



BACKGROUND.

“Literatura de cordel” (string literature) has been a part of Brazilian culture for over a hundred years, descended from a Portuguese practice that began in the 17th century. Cordel literature are pamphlets that hang from a piece of string (cordel) in the public places where they are sold. Typically, they are narrative poems with woodcut illustrations on the cover, often done by the poet himself. The work frequently expresses a powerful personal or political message.

Acquired through SmART Schools professional development and inspired by its history and potential, Santa Monica teachers are using the cordel in their classrooms to create and showcase meaningful student work. It is a powerful tool that employs easy, inexpensive materials (paper, pencils, string and clips). Students can make their work public at their own pace – the process is open ended: work can be taken down, edited, and replaced. This democratic means of publication symbolizes how creative work can be a social, community process. It vividly embodies SmART Schools core principle of learning in and through the arts.

PROJECT.

SmART Schools West will share this experience at the Santa Monica Festival by staging a Green Cordel. The Green Cordel will celebrate and showcase environment themed work created by students from four SmART Schools sites in Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District: Edison Language Academy, John Muir Elementary, McKinley Elementary and Will Rogers Learning Community. In addition it will offer festival visitors their own opportunity to reflect upon and respond to a variety of thought provoking green themed images, literature and facts and place their creative work on display. The Green Cordel will allow the public to add comments to all of the displayed works, bringing one more level of interactivity to the project.

The Green Cordel will consist of four parts:

- 1. One cord, Student Cordel, will display a selection of finished student work created around green themes. Students, whose work is on display, will be available to answer questions, talk about their work and discuss the process. Works will be both literary and visual. Throughout the day the public will not only experience the creative work, but they are allowed and encouraged to interact with it by posting comments (reflections, compliments, questions) on the student work with post-it notes.**
- 2. Cordel work is often created as a response to specific images, literature or events. A second cord will contain a selection of green themed images, poetry, literature and facts - appropriate to multiple age levels - provided for inspiration. [This could be a portion of the Open Cordel]**
- 3. A set of work tables, manned by student docents, myself and adult volunteers, will make simple materials available for festival visitors to create their own written or visual works. Each ‘seating’ of festival attendees will have the purpose and methods of the “Green Cordel” explained. Students will guide visitors in the making and display of their work. Individuals will explore the cordel containing thought provoking items and create their pieces in response**
- 4. A third, Open Cordel, cord will be strung as a gallery for works created by visitors. Individuals will be welcome to post comments on these works as well. Student docents will manage dispensing of post-its for both cordels. Visitors who have created work are welcome to return any time and edit or revise their piece as inspired to do so or in response to remarks attached to their work.**

PERSONNEL.

I will be present all day. Two adults to help me set up and work with me the first half of the day. I will have a second pair of adults working with me the last half of the day and then help me break down. I plan to schedule teams of three student docents, changing out approximately every hour and a half.

CONTACT.

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