

## Oasis Middle School PTO raises \$10,000 for studio equipment

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The art programs at Oasis Middle School are making strides due to dedication and determination from the Parent Teacher Organization and an art teacher to raise additional funds.

Oasis Middle School sixth and seventh grade students received new television studio equipment for their Iguana 5 News this year thanks to the PTO.

The PTO raised approximately \$10,000 for new studio lighting, teleprompters and a NewTek Tricaster Pro equipment, which was a total of \$12,000, to provide a professional atmosphere for the students to learn and produce their newscast.

"We did a huge makeover for this program to be able to really get kids a better feel for creating their video projects," Oasis Middle School Television Production teacher Vivian Theriault said.

The 21 children who participate in the newscast learn the basics of shooting video, how to make commercials and how to work on public service announcements.

"Our kids are benefiting from it because they are able to do so much more in the production of our school newscast," Theriault said. "I give them the basic training, but they are the ones putting on the show."

One of the new pieces of equipment the students are familiarizing themselves with is the NewTek Tricaster Pro, which is a small professional black box that is hooked up to a large computer monitor, with a keyboard for the actual switcher in a TV control room.

"We have the availability of various different virtual sets," she said. "The Tricaster makes our studio look like a huge professional looking studio."

The new equipment has provided the class with the opportunity to produce a newscast for all five school days, compared to only four last year.

"It has simplified things so much," she said.

The equipment also provides the students with a more hands-on approach.

"The beauty of it is the kids can do it," she said. "They are the ones on the switcher, adding the graphics. They are really getting the feel of what it takes to put together a news show."

Theriault said the newscast is a good communication tool for the school, along with parents because they can view it on [www.schooltube.com/user/OasismiddleTV](http://www.schooltube.com/user/OasismiddleTV).

A newscast in Spanish is currently in the works for Iguana 5 News, so information can also be provided for non-English speaking parents.

"I have a small group of students working on that," she said.

Theriault said to keep arts alive in schools you have to think of creative funding.

"There are ways out there to continue to grow programs," she said. "You have to be a little more creative in finding those funds, as long as you have the support of your administrators and the PTO there are certainly ways to do it."

The art program at Oasis Middle School also received money to enhance the program for students.

Art Educator Sara Masters said she received a \$500 grant from the Pine Island Art Association and \$800 from the Edison Celebration of the Arts.

The Pine Island Art Association grant provided Masters with the opportunity to purchase equipment and supplies she needed for the polymer clay program. The students are using the clay polymer to create beads using different techniques and shapes, which will be placed on wire or hemp to make necklaces and bracelets.

"I would not have been able to do this cool lesson with the students if it weren't for this grant as my budget does not allow for such large extravagances," Masters said.

The second grant Masters received from the Edison Celebration of the Arts allowed her to purchase bisque tiles, glaze, grout and grout sealer for a mosaic wall.

"My students and staff members last year were all able to glaze a tile that would then be fired and hung on the wall in a mosaic fashion," Masters said.

Masters said she applied for the grants because it has been proven that those who are involved in the arts do better on tests, along with improved self-esteem.

She said creating artwork is also important because it stimulates the right side of the brain, which is the creative and imaginative side.

"It is so great to see their faces light up when they have finished a project and they are very proud of the outcome," Masters said.