



Ceramic Arts Program Volunteer Orientation

You've Volunteered... Where to Start?

- 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, and the Gated Wait Area.

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 the kiln, uncheck the 'All Day' box and enter your loading time. You can choose to load 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 and unload the kiln before 8:00 AM. 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 class session (scheduled on the Clay Tools calendar), the students mold raw clay then wait at 2 weeks for their greenware to dry. Greenware is then fired in the kiln. After firing the ware is called bisque. In the second class session (scheduled on the Glaze Tools calendar), the students glaze (paint) their bisque. Glaze dries quickly (10 minutes) and when dried, glazeware is fired in the kiln. After glaze-fired, completed projects are wrapped 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 & 8:00 AM	Discuss who wraps with teacher	To teacher



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 that 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 role of lead, and project difficulty.

Please read and refer to the 3 training documents, *Molding, Glazing and Firing*. They will serve as your foundation for the success of your projects. Also, explore the CAP supplies and glazes in the PTA closet.

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

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

understanding of what clay is and how it has been used for thousands of years by every culture. Let the children feel and manipulate the clay. Teach students with clay skill-building techniques in mind.

Training tools and sample lesson plans can be found on our Pinterest Board -> <https://www.pinterest.com/DianeFromCA/ceramic-arts-clay-kiln/> We also have a file box of cardboard project templates in the PTA closet that you can use as inspiration. And check out our CAP Facebook page to see postings of past projects. -> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FHECAP/>

Below are age-appropriate project. Feel free to be creative and choose your own project. Lesson plans for some projects are available in the PTA closet or on our FHE CAP Facebook page:

- Kindergarten/TK – Pinch pot, cookie cutter magnets or ornaments, handprint, or holiday tiles,
- First Grade – Leaf dish, picture frame, fossil pendant, gingerbread man (red clay)
- Second Grade – Votive candle holder, hand project nature plaque or dish
- Third Grade – Owl, letter tile plaque, coil mug or coil basket, garden plant stakes
- Fourth Grade – Wide-mouth monster or fish, robot dish, castle, pinch pot fairy house,
- Fifth Grade – Vase, plant pocket wall plaque, historical American flag, 3D landscape.

Keys

Keys need to be signed out in the office on the Key Log. We have 4 sets of PTA Closet keys. 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 for 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 and on weekends and holidays. If the alarm is triggered, a reset-alarm fee of \$250 is charged.

Helpful Information...

Make Extras

Projects do break. It's always best to make extra pieces for back up. If a child is absent for the molding date, make a project for the child or schedule a make-up date with the teacher. 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 hand-carry your wares in transport boxes 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 depending upon the size of the project and number of students. Please store empty boxes at home when not actively being used.

Supplies Available in the PTA Supply Closet *

MOLDING/CREATING

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

GLAZING

- Paint brushes
- Glazes
- Fired color tile samples
- Colored plastic bowls for glazes
- Stir sticks, 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 5th 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 (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 at home when not in use.
- In the office, sign in on the Volunteer log. Sign out the keys on key log. Obtain your name tag.
- Gather supplies from the PTA supply closet. Use the list on the prior page as a resource. Access to closet is available from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM.
 - Clay dries out quickly. Cut the clay in the classroom and 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 and a sample 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 30 minutes)
- Assure each project is clearly labeled with each student's name, then place in the transport boxes.
- Clean up in the classroom. Wash tools, brushes, wipe glaze bottles, etc.
- Return unused supplies to the PTA closet.
- Transport projects to the kiln shed the same day.
- Place clay scraps back in the plastic clay bag. Spray with water if necessary. Re-brick, then seal bag.

Dry Projects: 2 weeks

Projects ½ inch thick or less 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*. It's important that projects are fully dried before being fired in the kiln. Damp projects or projects that are too thick or not vented will explode in the kiln.

Fire Greenware. Load the Kiln (30 minutes) – Unload 24 Hours Later

Please have the Kiln Loaded and Started by 9:00 AM, then unloaded by 8:00 AM 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**. This is what sets 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 (dried but unfired clay) may touch one another and may be delicately stacked.
- Greenware that is not fully dried or too thick, think a solid baseball, may explode in the kiln causing damage to the kiln and your projects. Always make a vent hole in solid pieces, for steam to escape. Once Greenware is fired it becomes rock hard, will not easily break and is called bisqueware.

Glaze Projects: 1-2 hours

- Pick up bisqueware from kiln shed.
- Educates students on glaze options and process. Offer 3-5 glaze choices. Bring sample tiles. We stock opaque (solid color), semi-translucent (shows darker color in the creases) and crystal glazes (glaze with multi-color flecks). Apply 2-3 coats of glaze on the project. Allow to dry between applications. Use lighter colors first, let it dry (usually 5 minutes), then apply darker color/s. If you want areas to be



white, do not apply glaze. Volunteer will apply clear glaze after class.

- Often glaze colors look very different before firing, greens are often orange. Place glazes in colored bowls matching their color.
- There are a few glazes that are not food-safe (list is posted next to the color tile board).
- 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

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 must 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, paint that area with clear glaze. Remember to apply a coat of clear glaze to any unglazed white spaces that will be visible.

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://www.fcusd.org/Page/36530>
- CAP Pinterest Board: <https://pin.it/22yhoH7>
- 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 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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