



the arts empowerment project

# 2020 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



# A Letter From Our Founder | CEO

Dear Donors, Partners, and Friends:

The Arts Empowerment Project's impact grows each year as does our commitment to engage the hundreds of Charlotte youth who need it most. During the uncertain and challenging days of 2020, we pivoted to support many youth who were battling the impacts of social isolation, trauma, violence, economic uncertainty, racial inequity, and injustice.

Our 2020 community impact report showcases The Arts Empowerment Project at work – designing innovative virtual workshops, creating targeted outreach programs, exploring social emotional learning, and partnering with community organizations to engage youth in inspiring opportunities. The arts create space for healing, hope, and for dialogue about the social and racial injustice, conflict resolution, and personal issues that affect us all. Youth who were already vulnerable prior to Covid-19 will continue to need increased resources and access to light, hope, equity, and opportunity, which will together offer paths to resilience in the days ahead.

Having your support as we continue building effective programs and a healthy sustainable organization will further our mission by helping each child break the cycles of violence and trauma as they learn essential life-skills, develop connections, and broaden their horizons. Thank you to all our community partners and supporters for joining us on this journey as we dig deeper, aim higher, and do the work necessary to offer a positive vision for so many students who must do more than just survive; they deserve the opportunity to thrive.

With my sincerest gratitude,

Natalie Frazier Allen  
Founder | CEO



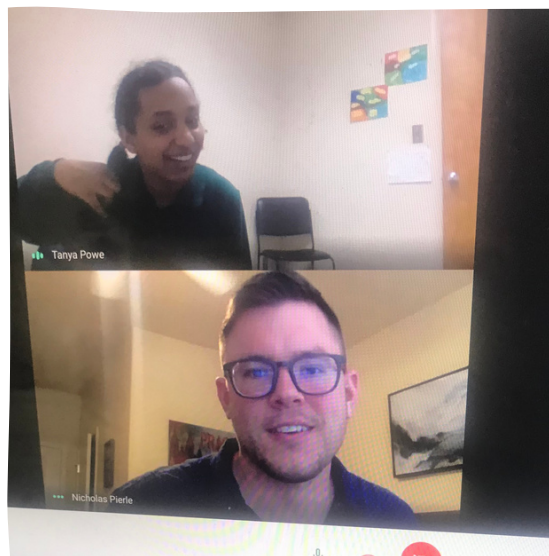


# Flagship Programs



## Arts Access

We are a collaborative organization by design. In addition to offering our five flagship programs, we connect vulnerable youth to high-quality art-based programs in Charlotte. We identify programs that match each child's interests, foster their creativity, and deepen their community connections. During 2020, TAEP provided 10 students with scholarships to participate in performing and visual arts lessons. Students safely enjoyed virtual and/or socially distant dancing and tumbling lessons at Fuzion Force, and voice and piano lessons with Arts Plus for a total of over 100 hours of high-quality arts engagement.



Arts Access student taking virtual voice lessons with an instructor from Arts Plus.



## Free Art Friday

The Arts Empowerment Project brings complimentary art experiences to the youth ages 5-17 at Safe Alliance and the Youth Learning Center at the YWCA of the Central Carolinas. Visiting artists, funded by TAEP, work with students on art projects that promote character development, social and emotional learning, and literacy through the arts. Throughout the year, students also have many opportunities to attend local theatrical performances and participate in cultural enrichment programs.



Students at the YWCA learned about the artistic legacy of Ezra Jack Keats and made textured paintings with fluffy "snow" and collage techniques

# Flagship Programs



## Promoting Peace + Justice

Our Promoting Peace + Justice classes bring teens at-risk for court involvement together with members of local law enforcement to help break down stereotypes and explore implicit bias and social justice issues through collaborative art. Our team members, teaching artists, and guest speakers from a wide range of disciplines help provide a safe space for officers and teens to engage in honest discussions about community and racially motivated violence, and other challenging topics.

In December 2020, students created abstract self-portraits using collograph print-making techniques taught by Arts Plus. Spoken word artists also led youth in a poetry activity to explore identity, conflict, and a way forward. During the final session, youth participated in a round-table discussion about community and police relations with artists, community members, law enforcement officers, and social workers.



