

Inspire. Imagine. Innovate.

ECA SPOTLIGHT Volume 2

October 2025




aces ECA
Educational Center for the Arts

OCTOBER AT ECA: “Falling” Into Creativity

Dear ECA Community,

October is a month of momentum at ECA as our students are settling into routines, collaborations are blooming, and the campus is buzzing with artistry. Fall brings new energy, and with it, incredible opportunities to showcase our talents and strengthen our community. We are still glowing from the success of our Back-to-School Night. It was an amazing evening filled with energy and connection, as so many of our families, both new and returning, joined us. The 30 minutes of mingling in the Gallery gave families and staff a chance to connect in meaningful ways, and the student performances from across our five departments were nothing short of incredible while our supportive PACE presidents were there to talk about their initiatives for another successful year ahead! The night truly reflected the heart of ECA in artistry, community, and collaboration. This month, we're especially excited to:

 Our first Coffee House of the school year will be held on October 9.

 Kick off preparations for our school-wide musical, *Once*, with auditions being held on October 28th.

 Celebrate our theme: Listening, Learning, and Grace—a reminder of the values guiding us in classrooms, studios, and on stage.

Our staff continues to work hard behind the scenes to create space for your children to thrive as artists and as people. Thank you for your partnership and for entrusting us with their growth.

With pumpkin-spiced gratitude,

Stefanie

Stefanie Savo, Principal
Amy Christman, Assistant Principal
Julie Massaro, School Counselor
Marsha Guglielmino, School Nurse
Seth Harris, Technical Director
Ashley Hernandez, Secretary
Nazorine Paglia, Dance Interim
Ingrid Schaeffer, Theatre
Saul Fussiner, Creative Writing
Johanna Bresnick, Visual Arts
Amy Christman, Music

October Highlights

**PACE Meeting - Tuesday, October 7
6PM (Zoom)**

Picture Days - Oct 20 & 21

Auditions for *Once* Monday, October 28

College Visits – UConn, University of New Haven, and more throughout the month

Fall Arts Showcases – Dept Info in Newsletter

THEATRE NEWS

Dear Theatre Families,

Welcome to an exhilarating season in the ECA Theatre Department! As we dive into the fall semester, our students are immersed in a wide range of dynamic classes and exciting opportunities to perform, create, and grow. With rich texts, vibrant movement, and powerful ensemble work, this season promises to be one of our most inspiring yet. We're thrilled to share with you what our young artists have been up to and what lies ahead.

In addition to their classroom experiences, our students will attend a special performance of *Spunk* by Nora Neale Hurston at the Yale Repertory Theatre on **Wednesday, October 15**. We will return to ECA at **4:30 PM**, after the buses have departed. Please plan to pick up your child at that time. On **Thursday, October 16**, we'll be joined by a few of the actors and musicians from *Spunk* for a rich discussion and behind-the-scenes insight into the production. This promises to be a valuable experience in connecting performance with professional artistry.

On **Tuesday, October 28**, we will hold our musical *Once* auditions. All students auditioning have been given audition requirements, a student form to fill out as well as a contract to be signed by their parent/guardian committing to the after-school rehearsal schedule.

Junior and Senior Theatre classes – under the direction of Benjamin Curns, are diving deep into Shakespeare's *As You Like It*—a romantic comedy brimming with love, wit, dancing, and reflection. Set in the early-to-mid 20th century with lively swing choreography by Pam Newell, this vibrant production will also be featured at the 3rd Annual Elm Shakespeare Youth Festival. Join us for the performance on **December 4 at 6:30 PM** on the Loffredo Stage at the Little Theatre.

Acting I – students, led by Ingrid Schaeffer and Liz Daingerfield, are laying the foundation of their craft by exploring Stanislavsky's system and Uta Hagen's exercises. They are delving into personal truth and asking the essential question, "Who am I?" Their work will be shared through Open Scene Exercises on **December 8 and 9** on the Loffredo Stage at the Little Theatre.

