

# PASADENA STAR-NEWS

Monday, August 16, 1999 ♦ www.pasadenastarnews.com

## Cartoon creations animate students

### Summer school's creative project uses arts programs to captivate young minds

By David Zahniser  
STAFF WRITER

**PASADENA** — Ninth-grader Jazmin Horta will never watch the "Powerpuff Girls" the same way again.

After spending six weeks working on her own animated feature, a 30-second cartoon featuring an angry crimson fish, the Washington Accelerated School summer student now appreciates the work that goes into cartoons.

These days, when she sees TV creations such as "Animaniacs" and the Cartoon Network's "Powerpuff" trio, she knows it's more than just a few pictures.

"I thought it was less drawing," said the 14-year-old. "I learned that you're supposed to trace a lot and color a lot."

Washington is the first of six Learning Centers in the Pasadena Unified School District, and it's using grant funding to supplement existing academic programs. Working with the arts agency known as the Light Bringer Project, the summer

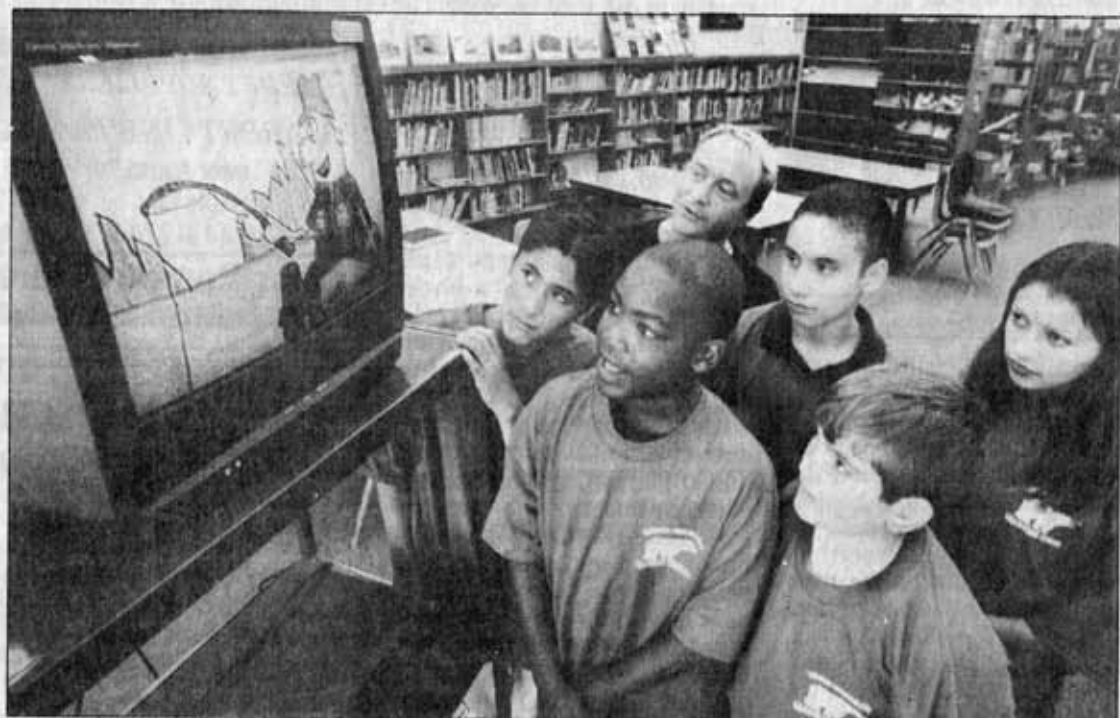
school offered a series of new creative classes, including music, drawing, dance and animation.

The arts programs were designed to captivate summer school students, many of whom have difficulty academically or need to catch up on their classes, said Light Bringer spokeswoman Patricia Hurley.

"We're trying to approach them from every angle, so that maybe if one area doesn't interest them, another one will," she said.

Twenty kids spent the first hour of each day drawing, tracing and coloring in two 30-second animated Public Service Announcements, one with an anti-graffiti message and the other dealing the environment. In the first, an elephant punishes an ant for spray-painting in places he shouldn't; in the second, a fish loses his temper over the increasing pollution of the sea.

Jose Belmontes, 13, said the work seemed boring at first. But as the two hand-drawn, hand-colored cartoons came together, he grew distressed that summer school was ending.



Staff photo by WALT MANCINI

**PUBLIC SERVICE CARTOONS** were created row, from left, teacher Nigel Zeid, Jose Velmontes and Jazmin Horta. Organizers plan to submit the spots to Nickelodeon.

"I wish this program wouldn't finish, that it would keep on going," he said.

Working with Nigel Zeid, an instructor with the Hollywood-based AnimAction, the students completed 560 drawings, or nearly 10 drawings for each second of cartoon.

Students learned about "in-betweening," the handful of drawings needed to take a character from one position to another. In one scene, to give the

fish the appearance of movement, students traced the creature in the same position over and over, then drew underwater plants that passed by in the foreground.

The principle is the same when various houses and trees whiz by behind Fred Flintstone's car, said student Andrew Vasquez.

"I didn't know that could happen till I tried it," he said.

As arts programs continue at

Washington, organizers plan to submit the 30-second spots to the children's cable channel Nickelodeon. But a more immediate payoff came this week, when Washington held its end-of-school party. Nearly 600 students who saw the two cartoons responded with applause.

"It made us so happy," said seventh-grader Robert Barron.

"That was like the best day," Vasquez added.