

# A Reason to Survive (ARTS)

## Organization Spotlight

By Christina Orlovsky



Young children facing difficult times often express their sadness or anger through artistic expression. Such was the case for Matt D’Arrigo, who used painting and a love of music to help him grieve the traumatic loss of his mother to cancer in 1992 at age 48. Nine years later, D’Arrigo founded A Reason to Survive (ARTS) in her memory and in an effort to help other kids experience the same power of the arts that helped him through his own pain.

“Every day, thousands of kids in San Diego are just looking to be kids again,” D’Arrigo says. “Their childhood has been snatched away from them through domestic violence, homelessness, terminal and chronic illness, abuse and neglect, divorce, death of loved ones and many other challenges kids should not have to face. They are looking for a voice — a way to express their feelings, regain some control in their lives and build positive relationships with adults. They are looking for a reason to survive their situations.”

That's where ARTS comes in.

“We are here not only to heal these young lives but to also inspire and empower them to overcome obstacles and thrive in this world — to become compassionate, creative human beings who can think outside the box and make a difference not only in themselves, but in the world they live in,” D’Arrigo continues.

Since 2001, ARTS has helped more than 25,000 children through its free arts-based programs and education, providing a safe, nurturing environment to pair children facing

challenges with adult mentors in the visual, performing and literary arts. ARTS recently opened the Pat D'Arrigo ARTS Center at the NTC Promenade in Point Loma, a 7,000-square-foot creative space that includes a music room, media arts lab, performing arts space, painting studio, mixed media studio, ceramics studio and ARTS Gallery.

Additionally, ARTS takes outreach programs to community partners, collaborates with partner organizations to create public works of art and provides scholarships to help youngsters pursue an education in the arts. Volunteers and donations are needed to help make ARTS programs a success.

"We don't expect all the kids we serve will become successful artists, musicians, poets, dancers or writers," D'Arrigo concludes. "What we do expect is that they will all go back into the world with a different perspective on life and be positive creative influences in their families, communities, schools and eventually in the workplace."

On November 13, ARTS presents "Reimagine: A Second Chance Through Art," a children's art auction. Held at Mixture in Little Italy, the event features a silent auction of one-of-a-kind artwork created with recycled and found objects by children at the Pat D'Arrigo ARTS Center, as well as live entertainment, hors d'oeuvres and cocktails. 6 to 9 p.m. 2210 Kettner Boulevard, 619-297-2787, ext. 2002; [www.areasontosurvive.org](http://www.areasontosurvive.org).