Acting II – Ensemble & Exploration, a unique blend of returning and new seniors are building a powerful ensemble guided by Erin Gorski and Ruben Ortiz. Through Meisner techniques, shared text work, and deep character discovery, this class is shaping up to be a celebration of growth and collaboration. Their culminating performance will be held on **December 18 at 6:30 PM**, on the Loffredo Stage at the Little Theatre

IMPROV II, students led by Brett Eptsein, are diving into ensemble building games Machines, Locations and World's Worst. We are ensuring CROW (Character/Relationship/Objective/Where) is present in every improv scene and exercise.

College & Monologue Prep – students led by Brett Epstein are taking time to explore themes and topics for successful college essays. We've written the first draft of these essays, and we've researched contrasting monologues for each student to finalize and present on a mock audition day in class.

Viewpoints – juniors are diving into the improvisational framework developed by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau. Each class begins with Sun Salutations to tune the ensemble and awaken the body. Through this process, students are developing heightened awareness, spontaneity, and instinctive creativity in performance. Our fabulous Pamela Newell leads this class.

Movement II – students are expanding their physical vocabulary by refining body awareness and applying Rudolf Laban's movement techniques. This exploration allows them to embody character through emotional and imaginative physicality—an essential skill for any performer.

Voice and Speech I – first-year students are learning to greet the stage with presence. Under the guidance of James Luse, they are developing vocal projection, articulation, and spatial awareness through playful and imaginative scenarios designed to build confidence and vocal strength.

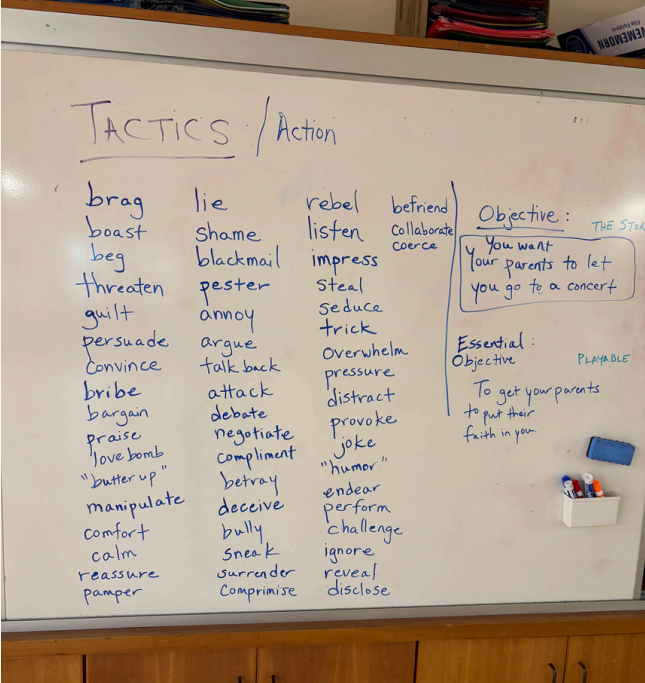
Voice and Speech II – students are preparing a moving and creative presentation of Langston Hughes's Advertisement for the Waldorf Astoria. Through this tribute, they are exploring vocal texture, movement, and character transformation—giving voice to both ends of the economic spectrum in a thought-provoking piece.

Voice and Speech III – our most advanced students are crafting original works using the International Phonetic Alphabet and playing with the sounds of language. Through poetic sound portraits and the manipulation of plosives and nasals, they are blending articulation with artistic innovation.

Origins of Theatre – students led by Liz Daingerfield are traveling back to ancient Greece to explore the roots of performance. They've engaged with text from Trojan Women and even created their own Satyr plays, gaining insight into the vibrant theatrical traditions of the Festival of Dionysus.

We are so proud of the work being done across all levels of our Theatre Department and look forward to sharing these exciting performances and experiences with you. Thank you for your continued support of the arts and of your child's artistic journey.

