

# Walnut Studios helps students get hands-on arts experience

By Susan Hay Anchor/Producer Global News

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[Walnut Studios is a collection of four bright art studios](#) located in the heart of Toronto's downtown core that houses over 50 artists from a variety of disciplines.

Three years ago, Walnut Studios partnered up with the Toronto District School Board to create a new program called Specialist High Skills Majors to give high school students the opportunity to get hands on experience in the arts.

Rebecca Dileo teaches the visual arts curriculum at Central Commerce Collegiate, an inner-city school nestled in the heart of Toronto.

“When they come into the studio there's a great educational point,” said Dileo. “So they can see the images the artists have on their walls, they can see their sketchbooks, they can see the palette, the paint on the floor, so this is a real life image of the artistic process.”

The students not only get experience in the arts but they get to graduate with a red seal on their diploma that is now being recognized by post-secondary institutions.

“I think having arts programming was very important from the beginning because we really have a belief and philosophy of community culture engagement ” said Artistic Director at Walnut Studios Ilene Sova. “I think that as a young person if I had come in here my mind would've just exploded with the possibilities.”

During these workshops students not only learn about the art process, they learn the marketing and promotions side, prepping for a show, hanging and labelling work as well as hosting an event and making that sale directly with a buyer.

“It's just amazing to have people from the professional field of art speak about how you can make a living out of it,” said art student Shafi Sultan.

