



## Ceramic Arts Program Volunteer Orientation

### You've Volunteered...Where to Begin?

- Contact the other volunteers in your class to network and brainstorm ideas.
- Identify who will take the lead to contact the teacher, coordinate, and schedule the project.
- Work collaboratively with the teacher to select the project and decide on the project molding and glazing dates. You need to initiate contact with your teacher. Do not wait for him/her to contact you.
- Schedule your project dates on the CAP Teamup calendar and share dates with your team.

### Teamup Calendar

We use an online calendar application called *Teamup*. It is accessed from a computer or mobile device and has apps for both iPhone and Android. Entries are synchronized instantly. We will send you an email with a unique link to your teacher's calendar and the Teamup User Guide.

Everything you do with clay on campus must be scheduled on our *Teamup* calendar. There are 4 resources that can be scheduled: Clay tools, Glaze tools, the Kiln fire greenware, and Kiln glaze fire.

### Schedule Your Project

- Once you know the project dates and times, schedule your dates in *Teamup*.
- Refer to the Teamup User Guide for details on getting started and using the application.
- The calendar can become quite full at times. We recommend getting your dates reserved early.
- When scheduling on PC, uncheck the 'All Day' box to enter time.
- You can choose to load the kiln at 8:00-8:30 AM, or 8:30-9:00 AM. The kiln needs to be started by 9:00 AM. The last person to load starts the kiln. Return the following day to unload. Glaze fires should be unloaded by 8:00 AM. Green fires are longer and hotter. Return the following day around noon or later to unload. You do not need to schedule your unloading time on the Teamup calendar.

### How it Works

Each project requires 2 sessions, generally about an hour each session. In the first session, scheduled on the Clay Tools calendar, students mold wet clay. Wait 2 weeks for the projects to dry. Greenware is then fired in the kiln. After the first fire, the ware is rock hard and called bisque. In the second class, scheduled on the Glaze Tools calendar, students glaze (paint) their bisque. Glaze dries quickly (about 30 minutes) and when dried, glazeware is fired in the kiln. After glaze-fired, completed projects are wrapped in bubble wrap, by the volunteer, student, or teacher, to protect them during transport home. Discuss with the teacher their preference on who will wrap the project.

### Timeline for Creating Projects

Create Project ->	Dry->	Fire (Load & Unload) ->	Glaze ->	Fire (Load & Unload) ->	Wrap ->	Return Project
Student = 1 hour	2 weeks	by 9:00 AM & 8:00 AM	Student = 1 hour	by 9:00 AM noon, next day	Discuss who wraps with teacher	To teacher

**Essential Reading...**Refer to the 3 training documents, *Molding, Glazing and Firing*. They will serve as your foundation for success. Also, explore the CAP supplies and glazes in the PTA closet.



**How it Works...**Each class gets enough clay to make 2-3 projects this year. For younger grades, we stock 6 x 6-inch bisque tiles. Tiles are a good first project for the TK/Kinder age group and for first-time volunteers. It only requires one glaze session with students and one firing. Each volunteer's time commitment is anywhere from 3-8 hours per project, depending on who serves in the coordinating role, and the project difficulty.

### Age-Appropriate Projects and Inspiration for Projects

Look for projects that are age appropriate. Introduce students to different clay techniques based on their age and prior experience with clay. Try to include information that enhances the children's understanding of what clay is. Let the children feel and manipulate the clay. Teach students with clay skill-building techniques in mind.

<b>K-1st:</b> Demonstrate the <b>Pinch and Pull</b> Method using clay
<b>2nd Grade:</b> Demonstrate the <b>coil, slip and score</b> technique using clay
<b>3rd Grade:</b> Create a recognizable form using the <b>slab</b> method in clay
<b>4th Grade:</b> Demonstrate the <b>additive and subtractive</b> methods using clay
<b>5th Grade:</b> Combine a <b>variety of clay methods</b> to create a 3D Form using clay

Training tools and lesson plans can be found on our Pinterest Board -> <https://www.pinterest.com/DianeFromCA/ceramic-arts-clay-kiln/> We also have a Lesson Plans laminated in the PTA closet as well as a file box of project templates for inspiration.

See our CAP Facebook page to for postings of past projects. -> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FHECAP/>

***Below are age-appropriate projects, but feel free to choose your own project***

- Kindergarten/TK – Pinch pot, cookie cutter magnets or ornaments, handprint tile or trivet
- First Grade – Pinch pot pumpkin, leaf or heart trinket dish, , fossil pendant, gingerbread man
- Second Grade – Coil votive candle holder, hand project, nature plaque or dish
- Third Grade – Owl, coil mug or coil basket, garden flower plant stakes
- Fourth Grade – Letter tile, wide-mouth monster or fish, medieval castle, pinch pot fairy house,
- Fifth Grade – Holiday village, roses, coil landscape, plant pocket wall plaque
- *Can I make a coffee mug?* Sadly, no. We use low fire clay, which is porous. It's great for decorative items but will never be waterproof. Mugs/vases filled with water may be damp or leak.