With excitement and gratitude,
The ECA Theatre Faculty
Ingrid Schaeffer
Chair, ECA Theatre Department



MUSIC NEWS

ECA musicians jumped into the school year with enthusiasm, thoughtfully establishing practice routines, discovering ensemble dynamics, and engaging in new approaches to theory and musicianship. Many students are enrolled in new courses being offered in our renovated music technology suite. This suite is the new home of ECA Studios, our very own recording studio, as well as fifteen digital audio workstations with full-size midi-keyboards and iMac computers. Teaching artist Jibril Hakim is offering courses including Audio Engineering, Music Production, and Songwriting. Over the course of the year, we will explore additional opportunities for music department students to learn from and in this space.

September events included a vocal workshop with guest artist and ECA alumnae Surrenity Williams, a thrilling jazz quartet performance by Dontae, Scarlett, Linus, and Ben for ECA Back to School Night, and our first Wednesday Workshop, which included an informal performance by our String Studio and a walking field trip to The Dome at the Yale Schwarzman Center to experience the art installation *Celestial Garden* by visual artist Leo Villareal.

Looking ahead, many of our students will perform in a fundraiser for ECA at 4pm on Sunday, October 5, hosted by the New Haven Chorale. Our choir, as well as many soloists, and a jazz trio will be featured at this afternoon concert, alongside ECA creative writing, dance, and theatre students. Our Tri-M National Honor Society chapter is planning the first Coffee House of the year, which will be held on Thursday, October 9. We hope you can join us!

Amy Christman
Chair, ECA Music Department



DANCE NEWS

This semester, we are excited to welcome our alumna, Khaili Dingle-King, who is interning with the Dance Department. She will be setting a hip-hop repertory piece on the freshman class, which will be performed in Rough Edges this December.

In addition, we are proud to be hosting our first HBCU dance audition in partnership with Alabama University in the coming weeks. We look forward to extending this opportunity to our entire dance community.

Finally, we are thrilled that the Alvin Ailey II company will be in town on Saturday, October 18th, and many of our dancers will be attending this inspiring performance.

Nazorine Paglia

Interim Chair, ECA Dance Department



CREATIVE WRITING NEWS

Our students had the opportunity to experience some truly unique and inspiring exhibits, and we wanted to highlight just a few of the moments captured:

Unfolding Events: Artists' Books – exploring the creativity and innovation of book arts.

Textured Stories: Japanese Chirimen Books – discovering the beauty and history of these rare, fabric-like creations.

The Celestial Garden – an immersive journey into an imaginative world of art and storytelling.

These experiences not only deepened our students' appreciation for the arts but also connected directly to the creative work they are doing here at ECA.

Saul Fussiner
Chair, ECA Creative Writing Department



Questions for thought partners:

listener ask the writer / Where do you think this is going / what's next?
 What else is happening that's not on the page yet?

writer ask the listener / what is most interesting to you about this so far?
 What are you wondering?

Charles

WORKSHOP -
 Mon - Tal Giam, Mead, Fr
 Tues - Hanna, Foster, Cam



VISUAL ARTS NEWS

A few highlights from around the department:

In Drawing & Painting students have been making observational cut-outs and collages

Printmaking class is working on three-color linocuts

Digital Photography students have been studying natural light and composition, and learning to edit with Adobe Photoshop.

This year's Portfolio Day event will be on October 22 and 23 from 1-4pm. This exclusive recruitment fair is one of the largest events of its kind in New England and is held exclusively for ECA Visual Arts students. Admissions counselors 25-30 top art schools and programs from around the country come every year to ECA to review student portfolios and provide direct feedback. Juniors and seniors will participate in portfolio reviews, while 9th and 10th graders will tour the event and see college presentations. Mark your calendar! The Opening Reception for our first quarter Visual Arts Show is Thursday, October 30, 5:00-7:00 PM. Family and friends are invited to come celebrate the hard work of our young artists. Quarterly art shows are held in the gallery and 5th floor at 55 Audubon Street.

