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MATERIALS FOR THE ARTS LAUNCHES ONLINE EDUCATION CENTER

The new digital resource center gives teachers everything they need for interactive, hands-on art projects, virtual field trips, and lessons to engage students learning at home.

Images of the MFTA Online Education Center are available [here](#).

New York, NY – Materials for the Arts (MFTA), NYC’s premier creative reuse program for arts nonprofits, public schools, and City agencies, has launched its new [MFTA Online Education Center](#) to support teachers and students learning remotely during the COVID-19 outbreak. The online resources, developed by MFTA teaching artists and education staff, are free of charge and include creative projects, lesson plans, and online field trips. Designed for multiple subject areas for students ranging from Pre-K to 12th grade, the MFTA Online Education Center prompts students to use everyday items to complete creative hands-on projects while at home.

“At Materials for the Arts, our primary mission is to innovatively create with what we have. For the last twenty years we have shared this mantra with educators, students, and members of the arts community. So we were perfectly positioned to switch over to digital learning, supporting teachers who are transitioning to online classrooms,” said **Harriet Taub, MFTA Executive Director**.

The MFTA Online Education Center now offers over a dozen creative reuse projects and lesson plans. One example is [‘Houses and Other Dwellings,’](#) a lesson showing how to make buildings from 3-ring binders. This project can be used to teach Math (measurement and geometry), Social Studies and Science (the study of living environments), ELA (fiction writing), and Social Emotional (reflective journaling).

Teachers can also choose from eight different field trip experiences available on the Online Education Center. One such experience involves making paper bead necklaces from the tube insert found in paper towels, creating characters from magazine scraps and newspaper, and other activities. The online field trips begin with introductory videos about MFTA which explain the importance of reuse and sustainability, and a virtual tour of the MFTA warehouse. The trips also include step-by-step videos featuring MFTA’s Teaching Artists who guide students through projects.

Over 93% of DOE schools are members of Materials for the Arts. Before COVID-19, teachers would shop amongst MFTA's 35,000 square-foot warehouse full of donated items including fabric, envelopes, postcards, vintage buttons, holiday ornaments, knick knacks, furniture, and even mannequins. Classes would come for field trips to the warehouse and complete art projects in MFTA's classrooms. The new Online Education Center reimagines these activities as virtual experiences that teachers and students can engage in at home.

"All of the supplies needed for our online lessons are reusable items students can gather from around their homes. They already have the art supplies they need: everything from cereal boxes, plastic bottles, scraps of paper, coat hangers, old shirts, and so much more. Our lessons challenge students to be creative, proactive, and resourceful with the materials we have around us," said **John Cloud Kaiser, MFTA Director of Education.**

Sarah Jennings, a teacher at Growing Up Green Middle School in Queens, was planning to take her seventh grade students on a field trip to Materials for the Arts that was then canceled due to the Coronavirus. With the MFTA Online Education Center, she and her students were able to take a virtual field trip to MFTA.

"I think it is still important--maybe more important than before--to have kids go on field trips and do hands-on learning. I noticed a lighter, playful side of my students that surfaced. They were able to be so creative and many asked me if we could do more activities like this. I noticed parents getting involved with the creative reuse project too. Many thanked me for instructing their child to involve their guidance on the project and providing an opportunity for quality time at home, said **Sarah Jennings, Growing Up Green Middle School Teacher.**

The MFTA Online Education Center is located on [MFTA's website](#). MFTA welcomes teachers, students, and parents to use MFTA's online resources, which are low or zero budget tools for engaging students of all levels. MFTA continues to add new content to the Online Education Center.

About Materials for the Arts (MFTA)

A program of the [NYC Department of Cultural Affairs](#), with support from the Department of Education and Friends of Materials for the Arts, MFTA is NYC's largest reuse center supporting nonprofits with arts programming, public schools, and City agencies. On average MFTA collects over 1.5 million pounds of supplies each year which it provides, free of charge, to its member organizations. In addition to providing materials, MFTA has an Artist-in-Residence program and holds public events every third Thursday of the month which include gallery openings and community workshops.

Learn more at www.materialsforthearts.org.

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