

Garnet Valley Artists Honored by Darlington Arts Center

By: Rosa Doherty, Marketing Manager

Families of creative kids throughout Garnet Valley have been inspired by longtime educators Diana Stevenson and Hattie Weselyk. These outstanding instructors have encouraged creativity and instilled confidence in countless students in our community through the arts. Darlington Arts Center is pleased to honor Diana Stevenson with the *Arts Service Award* and Hattie Weselyk with the *Teaching Artist Excellence Award* at their annual Arts Salute to Spring fundraiser on April 17.

The *Arts Service Award* is presented to the unsung heroes in our community who are serving our community by engaging others through the arts in our community. Diana first came to our attention as a uniquely committed teacher during the Congressional Art Show hosted at Darlington the last three seasons. She was subsequently nominated by her professional peers at Garnet Valley School District and then selected by a committee of Darlington's Board of Directors.

The *Teaching Artist Excellence Award* is presented to a Darlington Teaching Artist for sustained instructional excellence. Hattie Weselyk began teaching at Darlington at our original site on Baltimore Pike in Media, PA and moved with us to our Shavertown Road site in 2002. She is a favorite of students and parents for both her commitment to the art of dance and her understanding of the unique needs of each student. She was nominated by the Executive Director and chosen for the honor by a committee of Darlington's Board of Directors.

Diana Stevenson has taught visual arts at Garnet Valley High School for many years. During her time she has taught thousands of students the fundamental skills of an artist while channeling the arts in a positive way. "Diana has the perfect mix of passion for both art and her students. She is a tireless advocate, instructor, and mentor who exemplifies the very best in art education. She is the best!" says Dr. Marc Bertrando, Superintendent of schools at Garnet Valley School District. In addition to teaching, she is co-liason of the Garnet Valley Art Department, contributes to the state-wide recognized art curriculum, and a sponsor of the murals club. "All who know Diana are inspired by her passion for the arts and the dedication that goes into bringing that joy to others" says Claudia Eckel, a fellow visual arts teacher at GVHS.

Hattie Weselyk has been teaching Garnet Valley dancers at Darlington for over 15 years and has instructed students of every age and skill level - from our littlest ballerinas in Tiny Tutus all the way up to our most senior dancers in Advanced Ballet/Pointe and beyond. She is known for her creative and innovative, yet traditionally disciplined, approach to her classes and Darlington Dance Company, which she led for over five years. "Hattie's passion for dance shines through each one of her students. Dancers finish her classes with great artistic and personal growth. We are so lucky to have her!" says Susan Nicodemus Quinn, Executive Director of Darlington Arts Center. She has studied at The School of American Ballet, at the Juilliard School of Performing Arts and was formerly the principal dancer with The Brandywine Ballet Company.

Arts Salute to Spring is Darlington Arts Center's only fundraiser of the year and it's a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the arts, network with other Garnet Valley families, and honor the great educators in our community. The event will be held on Sunday, April 17 from 2:00-5:00pm at Penn Oaks Golf Club. In addition to highlighting the honorees, the event will feature a performance by Brandywine Jazz and R&B, wine and h'ordeuvres, live and silent auctions, performances by Darlington students and much more. To purchase tickets or to make a donation in honor of Hattie or Diana please visit www.darlingtonarts.org/ASTS.