

2018 National Teacher of the Year Finalist



Jonathan Juravich

2018 Ohio Teacher of the Year

Liberty Tree Elementary
School
Olentangy Local Schools
Powell, Ohio

School Profile: Suburban,
Traditional Public
District Size: 20,530
School Size: 580

Subject: Elementary Art
Grade: K-5

Years in Teaching: 12
Years in Position: 12

Candidate's Resume Information

Education

School	Art Academy of Cincinnati
Degree	Master of Arts
Major	Art Education
Years Attended	2009-2011

School	Otterbein University
Degree	Art
Major	Art Education with certification PreK - 12
Years Attended	2001-2005

Certification

Certification	Professional License P-12 multi-age Visual Art # 21362063
Year Obtained	2005

Experience

Title	Art Educator
Organization	Liberty Tree Elementary School - Olentangy Local School District
Years in Position	2005-2017

Title	Head Coach
Organization	Hyatts Middle School - Olentangy Local School District
Years in Position	2007-2017

Title	Adjunct Instructor
Organization	Otterbein University
Years in Position	2013-2017

Title	Art Program Consultant
Organization	Columbus Zoo and Aquarium
Years in Position	2016-2017

Leadership

Position	K - 5 Visual Art Department Chair
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Organization	Olentangy Local School District
Years in Position	2012-2017

Position	Professional Development Committee
Organization	Olentangy Local School District
Years in Position	2011-2017

Position	District Representative for Central Ohio Performance-Based Compensation Design Team
Organization	Olentangy Local School District
Years in Position	2011-2014

Position	Regional Director, Professional Periodical Editor, Conference Presenter
Organization	Ohio Art Education Association
Years in Position	2011-2017

Position	Workshop / Class Instructor
Organization	Ohio Association for the Developmentally Disabled
Years in Position	2013-2015

Awards and Other Recognitions

Award/Recognition	Central Region Outstanding Art Teacher
Year Received	2014

Award/Recognition	Otterbein University Community Engagement Award
Year Received	2013

Award/Recognition	Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Central Ohio Man of the Year
Year Received	2012

Award/Recognition	Peace and Justice Award: Art Academy of Cincinnati
Year Received	2011

Award/Recognition	Delaware Arts Festival Grant Awardee
Year Received	2007, 2008, 2015



Candidate's Professional Biography

Taking advantage of seemingly small moments to make a big impact for others is the cornerstone of Jonathan Juravich's professional and personal conviction. Jonathan is an award winning artist and art educator at Liberty Tree Elementary in Powell, Ohio. In his 13th year in the classroom, Jonathan, known as Mr. J, challenges students to make the world a better place through art. In his work as an artist, coach, and educational leader, he hopes to do the same.

Jonathan is the Building Environment Team leader at Liberty Tree - overseeing school culture, partnerships, and service learning. As the district Elementary Visual Art Department Chair, he facilitates professional development, advances curriculum, and advocates for arts education best practices. Coaching middle school cross-country and track gives him opportunities to continue making connections with students and families well after they have left his classroom.

Jonathan reaches out to the community locally and statewide by developing art programs with the Columbus Zoo, the Columbus Arts Festival, the Ohio Association for the Developmentally Disabled and the Ohio Art Education Association. He mentors future art educators as an adjunct instructor at Otterbein University, his alma mater.

Candidate's Application Questions

Question	Answer
Describe a lesson that defines you as a teacher. How did you engage all students in the learning and how did that learning influence your students? How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in this lesson?	Two years ago, our elementary art department, was given the news that we would have the chance to see our first grade students twice a week, instead of the single weekly class scheduled for the rest of our students. My department was excited to create an even stronger base of knowledge and skill at this young level that would positively impact our students developmentally as they grow. As the visual arts department chair, I led my team to develop a whole new course and curriculum: Art Enrichment. Our first graders now attend traditional art class once a week and Art Enrichment class on a second day. When considering our students and their needs as individual learners, we collectively designed the course to introduce art materials in isolation (the pencil, the marker, scissors, etc.). By structuring the classes this way, students could have a firm grasp on what is possible with each material before applying their knowledge to mixed-media experiences. Each individual student has their own unique way of grasping content, so my team and I created and organized a diverse collection of resources for instruction. Books and movies as well as individual and collaborative experiences would provide an opportunity for material exploration. With the introduction of each new material, students created drawings of the same item from nature (a leaf, a flower, a shell, and so on) in a sketchbook. The collection of these drawings would



