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Cloudy With a Chance of Dance: "Stormy Weather" Cluster Project

By Hannah Huckins; For the Clock

On April 27, 2017



Children attending "Stormy Weather," an April vacation camp at the Flying Monkey.

"Stormy Weather" is a cluster project and performance coming to The Flying Monkey on April 28, at 7 p.m. It is an opportunity to see the work of six PSU faculty members, three guest artists, over one hundred PSU students, and of course, the kids.

"Stormy Weather" is a week-long camp, which began April 24, during April vacation. The camp concludes with the performance on Friday night. Children auditioned to see what the best spots were for them, and to try to give everybody an equal opportunity to shine. The camp is open to kids ages 8–13.

About 30 children will give a performance that explores the four different kinds of storms: Blizzard, Thunderstorm, Hurricane and Tornado. They will learn about the storms through different modalities such as fine art, music, dance and lessons created by the PSU integrated arts class and childhood studies majors.

This project will give the kids a greater understanding of these storms and the safety that goes with them. Because of the innovative approach, the kids will be more likely to remember what they learned years later.

Professor of education and integrated arts, Patricia Lindberg, said that the idea of the project began when she sat next to meteorology professor Lourdes Aviles Bramer in a meeting for the Arts and Technology cluster at the beginning of the year. They began kicking around ideas and came up with this massive project that is inclusive to many people and departments on campus.

"Having the opportunity to work with my outstanding colleagues in music, theater, dance, art, meteorology and education and more than 100 PSU students from all over campus has been extremely rewarding," said Lindberg. "I am fortunate indeed, to be at an institution that values creativity and innovation."

There is a huge PSU student influence in this project. It is all about trying to give students as much ownership as possible. Because this is a cluster project, students are working with community partners such as Alex Ray, the owner of The Flying Monkey, and Lisa Ash from Plymouth Parks & Recreation.

"It's very exciting to be at an institution that is so innovative, because many people get scared of innovation and want to stay the status quo," said Lindberg. "But you've got to innovate in our society. That is what is going to keep you alive. And in order to innovate, you need to take risks and try things that seem impossible."

This project would not have been possible without help from Matt Kizer and Lenore Sousa (music, theater and dance), Pamela Anneser (art) and Timm Judas (visual artist and TIGER).

World Musician Randy Armstrong will also be working with the children, performing live music on top of the recorded music written by the composers. Armstrong owns over 400 instruments which he brings with him when he travels. The children will be able to create sounds for each of the four storms.

Lenore Sousa's advanced choreography class is working on choreography for the four pieces of music created for the storms. Sousa divided the class into four groups and will integrate the children into the routines. Matt Kizer is working on projections and animations for visuals for the backdrops and one of his students will work as a production manager.

There will be a huge art show as people enter the venue. There are over 400 pieces that include art and poetry related to the four storms from third grade all the way to work submitted by PSU students.

"Fill the space with art, and college students, high school students, kids and hopefully people arriving will feel totally ensconced in these four storms," said Lindberg. "It is amazing what can be accomplished in five days when people are likeminded and work together."

People are excited to see how the performance goes, because nobody knows what the show will look like at the end. It has never been done before. Lindberg said that it is a great model, and it would be really fun to try to investigate how it works in different disciplines.

Another cluster project is coming up in June, called "Peace Child." It is in collaboration with the international organization called Kids for Peace. The project will be more literacy based, collecting writings from children all over the place on their feelings about peace. The project will be created from those writings and will go from June 29 to July 3.