.D. English Literature) in Buenos Aires, Argentina



*"The ICAF gave me my first introduction to being a member of the international community. It gave me the opportunity to meet people from all over the world that shared my love of art, and in doing so, taught me at a very young age that creativity has no bounds and that ideas only get better when we share them with people with different world experiences."*

- Dr. Viviana Astudillo, evolutionary biologist in Toronto, Canada.

*"When I was chosen to be on the ICAF Youth Board, it bolstered my ability to find common good amongst people around the world"*

- Parth Koushik, high school senior in Texas, USA



*"The moment I stepped onto the National Mall and saw the World Children's Festival happen right in front of me, all of my insecurities and fears of being in that new place faded away. I realized that it wasn't a competition of talents anymore, it was a world of children, a place of knowledge and most of all, a nation of friendship. That festival helped me evolve as a young artist."*

- Teodora Lazar, National Citizenship Service, London, UK

*"The ICAF has tripled my esteem as an optimistic African artist and also it has tripled my hope as an artist."*

- Matovu Musana, high school student in Kampala, Uganda



*"Talking to all the kids and looking at their paintings inspired me a lot. I learnt to never stop doing what I like. Art is not just art, it is communication, inspiration, point of view, and a bridge that links us all up."*

- Chung Kei Ting, middle school student in Hong Kong

## ICAF Leadership

Ashfaq Ishaq, Ph.D.	Founder and Chairman
Katty Guerami	Treasurer & Secretary
Harriet Mayor Fulbright	Chairman Emeritus

## Corporate Advisory Board

Sandy Carter, Vice President, Amazon Web Services, Cupertino, CA  
 David Croslin, former Chief Technologist, Hewlett-Packard  
 Marcia Minter, VP Creative Director, L. L. Bean, Inc., Freeport, Maine  
 Mauro Porcini, Chief Design Officer, PepsiCo, Purchase, NY  
 Lisa Russell, Chief Investment Officer, Peak Trust Company, Phoenix, AZ  
 Susan Sheffield, Design Director, Target Corporation, Minneapolis, MN  
 Peter Tichansky, President/CEO, Business Council for International Understanding, NY, NY

## Academic Advisory Board

Gültekin Bilge, Artist/Painter, Scotland  
 Dr. B. Stephen Carpenter II, Professor of Art Education, The Pennsylvania State University  
 Linda Cato, Artist and Arts Curriculum Designer, Tucson, AZ  
 Wook Choi, Founder, Oogie Art, Wook & Lattuada Gallery, New York, NY  
 Richard Clar, Interdisciplinary Artist & Director of Art Technologies, Paris, France & Healdsburg, CA  
 Sergey Eylanbekov, Sculptor, New York  
 Dr. Sara Kapadia, Claremont Graduate University, Los Angeles  
 Aldona Kaczmarczyk-Kotucka, Artist and Art Educator in Rybnik, Poland  
 Dr. Cathy Malchiodi, Founder, International Art Therapy Organization  
 Dr. Bakhtiar Mikhak, MIT Media Laboratory, Cambridge, MA  
 Kathleen McHugh, founder of Community Arts Programs, Seattle, WA.  
 Dr. Mihai Nadin, Ashbel Smith University Professor, University of Texas at Dallas  
 Daniel H. Pink, Speaker and Author, Washington, DC  
 Rory Pullens, Executive Director of Arts Education, Los Angeles Unified School District  
 Dr. Danica Radovanović, web scientist and digital media specialist, Belgrade, Serbia  
 Donald M. Rattner, AIA, Creativity Architect, New York, NY  
 D. Paul Schafer, Founder and Director, World Culture Project, Markham, Canada  
 Dr. Candace Jesse Stout, Professor, Department of Art Education, The Ohio State University  
 Dr. Brenda K. Wiederhold, The Virtual Reality Medical Institute, Brussels, Belgium  
 Liu Yang, member of China Artist Association, senior craft artist and editor

In Memoriam George Rodrigue (1944–2013) artist, author, and children's dream-maker.

## Youth Advisory Board

Maria-Fernanda Aguirre-Broca – Aruba  
 Anguel Alexiev – California, USA  
 Chathura Sooriya Arachchi – Sri Lanka  
 Viviana Astudillo – Canada  
 Margaret Eloisa Ticlla Ccenhua – Peru  
 Kei Ting (Fiona) Chung – Hong Kong  
 Elliott Frank – Colorado, USA  
 Alejandro Goldzycher – Argentina  
 Anna Carolina Israel – Brazil  
 Natasha Janner – Oregon, USA  
 Natalia Hoosova – Slovak Republic  
 Rune Kondo – Japan  
 Paarth Koushik – Texas, USA  
 Attila Kovas – Hungary  
 Ella Gordon-Latty – New Zealand  
 Katia Lazar – Belarus  
 Tamara Mamedova – Azerbaijan  
 Dianna Mazzone – New York, USA

Ana-Maria Mitrea – Romania  
 Matovu Martin Musana – Uganda  
 Stanislav Nedzelskyi – Texas, USA  
 Sora Nithikasem – New Jersey, USA  
 Carmen Ortiz – Louisiana, USA  
 Fadhil Ahmad Qamar – Indonesia  
 Rebecca Rumfelt – Missouri, USA  
 Adelina Rupolo – Australia  
 Claudia Suteu – Romania  
 Michael Wong – New York, USA  
 Victoria Yin – Massachusetts, USA  
 Philbert Tiki Yong – Malaysia  
 Kaung Myat Zaw, Myanmar

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