



For Immediate Release
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Pre-K 4 SA *Gracias San Antonio* Online Art Auction Goes Live April 15
*Four-year-olds learn civic engagement and create art, and proceeds benefit
Therapy Animals of San Antonio*

SAN ANTONIO — Pre-K 4 SA teachers got creative to ensure all in-person and remote learners actively participated in this year’s *Gracias San Antonio: Children Are Citizens Project*. The year-long curriculum that is grounded in the belief that children are not just future citizens but are citizens today concludes with an online art auction opening April 15.

“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.”

Gracias San Antonio began in November with the children’s participation in a program-wide election to vote on a local nonprofit to support for the year. This year, children, families, and staff engaged in early voting and campaigning, aligned with the local, state and national elections, and encouraged discussion at home related to civic engagement and participation. As citizens of the community, the children also learn to give back to their city. The proceeds from art pieces in the online auction will support this year’s chosen nonprofit organization, Therapy Animals of San Antonio.

Activities continued throughout the year as children and families engaged in City Explorations with their teachers to visit different places around San Antonio. Local artists joined children in a virtual or outdoor classroom to create authentic art pieces using a variety of artistic mediums to express the children’s perspective of their city and the places they visited.



A Pre-K 4 SA remote learner proudly works on her class’s piece of art while on a City Exploration at the Japanese Tea Garden. The piece will be auctioned at the Gracias Online Art Exhibit benefitting Therapy Animals of San Antonio.

Pre-K 4 SA remote learners also participated in *Gracias*. For example, one class met at Mission San Jose for a City Exploration to explore shapes in architecture and nature. On another City Exploration to the Japanese Tea Garden, the class gathered in a socially-distance safe space to complete their work of art that reflected their view of the city.

Art enthusiasts and all citizens of San Antonio can bid on and secure their favorite piece of art through the online auction between Thursday, April 15 and Friday, April 30 at

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<https://www.32auctions.com/GraciasSanAntonio2021>. Winning bidders will be notified, and beginning this year, have the option to pay online or have the artwork shipped. Winning bidders may also arrange for payment over the phone or schedule a time to pick up their artwork from the Pre-K 4 SA West Education Center between May 4-15.

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.

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