



For SBISD publication

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MHS Junior Suzanna Jinks wins SBEF art contest

Suzanna Jinks has a winning smile and a fierce love of art. She can't help it. It's in her blood. Her mom and grandmother, both artists, can "draw anything." Suzanna can too, but she prefers drawing people.

So when her Memorial High School art teacher, Crystal Fiocchi, introduced Spring Branch Education Foundation's Running for the Arts 5K & ArtFest art competition, the ideas started flowing. She drew a runner whose singlet is splashed with visual and performing arts symbols.

Suzanna's drawing was selected from more than 20 entries. She was surprised.

"I was flooded with happiness when I won," she says. Her whole family, Tom and Caroline Jinks, and her brother, West, a seventh-grader at Spring Branch Middle School, celebrated. Another fun part of winning – when she and her friends run in the 5K on Saturday, May 6, they'll be wearing t-shirts emblazoned with her design.

The MHS junior has always attended SBISD schools, first Memorial Drive Elementary, then Spring Branch Middle. "It's a great environment," she says. "All the teachers are good, and I know they want me to do well." While this will be her first year to participate in Running for the Arts 5K & ArtFest, she remembers benefitting from the event's proceeds: grade-level field trips to the Houston Symphony, Alley Theatre and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Would she encourage others to enter art contests? You bet she would. "You never know what will happen. I didn't expect to win!"

Crystal Fiocchi says there are contest opportunities for art students almost monthly. She presents them to students based on their personal interests because she believes contests provide fertile ground for learning.

"Each contest comes with its own lists of rules and requirements," she explains. "There are deadlines, and there are also rewards. Students learn to accept critiques of their work. And the finished products are useful for students who are building their resumes and portfolios."

"They prepare us for the real world," Suzanna says, wise words for a 16-year-old.

Fiocchi, a 12-year SBISD veteran, personally enjoys the art of illustration and has illustrated several children's books. "I love telling stories through art," and she shares that love in the classroom. "It's super important to express ourselves visually. Creating builds discipline and commitment."

SBEF agrees that art is important to students and to the community. This is the first year the 5K will expand to an ArtFest. The Foundation has partnered with the Altharetta Yeargin Art Museum to host the event and enhance the art auction. Local artists and artisans are invited to participate as auction donors and as vendors.

Community members – even non-runners – will be on hand to bid on auction artwork, stroll through art vendors' booths, listen to garage bands and munch on goodies from a variety of food trucks. They'll hear and see SBISD fine arts programs in action.

Look for some of Crystal Fiocchi's students. They have submitted street art designs and will be on hand to create art throughout the event, 9 a.m. through 1 p.m., at the Museum, 901 Yorkchester.

Want to participate?

To donate to the art auction, email leann.ayam@yahoo.com.

To register for the run/walk or as a vendor, visit www.runningforthearts.com.

Photo options:

Suzanna Jinks

Crystal Fiocchi and Suzanna Jinks

2017 Running for the Arts 5K and Artfest artwork by Suzanna Jinks

About Spring Branch Education Foundation:

Spring Branch Education Foundation is committed to supporting SBISD students and educators. It partners with the district and community to fund programs that enhance education and students for the future. In 2016, Caruthers Institute ranked SBEF 42nd in the nation among 188 K-12 education foundations and in the top 10 of its division of foundations with \$1 million to \$1,999,999 in revenues. Since 1993, the Foundation has donated more than \$10 million to the district. SBEF is a 501(c)3 organization; all donations are tax deductible.