Artist Gil Horne Jr leading a discussion with Promoting Peace youth (via Zoom )

I am quiet and artistic  
I am wondering about my future  
I hear the demons whisper in my ear  
I want to be capable of putting on a smile, a real smile  
I am quiet and artistic

I pretend I am loved  
I feel the excruciating sharp pain from the demons within me  
I touch my chest and hope for a heartbeat  
I worry about living  
I cry at the thought of dying  
I am quiet and artistic

I understand not the meaning of life but the reason for it  
I say the only person's pain you will feel is yours  
I dream for happiness  
I try to smile even when it hurts  
I hope to be capable of smiling  
But for real, I am quiet and artistic

Promoting Peace Youth age 16



Arts Plus teaching Artist Caroline Tippet demonstrating line drawing and collograph technique



Visual representation of our Round Table discussion



# Outreach Programs

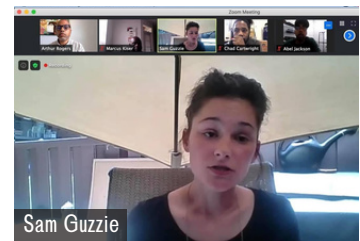
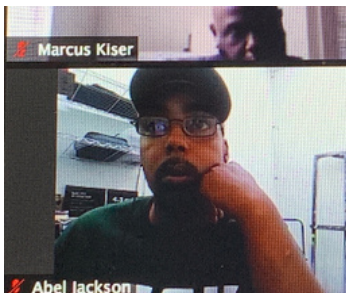


## Encounters

In our inaugural pivot to virtual programming, TAEP partnered with 9189 Creative Services to present our first Encounters series to youth from Youth and Family Services' Independent Living program. Teens participated in six workshops with local artists, entrepreneurs, motivational speakers, and community members, who shared their thoughts about remaining resilient, exploring personal and professional branding and life skills, and engaging in positive self-expression. Highlight: Charlotte's BLM Muralists joined our classes to discuss art and activism amid the summer protests over police brutality and racial injustice in the U.S.

"This class has helped me feel better about myself and my future dreams. I was able to express myself without any judgment from others, and I was felt to be more confident in my dreams and future."

- N. PARKER



Gil Horne

Ani Todd

Arthur Rogers



Thank you again to the organizers and artists from the Black Lives Matter mural project for partnering with us! We are grateful to all artists and facilitators for sharing their thoughts and educating our youth on the intersection of art and activism and helping students envision goals for their personal and professional development.



# Outreach Programs



## HeART Packs

The HeART Pack outreach program provides art care packages to at-risk youth delivered to their homes. HeART Packs contain age-appropriate art supplies, educational games, comfort and creative toys, snacks, gift cards, and a message of hope. HeART Packs give the opportunity to explore creative outlets and positive self-expression, crucial to youth who cannot join TAEP's in-person programs. Schools, businesses and individuals collect supplies and assemble HeART Packs, involving the broader community in TAEP's work.

During the summer, individual sponsors signed up to create unique HeART Packs for students at Safe Alliance and Thompson Child and Family Focus. In total, we collected and distributed 77 HeART Packs filled with age-appropriate art supplies, toys, gifts, books, and snacks. During the winter holiday season, TAEP put together 300 Holiday HeART Packs for youth ages 5-18 at several partner agencies including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Safe Alliance, YFS, and Elon Homes.



Holiday HeART Packs pack up and delivery, December 2020

## COVID-19 HeART Pack Program Spring 2020

### THANK YOU, SPONSORS!!

The Allen Family  
Alaine Bollinger  
Susan Boursse  
Kobi Brinson  
Amanda Boyd  
Carolyn Corsi  
Alicia Dahl  
Nicolette Emmino  
Carlynn Ferguson  
Dr. Kullen Gebreyes  
Gensler  
Good Friends  
Leslie, Dan, & Charlotte Greer  
Evie Haner

