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## Building interests in art

### City students visit art museum

By Chris Sykes Staff Writer , Orange Transcript

Orange residents of all ages were invited to view artwork from city students during Saturday's free Community Day event inside the Montclair Art Museum.

The event was inspired by the exhibit, "A Force for Change: African American Art," and the Julius Rosenwald Fund, and featured activities such as a children's arcade exhibition, which featured artwork from students in Orange's public schools; the Young Curators Audio Tour with students from Orange High School; and screenings of Claymation films produced with the museum's artist-in-residence at the Orange Central Community School. The museum also hosted theatrical readings of poems by black authors, which were read by students from Rosa Parks School in conjunction with the New Jersey Arts Incubator, as well as hands-on art projects.

The idea, organizers said, was to open the facility by giving residents the opportunity to sample its many diverse offerings. An extra feature from the parents' and students' view was the display of artwork from Orange children.

None of those incentives were lost on Stephanie M. Smith or Alana Baskerville, two Orange parents who went to the museum. Both took advantage of the museum and district's invitation to attend.

"I am excited to be here at the museum today to see the wonderful exhibits that are on display," said Smith, a second-grade teacher at Heywood Avenue School. "I think it's also wonderful that the kids' work is also on display on the ground floor. This was my first time at the museum and I was really blown away by how awesome everything is."

Smith was at the museum with her twin daughters, Jaida and Jonai Hill-Smith, her son, Jaree, and her husband, Bernard. She said it really was a family-oriented event that had something for adults and children alike plus the added benefit of being educational.

Smith said her fifth-grade daughters visited the museum for the first time with other Heywood students earlier this year. She said the girls learned a lot about art as well as black history and culture. They learned so much, she said, that when the family went Saturday, they were able to explain many of the things and information they retained from their previous visit.

"I think it's awesome that this has opened their eyes and minds to the different kinds and style of art," said Smith. "When I was in school, art was just a piece of construction paper and crayons, glue, maybe some scissors and some paint. Nowadays, art is so much more than that."

Jonai Hill-Smith gave an example of the difference between art projects she completes today and what her mother did as a student.

"We had a project in school and we had to draw a picture and make it look 3-D. I drew a building that was going downward but actually looked like it was going upward," said Jonai Hill-Smith, who said she wants to be a police officer after she finishes her schooling.

Baskerville was at the museum with her son, Michael, and her daughter, Michaela, who, with schoolmates from Rose Parks School, had artwork on display.

"I wanted to come and see what the children did," said Baskerville. "It was great and amazing and showed the kids

are so talented and capable of doing great work.”

Baskerville said her son thought going to the museum would be a “boring waste of time.” That was before he arrived, she said, and discovered there was more to do than just look at artwork. The third floor of the building was stocked with wigs, art materials and tools and space for children to create their own works of art.