

What Teachers, Parents and Administrators Say About Kid Pan Alley

“Kid Pan Alley is a truly unique project and one, which honestly offers magic in the real world. The workshops create an environment, in which children learn while creating and, in the end, are empowered by the experience. The songs that grow out of this sharing are fresh and downright good. As Manager of Statewide Programs and Exhibitions at the VMFA, I work with every community to bring the arts to each citizen of Virginia. Kid Pan Alley is one of the most community focused I have ever seen.”
Jeffrey Allison, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

“Throughout the song writing process, the students are taken on a journey of discovery that ignites their imaginations and ability to create. The experience of working with professional musicians that help turn their ideas into works of art is truly remarkable. I have witnessed students who might have difficulty connecting to the world around them, find their voice and learn how to use it. I was particularly touched as one student created a beautiful and complex melody line. This student has not shown this type of ability in the past, and this self-discovery has produced a better level of engagement in the weeks afterward. It is also a joy for me to be able to join and help the students and find that I become lost in the magic of the process myself.”

Heidi Johnson-Taylor, Music Teacher, Patrick Henry School for Sciences & Art, Richmond, VA

“This was one of the most amazing and valuable residencies that I’ve ever had the privilege to be a part of. I loved the way that the songwriters honored each and every idea that was put forward by the children and then helped to gently guide them to the final product.”

Hilary Sales, Music Teacher, Union Elementary School, Montpelier, VT

“Children learn to the core when they are engaged in meaningful work that is relevant to their life experiences and honors their ideas. 'Stand Up and Be Heard: One Little Song Can Change the World' draws children into the important work of exploring and expressing who they are and what they want to see in their world. The assembly beautifully supports a school's character development curriculum, building on universal concepts in the words of children themselves. Children deserve to be heard; this assembly helps us listen more closely.”

ElizaBeth McCay, PhD, Principal, Jackson-Via Elementary, Charlottesville, VA

“As I watched the songs develop over the course of the week I was amazed at the array of extension activities that stem from your program. For example, we could incorporate poetry, chorus, music/songwriting, recording, performing arts, videography, and content related topics to the mix. Thank you so much for working with our students and showing them that they have the imagination, creativity, mental capacity, and courage to write and perform their own compositions.”

T H. Renteria, Ph.D., Education Director, Volcano School for Arts & Sciences, Volcano, HI

“Seeing and hearing the songs written and preformed by our students brought staff and parents –literally- to tears as they witnessed the heart-felt expression of their inner beliefs. This experience can be a challenging act for some children however through acceptance, and encouragement Kid Pan Alley successfully incorporated all students in the progression of the creative song writing process. All student ideas were valued and encouraged...Every school in the country should have a KPA residency. We hope to continue our relationship with Paul and Donnie/KPA for years to come so that all students eventually participate in the song writing process and find their true song.”

Owen Bradley, Principal, Union Elementary School, Union, VT

"One boy in my class jumped in feet first and was incredible. He often has difficulty expressing himself but this opened up a new path for him."

Kathy Dowd, Jackson-Via Elementary, Charlottesville, VA

“It has been a couple of weeks since I attended the Jouett concert but I am still thrilled with the performance. It was evident on the faces and in the voices of those children that the experience changed their lives. It was fascinating to watch the process as it unfolded and to witness the final concert. You are able to give “voice” to children’s thoughts and feelings which is quite an accomplishment!! It is my hope that Kid Pan Alley can return to Louisa County to enrich our students.”

Dr. Deborah D. Pettit, Superintendent, Louisa County Public Schools

“You inspired me in ways that will change my teaching for years to come. I am going to incorporate a writing unit in the spring each year and have a showcase at the end of the year. Perhaps even do some CDs as a fundraiser.”

Hilary Parks, Whitsett Elementary, Nashville, TN

“I was hesitant at first about taking class time for a project that didn’t cover the SOLs; however, they addressed poetry writing SOLs for fourth grade. They really did well teaching figurative language such as similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia and alliteration. Rhyme scheme and poetry patterns were also present in their teachings. I really appreciate this workshop and I know my students did. Their final product was awesome.”

Sandra Clement, Blue Ridge Elementary, Ararat, VA

“I was surprised at some of the children who generally remain very quiet during regular music class time, eagerly and uncharacteristically bringing forth their comments and ideas. Suggestions were not hard to come by and it was a joy to watch the children’s ideas unfold before my eyes.”

Evelyn Oyster, Wakefield Country Day School, Flint Hill, VA

“Kid Pan Alley was one of the best experiences that our students have ever had at our school!...This experience will have direct and residual effects for years to come for the students that participated. The students are inspired to take a greater interest in the arts. The students are encouraged to do better academically in school.”

Tom Caton, Principal, Elkin Elementary School, Elkin, NC

"The wonderful Kid Pan Alley Program ignites children's creativity at a level that encourages them to use skills, talents and imagination in a new dimension - in other words, awesome!"

Brenda Phillips, Principal, Cary Elementary, Richmond, VA

“The confidence levels just soared as they realized that they really could create something meaningful themselves.”

Ramona Kahle, Woolwine Elementary School, Woolwine, VA

“Thank you for the remarkable work you did putting together the whole Kid Pan Alley effort in Albemarle. My daughters both performed last Saturday at The Paramount and it was a thrilling, confidence building, memorable evening for them. Especially for my special needs child, who has a hard time with crowds, this was a barrier breaking evening for her.”

Cale Elementary School Parent, Charlottesville, VA

“Ever since I worked with Kid Pan Alley, I learned that things can be difficult, but to keep on going to new doors or levels, get a job and live a wonderful life. Thanks for giving me the courage to keep on going.” *3rd grade student*

“When I first thought of Kid Pan Alley, I didn’t even want to participate, but as I started thinking about it, I thought I would be interested in songwriting. So in the future, I am going to continue to try and be a music teacher....Thank you. I enjoyed you making a difference in my life.” *5th Grade Students, Forestdale Elementary School, Fairfax County, VA*

“I have had the privilege of seeing Kid Pan Alley (KPA) grow from an initial experiment with elementary school students here in Rappahannock County into a national program that has been a gift to thousands of students across the country. Watching Paul work with a group of young people is a delight: the students are thoroughly engaged as they draw on their own life experiences and their own sense of humor to create both lyrics and melody. Singing their own creations along with first class musicians at the community concert which is the end of every KPA residency is a thrill for the students and an equally wonderful evening for the community, not only sharing some great music but also celebrating the creative capacity of the young people involved.”

*Sallie Morgan, Director, Community Support
Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services Board and Area Agency on Aging*