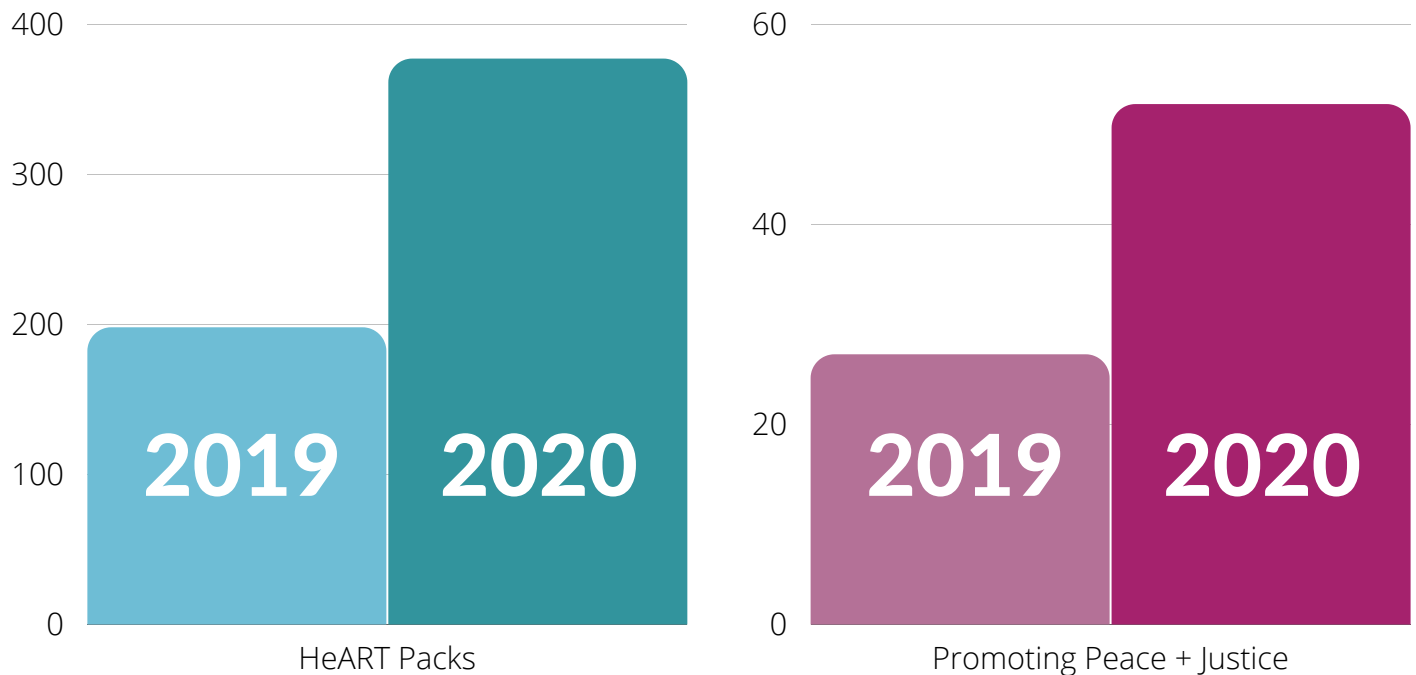
Scarlett Hollingsworth  
Susan Hornung  
Ivan Jacome  
Cynthia Moreno  
Jennifer Morlu  
Elizabeth Peterson-Vita -  
In memory of Adelphine  
Peterson  
Kaitlin Powers  
Peter and Susan Reinhart  
Terri Rivalte  
Ceci Robinson  
Linda Scott  
George Searle

Donna Kliefloth  
Tim Miner  
Angela Montoya  
The Shah Family  
Daniel Shama  
Cary B. Sherck  
Karla Shields  
The Society Guide  
Sun-Maid  
JoAnn Turrentine  
Martha Venter  
Melissa Vrana  
Victoria Vrana  
Carolyn Zimmerman





# Our Response To COVID-19



The pandemic created unique challenges for TAEP. As people around the world turned to the arts to foster resilience, promote connections and offer inspiration in 2020, The Arts Empowerment Project stepped up. Increasing our HeART Packs to reach isolated children meant sanitizing each delivery box from Amazon, fitting all volunteers with PPE and cleaning each separate item before placing it in the HeART Pack.

Pivoting our Encounters Life Skills Seminars and Promoting Peace + Justice Workshops to virtual platforms required hundreds of hours of work by all our staff and partners to become experts in Zoom, engage youth in meaningful virtual experiences, update our website to handle the traffic and re-imagine collaboration in an online environment. We are proud that our efforts allowed us to touch the lives of 513 children.


# 2020 Year in Review



Student's artwork from our Promoting Peace + Justice Program.


"Engagement with art - with the product of someone else's imagination - can change your life, often for the better, and sometimes profoundly."