help students, and us as educators, see growth over the course of the year. With each drawing, students' abilities with each specific material was evident, and their growth as observant artists was there, recorded on the page. During one such exploration, students investigated tempera cakes. They watched a movie I produced that compared and contrasted the tempera cake to its cousins, tempera paint and watercolor. My video production used humor to invite students to consider the paints in reference to one another. We were able to compare and contrast how these materials were all meaningful yet uniquely different. After practice with tempera paint, I wanted a way to explore this material with purpose and with a connection to diversity. I introduced students to the mosaics found in Iran. Several students had heard the word "Iran" in the news but many didn't understand the words they were hearing, or that it was even a country. We discussed the beautiful tile covered architecture that is found there. A question arose about how something so beautiful can be found in a part of the world that is often associated with negative news. Which led to the question, "What could happen to the tile work due to negative human interaction or neglect?" And so we explored and investigated deeper. One student's family was originally from Iran and the week before had given a presentation to the other students in first grade about Iranian culture and traditions. She beamed from ear to ear as we talked about the beauty and richness of the ornate tile work. The other students felt a strong connection to the art work, because of their classmate's pride. We discussed how these beautiful mosaics cover large surfaces, and could not have been completed by one person alone. These works are a result of the efforts of many artisans. My students came to the realization that when we work together, we can accomplish so much more than we do on our own. Students identified cultural motifs and traditional Persian color choices and used these references to influence their own design of a paper tile. Each child approached their tile designs from their ability/interest level: abstract shapes, intricate patterns, comical peacocks, or ornate fish. Students come to art class with varying ability levels but the diverse subject matter found on these tiles opened the door for student choice in the direction of their piece. Students transferred their designs to rich blue construction paper, representative of a signature Persian color. They used their newfound knowledge of tempera cakes to bring colorful life to their individual work. The finished tiles were cut out and students worked to assemble them together to create pillars in the school hallway. These large-scale works, comprised of tiny paper tiles, became a striking reminder of what we are capable of achieving together- and how the study of the visual arts can unite us even as we celebrate our cultural differences. In the art room I have the opportunity to take small moments of artistic exploration and build a bridge of understanding and acceptance.



