

the arts empowerment project

The Arts Empowerment Project 2021 Community Impact Report



The background is a vibrant, abstract collage of various colors including red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. It features thick, expressive brushstrokes and some geometric shapes. A large, semi-transparent white circle is centered over the image, containing the text.

"I really enjoyed my time in this class. It was a great opportunity to connect with my community and hear from incredible people with inspiring stories. In a deeper sense, this program gave me the chance to step back and use art to positively reflect on my personal goals and strengths, build my self-esteem, and practice creativity. I would recommend this program and attend again in the future. Thank you."

E. PAVER
ENCOUNTERS STUDENT 2021

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Letter From Our Founder



Natalie Frazier Allen
Founder | CEO

Dear Donors and Friends:

First and foremost, let me say how proud and thankful The Arts Empowerment Project is to our supporters and friends, who faced adversity daily with dedication, spirit and a commitment that surpassed all my expectations. When I see how many of you stepped up to the plate and re-dedicated yourselves to empowering the underserved youth of the Charlotte community, (with zooms, masks, and trying to work together while distancing), I am humbled and grateful. The social isolation, trauma, violence, economic uncertainty, racial inequality, and injustice are the elements we fought in 2021. With your support, we will continue to fight. We will never give up.

The Arts Empowerment Project volunteers, donors, and supporters like you made a big community impact in 2021. We prioritized serving youth who need it the most with virtual workshops, targeted outreach programs, and partnered with community organizations and individuals to engage youth in inspiring opportunities. Despite the limitations of COVID, we still were able to run virtual programs and outreach programs, which our kids so desperately needed.

As founding members, we helped open the new Visual and Performing Arts ("VAPA") Center in Uptown Charlotte, and are excited to see the impact on the community now that we have our own physical space. Our plans for VAPA are to be a safe inspiring gathering place to teach, engage, and introduce youth to all aspects of the visual and

performing arts. Our classroom at VAPA will allow our programs to flourish and enable us to better serve vulnerable children. I invite each of you to visit and witness for yourselves the positive impact this will have on TAEP. This space will create healing, hope, and dialogue about conflict resolution, self-confidence, resilience, and address challenges that affect us all.

Having your support allows us to continue building effective programs and provide opportunity for empowering kids who need it the most. Our mission to help each child break the cycle of violence and trauma as they learn essential life skills, develop connections, and broaden their horizons, is why TAEP is so important to the Charlotte community.

Sincere thanks to all of you for digging deeper in 2021. We have exceeded many of our goals and will continue developing more creative ways to serve our youth in 2022. TAEP's programs offer positive Social and Emotional Learning experiences, allowing us to connect youth with opportunity. We believe this is the key to successful futures—because our kids are not here just to survive, but to thrive.

With deepest gratitude,

Natalie Allen



Our Move to the VAPA Center!

The VAPA Center

700 N. Tryon. Street, Charlotte NC

The Arts Empowerment Project is proud to be one of eleven founding members of Charlotte's new Visual and Performing Arts Center (The VAPA Center). VAPA's goal is to serve as a space which brings together artists to create, practice, and exhibit their respective arts.

"We are incredibly grateful to finally have a place to call home. The Board of Directors and I are excited about the extraordinary opportunities this collaboration will offer the youth we serve. Not only is it a dream come true for us, but it is a huge win for the creative community and all who value, support, and enjoy arts and culture as members of the greater Charlotte community. " - Natalie Allen, CEO/Founder



The New VAPA Center



VAPA staff and friends



VAPA Artwork

About Us

What We Do

The Arts Empowerment Project provides high-quality arts programming, enrichment experiences, and social emotional development for children in need of access to light, hope, equity, and opportunity, which together offer paths to resilience.

Our programs combine meaningful and high-quality art instruction with development of life-skills. These include communication, self-esteem, decision making, personal branding, leadership, goal setting, visual literacy, exploration of social and racial justice, activism through art, and positive self-expression.