- MAX WYMAN

more than  
**100**  hours  
of art experiences

**377**   
HeART Packs distributed

more than  
**20**   
community partners

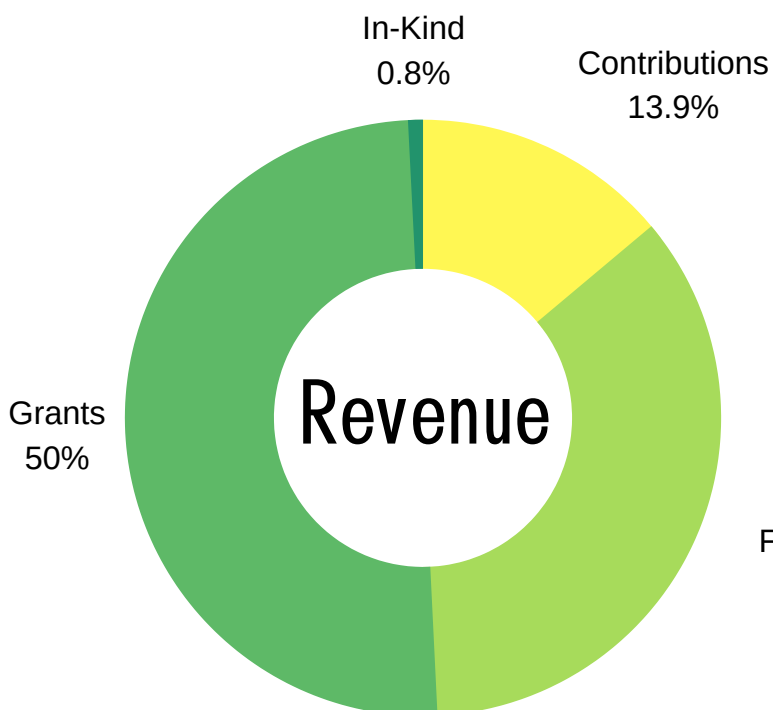
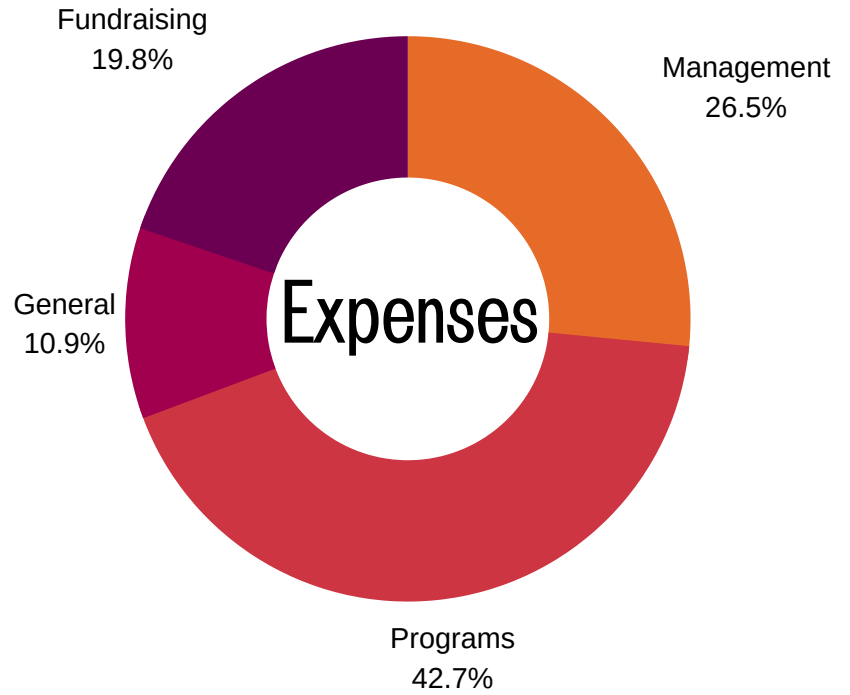
more than  
**136**  hours  
of original programming

 **16**  
programs presented



# 2020 Financial Summary

Programs	\$64,074.09
Fundraising	\$29,682.11
Management	\$39,779.54
General	\$16,355.27
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Total Expenses	\$149,891.01



Fundraising	\$69,125.70
Grants	\$97,750.00
Contributions	\$27,165.42
In-Kind Donations	\$1,575.00

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Total Revenue \$195,756.79

# Art Saves Auction + Social Justice Campaign



The performing and visual arts are an important way for youth who are at risk to remain connected and to find hope, comfort, and healing in these times of unprecedented challenges. The philosophy that the arts are an essential tool for building life skills and bringing resilience to our youth is and will continue to be the driving force behind The Arts Empowerment Project's core mission.

In order to help raise funds to continue our mission to support the most vulnerable children in our community, we held our Inaugural #ArtSaves Silent Auction & Social Justice Campaign for Children. Our Virtual Silent Auction supports our commitment to the community of children we serve and recognizes the individuals and organizations committed to helping children and families through the arts. In 2020, we raised close to \$70,000 in donations and pledges thanks to our generous sponsors and donors. Thank you to everyone who helped make this successful campaign possible!