### Keys

Signed out in the office on the Key Log. We have 4 sets of PTA Closet keys, color coded. Each set includes a key to the PTA closet and keys to the kiln shed. We also have 4 sets of Kiln-Only keys. These should be used when you need to access to the kiln shed on weekends and holidays. The kiln-only set includes a campus-fence gate key which opens the exterior gate by the bike racks.

*NOTE: The PTA closet is alarmed from 6:00 PM to 7:30 AM on school days, weekends and holidays. If the alarm is triggered, a reset-alarm fee of \$250 is charged.*

### Helpful Information...

**Make Extras.** Projects sometimes break so it's best to make a few extra pieces for back up. If a child is absent, have someone make one for them. Also, ceramics make great teacher gifts or extras can be donated to our sample projects box, in the PTA closet.

**Storage.** Transport your greenware to the kiln shed for the 2-week drying period.

- Greenware is extremely fragile. *We highly recommend you transport projects the same day they're made to prevent possible breakage.* Please label your boxes with your teacher's name.
- Transport boxes are flat, stackable boxes used to store and transport projects (Costco fruit boxes work well). For one classroom you will need 3-4 boxes.



## Supplies Available in the PTA Supply Closet \*

### MOLDING/CREATING

- Clay, slip, 6 x 6 bisque tiles
- Fired projects for inspiration
- Wire clay cutters and multi-slab cutter (2)
- Mats, rolling pins, wooden dowels
- Plywood boards
- Spray bottles; small bowls for water
- Sculpting tools
- Cutting tools (count before & after)
- Texture tools, rollers, stamps, letters
- Stencils – in file box/s
- Straws (for making holes)
- Paper towels
- Reusable tablecloths
- Buckets/brushes/sponges for washing tools

### GLAZING

- Paint brushes
- Glazes
- Glaze color tiles -take standing ones to class
- Colored plastic bowls for glazes
- Stir sticks, crystal glaze must be stirred well
- Spatulas for scraping glaze from bowls
- Fine tip applicator bottles
- Paper towels
- Reusable tablecloths
- Buckets for washing brushes & bowls
- Sponges and brushes for cleaning
- Bubble wrap (for finished project)
- Masking tape for labeling wrapped projects

\* ***During times when pandemic restrictions are in place: Only disposable supplies are to be given to students.*** Disposable supplies include skewers for cutting clay, plastic cutlery for scratch and attach, 11 x 17 paper for clay mats, zip top bags, paper bags, souffle cups/lids, paint brushes, biodegradable plates and bowls, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. Any reusable items used are to be disinfected after use. Supplies not mentioned above are not provided by the PTA.

## Six Stages of Clay

- **Slip:** Clay that is in liquid form, used to pour into molds or used as glue to bind two pieces of moist clay together. Slip is used for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade vase project.
- **Wet or Plastic Clay:** Workable stage, molding stage, can recycle, can join to other pieces.
- **Leather-Hard:** Although it's still semi-moist it is strong enough to support itself and keep its shape when pressure is applied. This is when designs can be carved, or a handle added.
- **Greenware or Bone Dry:** Clay when it is air-dried. It is very fragile, and a tiny nudge could easily damage it. Any excess moisture left in a piece will produce steam when fired and may explode.
- **Bisqueware or Bisque:** Has been fired once in kiln and cannot be recycled. Glazing stage.
- **Glazeware:** Projects that have been fired once (bisque) then glazed and fired again to enable it to hold liquids. Glazes create a glassy coating in the desired color. Mixing glazes corrupts the formula and creates unpredictable results.

## Firing / Kiln

We encourage classrooms to share the kiln for the firing projects. Greenware can touch and gently stacked, therefore a lot of greenware can fit into the kiln. Please watch these videos on loading the kiln.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7bIPvnZ24Q> (5:50) and [https://youtu.be/-HuhyFPa\\_-Y](https://youtu.be/-HuhyFPa_-Y) (2:39).



## Project Timeline

### Gather Supplies: 15 minutes

- Bring your transport boxes with you. These are flat (3-4 inches high), stackable boxes to transport projects. Label your boxes with your teacher's name. Store on top shelf in PTA closet or at home.
- In the office, sign in on the Raptor computer and print or obtain your name tag.
- Sign out the keys on key log, located in the bottom drawer, right side.
- Gather supplies from the PTA supply closet. Use the generic Lesson Plan list hanging on the glaze tile wall. Access to school office and PTA closet is available from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM.
- Plan to cut the clay in the classroom or keep covered with plastic wrap if it will not be used right away.
- Additional supplies for your specific project may include paper plates or bowls, straws, stencils, texture tools or impression rollers. Don't forget to bring a sample or picture of the finished project.

