

Dear Families,

April 21, 2010

Today our art docent presentation was about Vincent Van Gogh. Vincent was born in Holland in 1853. He grew up in a very religious household because his father was a pastor. Vincent had many brothers and sisters. He was closest to his brother Theo who became his staunchest supporter. Vincent worked at many jobs, but because of intense emotions he did not stay employed for long. When Theo started to work for an art dealer he convinced Vincent to start painting. This became a great way for Vincent to express his feelings. He considered himself a failure because he could not keep a job and he only sold one painting during his life. Little did he know he was to become the world's most recognized painters. Today Van Gogh's paintings sell for millions of dollars.

We studied Van Gogh's most famous painting *Starry Night*. We talked about how Vincent mixed the colors of the paint right on the canvas and not on a palette. He also used short brush strokes to create texture and movement in the painting. Vincent wanted us to notice how nature can be a great force and how humans are subject to its whims. The night sky is filled with swirling clods and glowing stars. The town is dark and slumbering.

In our art project we swirled liquid watercolors through shaving cream to create the swirling clouds. We used crayons to fill in the stars and the town below. We went into a darkened room and looked at the stars by using a miniature planetarium. We worked together to point out constellations.

Lisa Halberg and Gina Cannata-Patterson art docents