Raised over  
**\$20k** at our Auction

More than **90** Auction Items Donated



#### Host Committee Members

Carolyn Culicerto Corsi, Co-Chair  
Samantha McCall, Co-Chair  
Gray Dunaway  
Kathleen Jordan  
Mary Beth Morgan  
Neely Verano  
Carolyn Zimmerman



The iconic "Rainbow Girl" from  
Free Art Friday at the YWCA



# 2020 Social Justice Campaign Sponsors

## LEAD SPONSOR



## SILVER SPONSORS



FALFURRIAS CAPITAL

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PNC



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## LUMINARY SPONSORS

Carolyn Culicerto Corsi  
& John Corsi



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Gray Dunaway

Kathleen Jordan

Samantha McCall

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PROPERTIES

Mary Beth & Bill Morgan

**National**  
**Gypsum**

Nelia & Michael Verano

## BRILLIANT SPONSORS



Jay Hewlin

Kama & Joe Pierce

# 2021 Execution of Our Strategic Plan

As a result of the 2019 board retreat that focused on strategy, The Arts Empowerment Project Mission, Vision, & Goals have all been updated and better reflect the future of our organization. This strategic work also prioritized our four flagship and two outreach programs to enhance our impact in the community and elevate our mission to more broadly benefit all of the children who are impacted by violence and trauma each year.

**MISSION:** To break the cycles of violence and trauma through arts opportunities that ignite change in vulnerable youth.

**VISION:** A community that gives every child arts experiences that broaden horizons, foster resilience, and build essential life skills.

## GOAL Pillars and Strategies

In order to significantly increase our service to the more than 18,000 Charlotte children and youth who are impacted by violence and trauma each year, TAEP and its board will focus on the following goal pillars:

1. Program development and growth
2. Branding and awareness
3. Organizational resilience
4. Financial sustainability

### GOAL Strategies: Program development and growth

- Expand the number of students served through our current programs and services
- Deepen institutional partnerships for both program delivery and evaluation
- Grow programs that engage and serve caregivers and community members

### GOAL Strategies: Branding and awareness

- Expand storytelling on digital platforms and social media
- Produce new storytelling content focused on students and impact
- Ensure consistent storytelling across stakeholders and platforms
- Create systems that capture and capitalize on data about our audiences, stakeholders and supporters

### GOAL Strategies: Organizational resilience

- Define a long-term structural plan for staff roles, costs and locations
- Increase board continuity and confidence through strategic recruiting and succession planning
- Design and launch a program evaluation process that clarifies student outcomes and community impact

### GOAL Strategies: Financial sustainability

- Develop a three-year framework for the growth and sourcing of TAEP's contributed revenues
- Increase board engagement in development efforts
- Increase multi-year corporate sponsorships
- Increase the quantity and retention of individual donors
- Upgrade the technology and data that support fundraising



Youth from Free Art Friday at the YWCA showing off their superhero personas



## Board of Directors

David Maruna - Board Chair  
Katie-Rose Higgins - Treasurer  
Mary Beth Morgan - Secretary  
Carolyn Zimmerman - 1st Vice Chair  
Daniel Shama - 2nd Vice Chair  
Hugh Allen  
Portia Kee  
Samantha McCall

Elizabeth Peterson-Vita, PhD  
Kaitlin Powers  
Peter Qin  
Arthur Rogers  
Molly Shah  
Julie Stout  
Evelyn Warren

## Board of Advisors

Patrick Diamond  
Lt. Steven Durant  
Terhea Golden  
Robin Grey  
Kobi Kennedy Brinson  
Yebin Lee  
Kellie H. Lofton

Enger McCartney-Smith  
Corey Mitchell  
Kimberly Morgan  
Joanne Rogers  
The Honorable Louis A. Trosch, Jr.  
Neely Verano  
Melissa Vrana  
Dwayne Wilson

## Staff

Natalie Frazier Allen - Founder | CEO  
Leah Crews - Program Coordinator

## Interns

Ariel Britton - BSW Candidate, UNCC  
Carmyn Johnson - BSW Candidate, UNCC  
Uyen Dinh -- MSW Candidate, UNCC



## the arts empowerment project

15105-D John J. Delaney Drive  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28277  
704-765-1845

[info@theartsempowermentproject.org](mailto:info@theartsempowermentproject.org)  
[www.theartsempowermentproject.org](http://www.theartsempowermentproject.org)

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of leadership*