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Creative Planet School of the Arts Finds New Home with Presbyterian Church in Baldwin Park.

Baldwin Park — Creative Planet School of the Arts (CPSOA) is happy to announce that it has found a new home in Baldwin Park. First Presbyterian Church of Baldwin Park has agreed to rent its property to CPSOA which was recently dropped from its previous location at First United Methodist Church in El Monte.

In March of this year, the highly praised, private arts school was informed, with no explanation, that their lease which was to expire in June would not be renewed.

Founder and Artistic Director, Bill Rugh, was left with no property to continue his one-of-a-kind academic and arts private school.

Undeterred and determined to continue with his school's mission, he set out, along with co-founder and Director of Education and Outreach, Michelle Benton, to find a new property anywhere in the San Gabriel Valley. Their goal was to find a property within a reasonable distance to the previous location so the existing students enrolled at CPSOA would be able to continue to attend. They searched from Pasadena to Pomona, Hacienda Heights to Altadena. "If it's too far for parents, we'll just buy an old school bus and pick the kids up from El

Monte. We'll do whatever it takes!" exclaimed Mr. Billy, as he is called by the students who currently attend CPSOA.

The search was not an easy one. Because of their sudden eviction by First United Methodist, the school was forced to move all its belongings into storage for the summer and set up a temporary office. The school's summer arts camp which consists of 6 to 8 weeks of arts training, Monday through Friday had to be cancelled this year. Rugh and Benton researched countless possibilities through phone calls, e-mails and meetings which finally landed them at the First Presbyterian Church.

"We really love the school's mission and want to support the school's efforts in the community!" said Pastor Miguel Santamaria. Santamaria and his Board of Elders voted unanimously to rent their property to CPSOA.

"Creative Planet School of the Arts is a fantastic opportunity for children to incorporate the arts into their daily lives. These students are incredibly talented, disciplined and the brightest light of our future. They bring joy and positive messages and role modeling to the community through their incredible performances. Creative Planet School of the Arts truly is a gift to all chil-

dren and the communities they serve" said Iris Levine, Artistic Director of Vox Femina Los Angeles, one of the premiere womens choruses in the United States.

Parent Debbie Reynosa couldn't be happier.

"My 7-year-old was having many problems in school, so many that they wanted to hold her back a grade. My other daughter was fighting a lot at school...I found CPSOA and within two weeks my 7-year-old was reading by herself for the first time ever. Within six months, both of them were blooming in the arts. These people have a gift of tapping into any child's gifted place," said Reynosa.

Last year the students of CPSOA tested in the top 10-20% of the nation's SAT scores and they have had opportunities to perform at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, with Vox Femina Los Angeles, the Albert McNeil Jubilee Singers, the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles and at the LA County Fair just to name a few. Its students have been accepted into schools such as the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts and Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise as well as being cast in public service announcements and national commercials.

AROUND TOWN

By Mavis Hansen

Creative Planet School of the Arts is in a brand new location in Baldwin Park. It is now accepting applications for fall enrollment. If you have a child that's interested in performing or just want to enable them to have a creative outlet give them a call. Fees for the classes are on a sliding scale and they even offer scholarships.

Creative Planet is looking forward to settling into its new home and eager to resume classes in September.

"We're very excited about the move and developing our presence in the city of Baldwin Park," said Benton. "The school has an open enrollment policy. If you have a student that excels in the arts or would like to learn more about the arts or could just benefit from the one teacher per 15 student classroom ratio, feel free to contact CPSOA at 626.442.1253.



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