

# NEIGHBORS

## EDUCATION

### Lewis Center hosts Festival of the Arts

BY RYAN ORR ~ SPECIAL TO THE DAILY PRESS

I had the privilege of attending a fundraiser at the Lewis Center for Educational Research this summer hosted by the Curt Emick Foundation. The venue was filled with original artwork and photography from local students and community members. Sales from each piece went to benefit the foundation, which supports local education. In this case, the foundation shared a portion of the proceeds with the Lewis Center.

One of the most striking things about the event, however, was the sheer talent of the students involved. Kyla Drake, an Academy for Academic Excellence drama student, fully dressed in a statue costume right down to the silver body paint, made less movement than a statue itself.

Wendell Bridgewater, a Victor Valley High School student, played the cello with pinpoint accuracy, captivating the audience's undivided attention.

This event was impactful for many reasons, including of course, the funds raised that go toward local education, and the attendance of local officials and community stakeholders. The main reason this event had such an impact is while standing in awe of the talent of two students, surrounded by original artwork submitted by community members of all ages — one begins to realize the true amount of local talent this High Desert already has.

Events such as this fundraiser and the Lewis Centers' Festival of the Arts will ensure that pool of talent will continue to grow year after year.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHERYL THOMPSON

**STRIKING PERFORMANCE:**  
Kyla Drake, Academy for Academic Excellence drama student, and cellist Wendell Bridgewater, a Victor Valley High School student, perform for an appreciative audience at the Lewis Center for Educational Research Festival of Arts.