

“A Day In Clay” with Artist in Residence Cliff Mendelson at NRHS

As part of an Artist-in-Residence program at New Rochelle High School, students had the opportunity to observe work of a professional artist, sculptor, potter Cliff Mendelson as he worked with clay in a ceramic art room at the school on Wednesday, January 17.

“Through the magic of A Day in Clay, everyone - from kids to corporate executives - discovers how the art of clay crosses cultures and academic disciplines. Sometimes it is how a pot emerges from the wheel to a height of 3-feet, or it can be a simple hand-built mask or a pinch pot. We find that clay helps us tap that creative impulse that raises the ordinary to the extraordinary,” explains Cliff Mendelson. The artist is also an alumnus of NRHS.

Artist Cliff Mendelson shares his expertise and talent as he demonstrated the art of creating pottery on a wheel. Students enjoyed learning about the process and effort involved in creating ceramic pieces and gained an appreciation for the skill involved to make any work of Art. Through this presentation, students witnessed an artisan who succeeds at what he enjoys most, which is also his life’s work.

Students observed the artist create original works of art in an atmosphere that fosters inquiry, and involvement. Conversation and dialog are encouraged in light of how design (form and function) are an integral part of the creative process. Students received personal instruction as well.



Artist Cliff Mendelson provided individual assistance to NRHS students during the Day in Clay workshop. Shown working clay on pottery wheels are Katherine Taboada and Kerline Dieudonne.

Students felt inspired as a result of the hands on demonstrations of Cliff Mendelson and the ceramic works in progress.

Supervisor of the Music and Arts Dr. Domenic Guastaferrro adds, “This Artist-in-Residence workshop empowered students with knowledge concerning how art is made

and its connection to various cultures. It provided a first hand experience involving a working craftsman and the original works that were created by using his imagination and skill.”

Samples of finished works were discussed in light of the history of art in various

cultures and how its applications are alive in the world today, particularly with Native American, Greek, and Asian influence.

A display, coordinated by NRHS art teacher Grace Fraioli, of the ceramic pieces, with photos taken during the workshop, will be on exhibit in the main lobby showcase.