### Create the Project: 1 – 2 hours

- Set up the classroom before students arrive, if possible (about 10 minutes)
- Explain and demonstrate the project to students.
- Coordinate with the teacher to use the Lady Bug Viewer (about 10 minutes)
- Students create the project (about 40 minutes)
- Assure each project has student's name and is written legibly, then place in the transport boxes.
- Place clay scraps back in the plastic clay bag. Spray with water. Re-brick, then reseal bag.
- Fill bucket with water, ¼ full; have students place tools into bucket. Use sponges to wipe desks, etc.
- Return unused supplies to the PTA closet.
- Transport projects to the kiln shed the same day, while they are still moist.

### Dry Projects: 2 weeks

Projects should be allowed to dry for *two full weeks*. Larger or thicker projects should be allowed at least three full weeks to dry, e.g., castles, or anything thicker than your pinky finger. It's important that projects are fully dried before being fired in the kiln. Damp projects contain water, which turns into steam when heated, which will cause the piece to explode in the kiln.

### Fire Greenware. Load the Kiln (30 minutes) – Unload 27-28 Hours Later

***Please have the Kiln Loaded and Started by 9:00 AM, then unloaded around 2:00 PM the next day.***

- Follow the Kiln Instructions, posted on wall in the kiln shed. Instructions are similar for firing both GREENWARE and GLAZEWARE except :
  - FIRE CONE 04 = Greenware at SPD Slow. FIRE CONE 06 = Glazeware at SPD Medium
  - The cone and speed (SPD) are what set the firing temperature and length of time.
- Turn on EnviroVent fan before loading, then off at unloading. Switch is on the cord behind the kiln.
- Load kiln so that projects and shelves are 2" away from the thermocouple. The thermocouple is the stick with the black tip protruding from the sidewall of the kiln, a few inches from the top of the kiln.
- Greenware may touch one another and may be gently stacked on top of each other. Once Greenware is fired it becomes rock hard, will not easily break and is called bisqueware.

### Glaze Projects: 1-2 hours

- Educate students on glaze options and offer 3-5 glaze choices. Bring standing color tiles to classroom
  - Opaque glazes are solid color and cover imperfections in the surface.
  - Sheer glazes allow surface textures or design to show through.
  - Crystal glazes create bright multi color bursts and specks unique in every firing. Apply 2-3 coats of glaze on the project.



- Instruct students to apply 2-3 coats of glaze and let dry between each coat.
- Use lighter colors first. If student wants areas to be white, instruct them not to glaze that area.
- Glaze colors may look very different before firing, Place glazes in colored bowls matching their color.
- All our glazes are non-toxic, do not stain clothing, clean up with soap and water and are food safe. However, crystal glazes should not be used for food items as the surface may be difficult to clean.
- Return unused glazes back to their bottle, using a spatula.
- In the classroom, wash tools, brushes, wipe glaze bottles. Return unused supplies to the PTA closet.
- When in the closet, do a clay check, then apply clear glaze to any unglazed surfaces.

### **Fire Glazeware. Load the Kiln (30 minutes) – Unload 24 Hours Later**

Glazeware are projects that have been fired once (bisque) and painted with glaze. *Glazed pieces must be stilted with the project resting on the metal prongs.* Glazeware may not touch each other or the kiln walls. Leave about a ½ inch between each piece. Glaze melts and fuses to the clay during the kiln firing process. Any part of a project that touches the kiln, shelves, or posts, will fuse together and damage both items. *Please read the document Firing / Using the Kiln.* For detailed information and procedures on loading and operating the kiln and please watch this short video -> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HuhyFPa\\_-Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HuhyFPa_-Y)

### **Using Bisque Tiles – Tips for Best Results**

- You can draw your design with a pencil prior to painting; the pencil lines will burn off when fired.
- You can write the child's name on the bisque with glaze. Use the Fine Tip Applicator Bottles to write names, dates, or details. Test writing on a paper plate first.
- You will get your best result by keeping your design simple, using just a few colors.
- You should apply 2-3 coats of glaze for the true shade of the glaze. Allow one coat to dry before applying the second/third coats.
- Try to avoid 'globs' of paint, they can blister and explode or drip during firing.
- You may paint on the sides of your tile to provide a finished look for a trivet or wall plaque but try not paint on the back of the tile. If attaching a hanger or feet for a trivet, DO paint the back on the area you wish to glue something. Remember to apply clear glaze to any unglazed white spaces.

### **Training Materials and Resources**

- CAP Orientation, Molding, Glazing, Firing/Using the Kiln can be found on the Folsom Hills PTA -> Ceramic Arts Program webpage: <https://fhe.fcusd.org/culture-climate/pta/ceramic-arts-program>
- CAP Pinterest Board: <https://pin.it/22yhoH7>
- FHE CAP Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FHECAP/>

### **Please Ask Questions, Let Us Know of Issues and Report Problems**

If you have questions, concerns or need help or information, please call, text, or email us. For issues that need immediate assistance, we respond quickly to text messages or phone calls. If the issue can wait a day or two, please email us. Email also works well to let us know if something is missing or broken.

### **Thank You!**

We are happy that you've decided to volunteer for the Ceramic Arts program. You have our sincere thanks and appreciation. Without your support, the program would not exist. We hope you have a fun and rewarding experience. If you have questions or need help, just call, or text us.

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