

Marcos de Niza High School is a diverse, Title 1 school in the Tempe Union High School district that currently serves 1500 students. Within Marcos de Niza is the Arts Academy, which hosts choir, orchestra, dance, band and theater events throughout the school year in the auditorium. This year students are collaborating in a spring production of Annie among many other concerts and a fall play. The Choir and Drama Parents (CDP) group is a small group of dedicated volunteers working to support the theater and choir programs, and the teachers and students involved. That support comes in many forms, including fundraising, creating and building sets for the shows, sewing costumes, providing support for the students during events, day-of event volunteering, and more.

This year, the CDP is focusing on bringing the school auditorium lighting and equipment up to current industry standards. Our goal is to create a safe, contemporary learning environment for our tech theater students to learn in, for our actors, singers, and musicians to perform in, and for our entire student body, teachers and staff to use as a place to come together as a community.

Open since 1971, the auditorium lighting, technology and equipment used by our students have become worn out, unsafe, or outmoded. Our tech theater teacher is teaching with outdated equipment, making due with what is on hand. While in years past the “scrappy,” get-it-done skill set was highly valued, these days, technology, tools, and the ability to use them well, are much more valued. Required, in fact. Safe technology and trained users, with hands-on experience, using contemporary technology, are what industry is looking for.

To that end, the CDP wants to provide students at Marcos de Niza with the safest, up to date work environment, equipment and tools available to kick start their careers and/or prepare them for higher education in the many theater related fields. We are seeking funding because lighting and equipment are very expensive and our fundraising efforts cover only a portion of costs needed to make the auditorium both a safe and contemporary learning environment.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Diablos for supporting our organization. Thanks to a previous Diablos grant, we were able to get the lighting upgrade started with the purchase of one new set of lights. This grant will allow us to finish the project.