Please note: All Visual Arts students are required to attend their quarterly show Opening Receptions. Please plan accordingly for transportation.

2025-2026 Visual Arts Opening Receptions:

October 30, 2025 — 5:00-7:00 PM

January 22, 2026 — 5:00-7:00 PM

March 26, 2026 — 5:00-7:00 PM

June 4, 2026 — 5:00-7:00 PM

Hanni Bresnick

Chair, ECA Visual Arts Department



ECA TECH NEWS

PICS & INFO

1. One of the new Arts Hall intelligent lighting fixtures; ETC High End Systems MiniStar.
2. Gretchen explaining paint brush technique to the Theatre first years in our stagecraft workshop.
3. The new Arts Hall audio mixer; Midas M32 Live Digital Audio Console.
4. Gretchen showing the completed "brick" paint job that the students painted collaboratively under Gretchen's guidance.
5. The new Arts Hall audio rack, including the DSP (digital signal processor), DSP interface, wireless receivers, and amplifiers.

ECA TECH DEPT

Tech Director: Seth Harris

Tech Assistant: Gretchen Damato







Be a part of PACE! – Parents for Arts-Centered Education

PACE is a parent-led organization that plays a vital role in enriching the student experience at ECA. Through fundraising, volunteering, and advocacy, PACE helps support performances, provide scholarships, and fund essential supplies that keep creativity thriving at our school.

The best part is there's no membership application! All ECA parents are automatically part of this welcoming community. PACE meets once a month via Zoom, and all parents are encouraged to join in and get involved.

 [PACE Website](#)

 [PACE on Facebook](#)

PACE is proudly led by Co-Presidents Ali Parmelee & Amy Gray, who work tirelessly to support our students and school community. Together, we can make a lasting impact at ECA!

♥ Upcoming Tuesday Meeting Dates and zoom link : [Join via Zoom](#)

- September 9, 2025
- October 7, 2025 *** NEW DATE***
- November 11, 2025
- December 9, 2025
- January 13, 2026
- February 10, 2026
- March 10, 2026
- April 14, 2026
- May 12, 2026
- June 9, 2026

Please join us online on Tuesday, October 7 at 6:00 PM for our next parent Zoom meeting.

We'll be brainstorming PACE's support initiatives for the 2025–26 school year. There's no commitment required – just an easy, convenient way to share your ideas. The more parents who participate, the stronger our collective impact will be.

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Picture Day is Coming!

¡Ya llega el Día de la Foto!

Monday, October 20 and Tuesday, October 21, 2025

ACES Educational Center For The Arts



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You can place your order on mylifetouch.com using your Picture Day ID: EVTNBB4QX.

Order before midnight on Picture Day to get FREE shipping!

Your child can also bring their completed flyer with cash or check on Picture Day. Orders after Picture Day must be placed online only on mylifetouch.com.

SCHEDULE

- Theatre and Visual Art Departments – October 20
- Creative Writing, Dance, and Music Departments – October 21

 **Important Note:** October 20 and 21 are the only scheduled Picture Days. While each department has an assigned date, students may be photographed on the alternate day if time allows.

 **Make-Up Day:** Tuesday, December 2 from 2:00–4:00 PM



Community and Family Engagement

EDUCATOR INVITATION

Beginning of the Year Kick-Off


**WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 22, 2025**

WE ARE ON THE SAME TEAM



You're invited to a professional gathering designed to strengthen family-school-community partnerships! Educators will:

- Engage in meaningful dialogue with families and community partners.
- Gain strategies and tools for enhancing family engagement.
- Participate in breakout sessions tailored to building collaboration and student success.
- Network with colleagues and community leaders.

 Refreshments provided – fuel up while sharing ideas and best practices!



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2025

Your paragraph text



2:00–3:30 PM



SDA BUILDING

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