

Nonprofit Brings Arts Education to Under-Resourced Students Through Innovative Virtual Reality Field Trip Program

Act One's Virtual Reality Arts Immersion™ Field Trip is the Only Program of its Kind that Brings Art and Culture Experiences to Title I Classrooms at No Cost

PHOENIX, AZ, UNITED STATES, January 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Act One, a charitable organization in Arizona focused on providing arts education access to all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status or geographical location, is combining technology, education and arts with its groundbreaking virtual reality (VR) field trip program.



The VR field trip experience, also known as Arts Immersion™, is designed to provide a 360° immersive visual and audio journey for fifth- through 12th-grade students across the state.

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Thanks to virtual reality headsets and educator-built content, more than 31,000 students in Arizona have participated in this unique experience since its launch in 2021. The program is provided to Title I schools at no cost.

In an effort to expose students to vibrant storytelling, "Weaving Our Story," the most recent installment of the VR field trip content, focuses on Indigenous artists from Arizona. The multi-chapter experience includes Tyrrell Tapaha, a sixth generation Diné sheepherder, weaver and fiber artist, the Duncan Family, world champion hoop dancers, musicians and storytellers, and Janelle Stanley,

who grew up in the Navajo Nation and recently created a public art installation at Phoenix Sky

Harbor Airport as well as public installations in Downtown Phoenix and beyond.

"For 'Weaving Our Story,' we sought artists who work in traditional and modern Indigenous art forms that are not just educational, but also entertaining," said Dr. Beth Maloney, Executive Director of Act One. "We collaborated with an Indigenous Cultural Advisor and a Navajo Nation member and language teacher to ensure an authentic, responsible and respectful portrayal of Arizona's Indigenous cultures. We wanted to provide a safe and comfortable filming environment for our artists as well as ensure we are providing appropriate resources for teachers to support and extend the learning in classrooms."

Act One's immersive experience initially began with just 50 virtual reality headsets when the program launched in 2021. Since then, the fleet has grown to 150 headsets with specially designed travel cases known as "bus cases," two donated vans and Act One virtual reality field trip specialists who travel across the state to guide the VR learning experience.

"With education budgets in a state of flux and many schools across the nation being forced to cut arts programs and field trips, we have had to be creative with offerings that support our mission," said Dr. Maloney. "Arts education can be delivered in a variety of formats, but with Act One's VR field trip program, we are able to provide an innovative, growing, cost-effective and research-driven experience for middle and high school students and educators. Arts education is critical to today's students and their future successes, which is why we continue to invest in the Arts Immersion™ program."

Each of the two Act One Arts Immersion™ virtual reality experiences contains three chapters that



range in length from 8-10 minutes. Each chapter features at least one different art form or artist. All chapters tie together in an overarching, unifying theme.

The most recent VR installment was designed by a team of 18 Arizona State University students at MESH Labs in Mesa the Mix Center. Under the tutelage of Skye Lucking as Creative Director, they worked for more than a year and a half to film, edit and curate the immersive educational arts experience.

To ensure the VR program could effectively reach all participating students, Act One worked with MESH Labs to identify and address potential accessibility barriers, including providing tablets for students who cannot wear headsets, subtitles for multilingual learners and audio descriptions for students with visual impairments.

"Educational virtual reality experiences not only cultivate knowledge and appreciation of the arts but also inspire creativity and important discussions," Dr. Maloney concluded. "We are remarkably proud of the impact we are making for students who lack access to arts due to economic, geographic and logistical barriers and look forward to future opportunities for Act One to change the world one student at a time."

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Act One makes meaningful arts experiences accessible to thousands of children and families in Arizona each year through field trips for pre-K through 12-grade students from Title I schools. The nonprofit organization also brings arts education directly to the classroom with its unique Arts Immersion™ Virtual Reality Field Trip program launched in 2021. It also facilitates the Culture Pass program in libraries across the state. For more information about these programs visit, www.act1az.org

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