

# MID VALLEY NEWS

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## Creative Planet School of the Arts holds Demonstration



Through what it calls a desperate attempt to save their school, students, parents, and teachers of Creative Planet School of the Arts (CPSOA) picketed Sunday, March 20, in front of the First United Methodist Church in El Monte.

Demonstrators carried signs that read "It's about the children, not the money" as they chanted, "What do we want? — Creative Planet! When do we want it? — Now!" And, while some leaders of the church were obviously unhappy with Creative Planet's presence

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(some even threatening to call the police) students still danced and sang on the church's sidewalks to Quincy Jones' *We Are the Future*, *Now*.

Organizers said that through the means of a peaceful demonstration, parents and supporters of CPSOA wanted to make it clear that they do not think it is right for FUMC to resend its good faith word in inviting Creative Planet to its campus only to uproot and possibly close a school dedicated to helping low-income and at-risk youth of the community.

Organizers said that the pending closure of the school is for the church to make a profit from a wealthier school.

In 2003, the church invited CPSOA to move to its proper-

ty after it had been kicked out of another church due to religious differences regarding the homosexuality of its artistic director and the "evilness" they deemed dance and other "pagan" arts can lead to.

Now, the church that saved the arts school from shutting down just two years ago is kicking them.

FUMC gave the school official word last week that it would have to move out in May, two weeks before the school year ends.

FUMC has found another school which is willing to pay a significantly higher rent.

CPSOA, however, was never given an opportunity to renegotiate its contract to increase their rent in order to stay.

"CPSOA has always upheld its end of the contract; renovating the space, paying a steadily increased rent, and sticking to its stated mission to the community. Now CPSOA could be homeless again," said a CPSOA spokesperson.

CPSOA founder, Bill Rugh, believes that students who are academically challenged and well-rounded in the arts have higher levels of self esteem and achieve greater heights. The collective success stories of the past two years have proven this true. Students at CPSOA know how to dance ballet, hold a yoga pose, compose music, play piano, perform Shakespeare, write a play, and still test in the top 20% of the nation on their SAT's...