<p>Describe a project or initiative you have been involved in. What was your role, and how did this contribute to the overall school culture?</p>	<p>At Liberty Tree Elementary I have accepted the role of Building Environment Team Leader. In essence, I work to foster and support our school’s unique culture. I encourage other teachers to take on leadership tasks, establish a guide to our school’s culture, and organize school-wide events. Throughout the district, our commitment to value diversity led our team to discuss how to celebrate our differences while recognizing our strength as a community. Two years ago, I developed and organized an evening program called “The Battle of the Brush.” Families signed up to come to school and create art together. In an effort to engage everyone in the process, Liberty Tree teachers, PTO members, and pre-service art education students from Otterbein University volunteered to work the event. Over 90 families participated. Each family was given a stretched canvas, brushes, access to paint, and a secret envelope. The envelope contained one of three themes centered on diversity and community: roots, tradition, and togetherness. Families made their way to the Cafeteria/Gym which was set up with tables and chairs for the event. The group was given directions, the time limit, and told that all members of the family were to be actively engaged in the process. With a count-down to “Start”, families opened the envelopes and began brainstorming together- using the butcher-paper covered tables as their sketching surface before painting began on the canvases. Over the course of the evening, one could walk around and observe families working together and truly discussing the topic they had been randomly assigned. Parents who didn’t consider themselves “artistically inclined” were listening to their students and breaking down walls of insecurity to have fun and create with their children. When painting time was up, the works were organized by theme, numbered, and displayed. Families viewed the final creations together, noticing the concepts and the individuality that emerged during the battle. A People’s Choice award for each category was presented based on anonymous voting by the participating families. These winners received gift certificates to local community arts organizations. All participating families took their paintings home with them to commemorate their creative experience. The power of the visual arts to engage, communicate, and bring people together was truly exhibited that evening. For the families, this was an opportunity to view perspectives of others in their community. The enthusiasm for this event has continued to grow. We held a second event this past year with even more attendees and three new themes centered on diversity and community. Plans are already in the works for this upcoming winter. In classroom conversations, we have been able to refer to the event when discussing collaborative experiences, or how our differing views on a concept can be individually valued. The Battle of the Brush has become an opportunity for us to engage in conversations about respect, culture, and who we are as a school community.</p>
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<p>How do you ensure that your students are connected to the world around them? Describe the ways in which you do this.</p>	<p>It is important to me that my students know that visual art is not just something that they experience in a museum. There is a vast visual culture that they are naturally a part of, and I see it as my role to engage them in discussions, explorations, and creative experiences that get them to stop, think, and interact with the world around them. An area that we discuss very early on is the concept of “context.” I explain to my students that, in its most basic form, context provides us with the background information that may help us understand a topic further or give us important insights. I once told a group of students that if they ever walked into an art gallery and there was a giant red square on the wall - I hoped that they wouldn’t immediately dismiss it but, instead, ask questions, read titles, use their resources (like their phones) to research it. That red square may mean something so much more. In the end, if they still were not a fan of the art, that would be okay, but now they understand a little bit more about this work’s meaning. Contemporary art is one way in which I try to drive home the idea that they are contributing members of this visual culture. My students have discussed the work of the street artist “Space Invader” and his connection to pixels. Third graders have analyzed super hero costumes and designed their own based on the work of contemporary artist Laylah Ali, who with her art deconstructs bullying. First graders discuss Iran and the significance of the ornate tile work found there. Or we view social media posts from artists Souther Salazar or Geninne Zlatkis to get a glimpse, not only of their work, but also their lives. These are real people creating art. They have something to say, something to share, and we are a part of that very context that brings meaning to their work. Additionally, I have begun a partnership with the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. This past year we piloted a program for first grade students centered on backyard conservation. I worked with the zoo to develop stations where students explored box turtles and their adaptations. Students rotated through activities, which included meeting Cecil the turtle. This animal ambassador from the zoo helped make their learning real. The students utilized this study and collaborated to create class paintings based on their interactions with Cecil and the zoo. Cecil joined us again at the school for an enrichment activity. During each first grade art class, he walked through paint, making his own marks on the surface of the student collaborative paintings. These final works were auctioned off to raise money for the Ohio Wildlife Center. Their learning was real, it was impactful, it opened their eyes to simple ways they can foster conservation in their own backyards, and the power of the visual arts to benefit others.</p>
<p>What do you consider to be a major public education issue today? Describe</p>	<p>In our society competition and achievement are celebrated, often at the cost of compassionate, supportive relationships. The antidote is a focus on respect and empathy. Students exhibit behaviors that are a reflection of actions modeled for them by adults. As educators, we can demonstrate the importance of addressing everything we do with respect and empathy.</p>



