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Ceramics Club

I joined the Ceramics Club looking for a quiet place to sit during lunchtime; Instead I found a community where I learned how to help others belong.

The DSHS Ceramics Club is more than just a place to make art – it is a space where students of all backgrounds, skill levels, and experiences can feel welcomed, supported, and free to express themselves without pressure or judgment.

I joined the club last year, looking for a safe space for my introverted personality and a creative outlet, but I found more: a community that has since become one of my closest friendships. That's how I came to understand how important it is to create an environment that makes students feel included and comfortable. A year spent in the club shaped my perspective on inclusion - it's not just an empty word or idea, but something that must be built actively, with intention, effort, and leadership. Now, as co-president, I am committed to making sure other students, especially those who may feel intimidated, isolated, or inexperienced, can find the same sense of belonging in Room A-06.

What is amazing and truly beautiful about ceramics – and art in general – is that there are no grades or pressure of expectations like in a classroom, there are no standards or deadlines, making it one of the best and most accessible creative outlets we believe each student at DSHS deserves to experience and enjoy.

Ceramics and art in general uniquely promote equity: there is no "right" or "wrong" way to create. This removes barriers for students who may struggle in traditional classrooms or who are hesitant to participate in structured environments or activities. Our club intentionally maintains a very relaxing, low-pressure atmosphere to ensure that creativity remains accessible to everyone, while also including peer-provided guidance and support.

These beliefs really shape our activities. For example, earlier this year, we partnered with the DSHS Best Buddies program for a Valentine's Day project, where their members joined us at lunch to glaze pieces our club had made for them. It turned out to be a core memory for our club, since everyone who participated took home a fun ceramic piece and enjoyed sweet treats in a relaxed environment. Inspired by how much fun everyone had at that event, we are now planning a similar event for Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week, inviting educators to come in during lunch time to relax, glaze, throw on the wheel, hand-build, or enjoy some snacks, drinks, and good music, since we believe taking a creative break matters for both students and teachers.

Everyone, regardless of their age, background, or current role, deserves the opportunity to create something that they can be proud of and feel valued and appreciated.

Beyond campus, our club has begun expanding opportunities for our students through real-world experiences that some might not otherwise have. In March, we secured a spot in the FADS spring market at UC Davis, where our members sold \$200 worth of ceramics, crochet, and artwork. For many students, this was their first experience sharing and selling their work. And it was easier to do as a team, supporting and cheering each other on. Doing this as a team made the experience more accessible and less intimidating, while also building confidence. These opportunities provide valuable exposure to artistic entrepreneurship – skills not typically covered in traditional classes – and empower students, regardless of their skills and art style, to see themselves as real creators within a larger community.

We're also planning how to create a more connected community in our school for the 2026-27 school year. We are brainstorming an idea for a ceramics "speed dating"-like event at the beginning of the school year to help new students, especially incoming sophomores, make new friends in a fun, interactive way. Participants will be paired across from each other with a shared project, rotating every five to ten minutes to work with someone new. From personal experience, other club officers and I understand that joining new clubs can feel intimidating. So we want to make it easier for any students to get acclimated to the campus - what better way to do that than through art?

To continue and expand these efforts, we are constantly seeking funding to support essential materials that keep our club accessible and inclusive.

Funding Plan

Item Estimated Cost:

Clay (100 lb) \$90

Glazes (12 bottles, 16 oz) \$180

Tools \$35–\$50

Snacks (for inclusive events) \$30–\$40

Total Estimated Cost \$335–\$360

These materials directly support our mission:

- Clay and tools ensure all students can participate regardless of financial ability
- Glazes allow students to complete and personalize their work
- Snacks help create a welcoming, low-pressure environment during community events

By creating a free and accessible environment, we remove financial barriers and ensure that all students – regardless of background and skills – can engage in creative

expression. With this funding, we hope to continue expanding a space where every student at DSHS feels welcome, supported, included, and empowered.