

Supporting Your Docent Volunteer

Be Clear About Your Expectations:

- **Set parameters on the time you feel comfortable allotting to the Docent Program:** Ensure that the docent understands right from the start how much class time can be devoted to this instruction, and work with them in a proactive way to help stay within your guidelines. Art projects can always be taken home to be worked on, if there is not enough class time available.
- **Be clear about who is doing the prep work for art activities.** Prepping materials for an art activity is time consuming. If you don't have the time, let your docent know this and help them to plan accordingly.
- **Be sensitive to budget constraints.** Make sure you are both clear about who is providing the materials for art projects. If special materials are not available through the PTA budget or the school, try to work out an equitable way to pay for them without expecting the docent to pick up this cost.

Help Your Docent in their Presentation:

- **Be sensitive to the fact that many docent volunteers haven't given group presentations before,** and are nervous about doing so. Help them by providing encouragement and support for their efforts.
- **Docents often feel frustrated** when they put a lot of time and energy into planning a presentation and an activity for the classroom, and then the teacher gives them little or no feedback on how it went, if it worked well, etc.
- **Give feedback, preferably in writing, on how they did.** A quick note at the end of a presentation on what they did well, with one or two suggestions for improvements next time, is helpful feedback. Make allowances for the fact that docents are novices in the classroom, not professionals.
- **Feedback might include comments on:**
 - Questioning strategies used
 - What helped kids to get engaged in the learning
 - What was learned
 - The relevance and age appropriateness of the material presented
 - How the docent recognized student contributions
 - Materials management strategies

Thank them for their time and effort.