



Getting Ahead at Las Artes

Las Artes Arts and Education Center offers a unique learning environment for youth ages 17-22 supported by Pima County. Structured classroom study combined with community art projects allow students to prepare for GED testing while building employability skills. Students participate in making mosaic art murals that beautify neighborhoods, libraries, and other public buildings throughout Pima

County. The goal for Las Artes students is to make a positive transition into education or sustainable employment.

Many of these students have not been successful in traditional schools and are at risk for un- and under-employment, low paying jobs, and a cycle of poverty. While at Las Artes, students benefit emotionally, financially and academically from support on a variety of related issues ranging from language barriers, anger management, legal intervention, and child care.

Through the GED and job training program, students begin to see a way forward, but they often need additional support for long-term planning, imagining their lives in new ways, and creating concrete plans for future careers. *Getting Ahead* is an intensive 50-hour class where students dialogue and use a mental models to envision their current life, the life they would like to have (called their “future story”) and the qualities their community would possess if it were a prosperous community for all. They analyze the hurdles facing individuals moving out of poverty; assess their own resources; set goals that bring stability to their living situations; and identify strategies to build resources, social capital and opportunities.

While *Getting Ahead* drives each student to create his or her future story, more support is needed. Mentoring Pods meet twice a month over lunch with two to three students and two mentors, one a workforce development specialist and the other a community volunteer. Mentors are caring adults who are good listeners and help students solve problems, build resources, and define their next steps.

Interested in mentoring or knowing more? Contact:

Patty Short, Las Artes Education Coordinator

patty.short@pima.gov (520) 724-5112 (office)

Las Artes Center 23 W 27th St. Tucson, AZ 85713

