



For Immediate Release
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Pre-K 4 SA Hosts *Gracias San Antonio* Online Art Auction to Benefit St. PJ's
Four-year-olds create art, learn civic engagement and participate in cultural life of San Antonio

SAN ANTONIO — Pre-K 4 SA's *Gracias San Antonio: Children Are Citizens Project* is grounded in the belief that children are not just future citizens but are citizens today. Despite Pre-K 4 SA's closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019-2020 program will conclude with an online art auction opening May 22. The proceeds from children's art pieces will support St. PJ's Children's Home.

Gracias engages Pre-K 4 SA's 4-year-olds to express their opinions and participate in the civic and cultural life of San Antonio. As citizens of the community, the students also learn to give back to their city.

"One of the primary goals of Pre-K 4 SA is to create a strong, educated workforce in San Antonio. Through our civic engagement initiatives like *Gracias*, our children and their families have the opportunity to engage with the community and experience what makes San Antonio a unique and vibrant city," Pre-K 4 SA CEO Sarah Baray said. "Integrating the arts into the early childhood curriculum enhances the children's learning and development."

St. PJ's was chosen as the benefiting charity by students in a vote held at the four Pre-K 4 SA Education Centers and Gardendale Early Learning Program on Nov. 4 to promote Election Day. Throughout the year, children and families engaged in city explorations by visiting different places around San Antonio. Local artists joined students in the classroom to create authentic art pieces using a variety of artistic media to express the children's perspective of their city and the places visited. More than 100 pieces have been created and will be displayed on the online auction.

Art enthusiasts can bid on and secure their favorite piece of art through the online auction between Friday, May 22 and Sunday, June 7 at <https://www.32auctions.com/graciassanantonio2020>. Winning bidders can pick up their artwork from Pre-K 4 SA beginning June 8.

"We are truly saddened that the children, families, artists and public cannot enjoy the art as in previous years at our *Gracias* Art Reception and Gallery," Baray added. "But we want everyone to stay safe and healthy, and there is still an incredible need to support our partner charity, St. PJ's Children's Home."

About Pre-K 4 SA:

Pre-K 4 SA is a comprehensive early childhood initiative aimed at changing the education and workforce trajectory of San Antonio in one generation. Pre-K 4 SA offers full-day pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds living in the City of San Antonio. Pre-K 4 SA is free for qualifying students and also accepts tuition-paying students. The school day begins at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. Extended hours are available at no additional charge from 7:15 to 8 a.m., and from 3 to 6 p.m. for working families. Breakfast, lunch and two snacks are included and free transportation is available to all students. Pre-K 4 SA has four Education Centers located throughout the city: North Education Center, 3635 Medical Dr.; South Education Center, 7031 S. New Braunfels Ave.; East Education Center, 5230 Eisenhower Rd.; and West Education Center, 1235 Enrique M. Barrera Memorial Parkway. The Gardendale Early Learning Program powered by Pre-K 4 SA is the first replication site and was made possible through a partnership with Edgewood Independent School District. This program creates greater capacity for high-quality early education with both pre-k and kindergarten classrooms. The Pre-K 4 SA Professional Learning program provides pre-kindergarten through third grade educators in San Antonio with complementary continuing education to support best practice instruction to help every child in San Antonio excel. The Pre-K 4 SA Competitive Grants program provides more than \$4 million in funding annually to increase quality and access in early childhood programs throughout San Antonio. Visit www.prek4sa.com for more information.