Introducing THE EVERETT HOAG COSTUME AND DESIGN STUDIO

By: **Beth Adamo**, Resident Contributor

Last year, Nathan Bishop Middle School was proud to officially dedicate and open the Everett Hoag Costume and Design Studio. The Costume Studio is the result of a very generous donation by veteran designer and educator Everett Hoag, who gave approximately $20,000 worth of costumes, fabric, materials, props, and equipment to the school. "My intention was to be able to give back some of the energy that I've received being a teaching artist now for 38+ years to a school that really appreciates what the arts can do," explains Hoag.

Hoag cites the exceptional work of Nathan Bishop's English department and performing arts teacher Glenn Zienowicz as modeling what the arts can do for kids. "So often kids don't have an opportunity for self-expression and a sense of belonging. By having strong arts programming, especially for middle schoolers, it really helps them find a sense of identity."

Hoag now teaches two after-school workshops at Nathan Bishop through the Providence After School Alliance (PASA) AfterZone's programming, which brings a full roster of engaging after-school activities and learning opportunities to youth in Providence. "What we're trying to do with the arts program is to make sure that even the quiet voices can be heard—and that's so empowering. Seeing that shyness overcome is what the arts is all about; letting everybody contribute equally," he says.

A neighbor gets involved

The exceptional arts program at Nathan Bishop inspired neighborhood resident Diane McAleer, who has lived across the street from Nathan Bishop for 43 years, to donate her mother's collection of vintage hats from the 1950s and 1960s to the school. "I've held onto them for many years, waiting to find the right home and as soon as I saw the information about the Costume Studio, I knew Nathan Bishop would be the best home for the hats," she says.

Over the years, McAleer has been involved at Nathan Bishop in a variety of different capacities—helping with Student Council food drives, serving on the Superintendent's committee, and working with architects on the school's recent renovations. "I feel that the neighborhood school should be connecting with the community—and that the community should also be connected to the school," she says.

Impressed by the work of Zienowicz's Nathan Bishop Drama Club—another program through PASA's AfterZone—and Hoag's Costume Studio, McAleer shares an appreciation for what the arts can do for kids. "I think that there are so many different ways that kids learn, and the arts can help them learn how to express themselves in positive ways. Plus the team-building is so important," she adds.

Zienowicz and Hoag are delighted and grateful to see members of the local community like McAleer considering Nathan Bishop as a worthy recipient of such prized possessions—and encourage others to consider giving as well. For information on how to make a donation to the Nathan Bishop Drama Club and/or the Everett Hoag Costume & Design Studio, please contact them at the school: 401-456-9344.

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