<p>why this is important to you, and how you are addressing this from your classroom.</p>	<p>Respect...Several years ago I took a look at the expectations that I had posted in my classroom and realized that all of the statements came down to this single word. However, the idea of respect can be quite an abstract one, especially for elementary students. I developed visuals that modeled what respect can look and sound like. This became a schoolwide initiative that has transformed the dialogue around how we treat one another. The consistent message of showing respect to others, our space, and ourselves is reinforced in each learning environment in our building. Empathy... "Put yourself in someone else's shoes." This is a phrase we have said and heard countless times. But do we, or our students, truly know what that means? A former student of mine would often sing "Empathy. Empathy. Put yourself in the place of me." This simple rhyme is poignant. It is real and concrete. You are being asked, by someone else to consider what it is like to be them. If we can really consider someone else's journey and then take action based on our thoughts and investigations, just imagine the powerful impact this can and will have! Over the years, I have worked to model these traits for my students by developing art experiences that have had a positive influence on their character. The most recent exploration of this kind occurred earlier this year. Hurricane Harvey hit Texas, and my students came to class with many questions. I was able to lead them through a discussion about how this natural disaster had affected the people that lived there. We considered what would happen to our own lives and specifically our art room as a result of such an event. In response, each student donated supplies to affected schools and students. For each art supply contributed, students were given a paper polka-dot to decorate and attach to a five-foot-tall structure shaped like a house. The completed sculpture, covered with brightly colored dots, was a visual representation of the empathy my students felt for children, like themselves, who could no longer attend school due to the damage from the hurricane. During the process students asked what we were going to do for the people of Puerto Rico. The concept of empathy had become a part of their understanding of what the arts can do for others. They were taking ownership of their feelings of empathy, an awareness for others, and their future educational experiences. As educators, we must all work to create a movement for our students and their futures, so that they may positively impact the greater community with thoughtful respect and empathy.</p>
<p>As the 2017 National Teacher of the Year, you serve as a spokesperson and representative</p>	<p>Several years ago I was asked to identify a quote that defined my life. I have always admired Helen Keller, in part because of my grandmother who was blind. A quote attributed to Keller rang true for me: "I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble." These words resonated with me. Not all of us are going to live a life in which we solve great social injustices, or find long-missing solutions to great problems. But in our lives, each day, we are faced with small tasks that we can do begrudgingly, or</p>



<p>for teachers and students. What is your message? What will you communicate to your profession and to the general public?</p>	<p>with great enthusiasm, care, and humility. A few years ago I was coaching my middle school cross country team comprised of kind and supportive athletes but as far as their performance, it was a struggle and they knew it. We were about to face a very strong team, and morale was low. The night before the meet I created an individual button with the face of every kid on that team and attached it to a sweater vest. Throughout the next day's meet, I ran around wearing that vest and cheering for those athletes with all my heart. The clanging and jingling noise from those buttons on that crazy hot vest was so worth the effort. My team of amazing athletes ran past me with smiles and extra energy, and some finished the race with their personal best results. I continue this practice for all of my subsequent teams, even when the number of athletes go well over seventy, because it is about being there and celebrating their simple victories, encouraging each student to give their best in everything they do. When I was named the 2018 Ohio Teacher of the Year, I wore a vest of a different kind at the recognition assembly. On this vest I wore buttons depicting each and every staff member at my school, Liberty Tree Elementary. I am humbled and honored to work with these amazing educators each day. Their small actions have made a lasting impression on countless students and have positively impacted who I am as a person and an educator. Daily, these incredible teachers, and staff members, perform beautiful, quiet deeds that may not ever be noticed by others. They do whatever is best for our students with humility and grace. I challenge my students to find moments to "quietly" shine each day...To do what is best even if it doesn't get attention or applause. It could be as simple as greeting others with a smile and a warm hello, saying Thank You even when not prompted, exhibiting respectful listening when hearing a story, or giving a handwritten note to a friend. I ask that they come to school in the morning open to ideas and perspectives, and with a hunger to learn. For my students, and anyone I encounter, I hope that I model behaviors reflective of the dedication I give to each part of my life. That is my message, to live life with enthusiastic, empathetic, resilience through tough times, or through seemingly small tasks. The results can inspire others when least expected.</p>
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Candidate's Supporting Evidence

[Recommendation Letter 1](#)

[Recommendation Letter 2](#)

[Recommendation Letter 3](#)