3X

Students with access to the arts in high school are **three times** more likely to earn a bachelor's degree than students without arts experience (17% vs. 5%)

4X

Students with weekly exposure to the arts are **four times** more likely to be recognized in school for academic achievement

5X

Students with little or no arts education are **five times** more likely to drop out of high school than students with high arts involvement

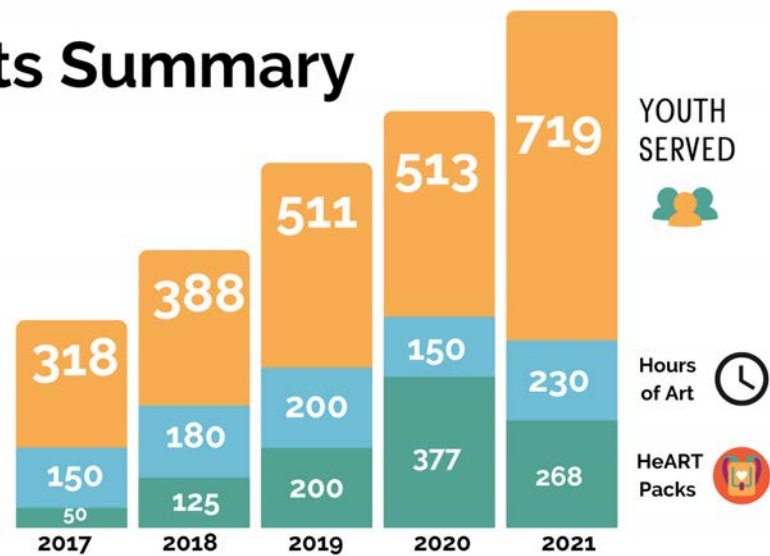
Why It Matters

National studies show that participation in the arts and positive pro-social activities contribute to great academic achievement and can mitigate the effects of childhood trauma, transforming lives.

An independent study of TAEP's pilot program by the UNC-Charlotte School of Social Work reported that our students formed career and educational goals, developed positive peer interactions, grew more engaged in their community, accessed new opportunities and experiences, gained new life skills, discovered healthy emotional outlets and became more confident.



Stats Summary





Proud 1st Grade Artist showing off his Snowman.



Student shows off her art based on "Snowmen at Night" book.



A student displays her talents with oil pastels.

Flagship Programs | Free Art Friday

Free Art Friday

The Arts Empowerment Project's Free Art Friday program brings arts experiences to underserved youth enrolled in after school programs at Youth Learning Center at the YWCA of the Central Carolinas, and at Niner University. Visiting artists, funded by TAEP and volunteers work with students to explore character development, social and emotional learning, and literacy through the arts. Throughout the year, students and their families have several opportunities to attend local theatrical performances and participate in cultural enrichment.

More than **144**
youth participated!



Flagship Programs | Promoting Peace + Justice



CMPD officer and student working collaboratively on a painting.



Student and Charlotte police officer during digital photography scavenger hunt.



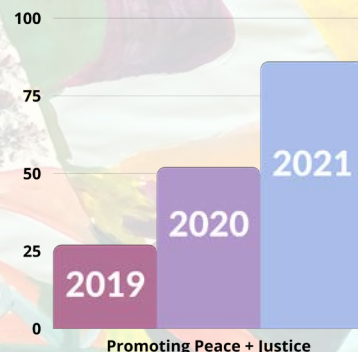
Students engaged in our "Frame Your Own Story" workshop.

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 teens and officers to engage in honest discussions about community, racially motivated violence, and other challenging topics. This experience allowed participants to see the humanity in one another, and have transparent conversations of how we all can make a difference when we work together.

Over 86 kids participated in this program in 2021, and our numbers continue to increase. Over 30 CMPD and Sherrifs Department officers collaborated on art projects to help promote understanding and trust in the Charlotte community and the surrounding areas.



Featured Left:

*TAEP kids,
Officers and
Facilitators.*





Young students excited to attend "The Dark Chocolate Nutcracker," sponsored by a special donor.



Former student Chef Valencia Garmon, leading students in our virtual culinary class in preparation for Thanksgiving dinner.

Flagship Programs | Arts Access

Arts Access

Through our Arts Access Initiative 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 2021, TAEP provided over 30 students with scholarships to participate in empowering summer art programs at Fuzion Force, Arts+, Vision Royalty Studios, and Children's Theatre of Charlotte.

"My favorite part of the camp was learning new dances and making new friends at Fuzion Force. The instructors are very inspiring and they are pros at what they do."

- Kamara (2021 Arts Access Student at Fuzion Force)

Flagship Programs | Culinary Camp

Culinary Camp

In partnership with Youth & Family Services we hosted a virtual cooking camp with Chef Valencia. Over 20 students enrolled in our class, which covered food preparation, slicing skills, and other important culinary activities such as temperature control, measuring, mixing, and proper food presentation.

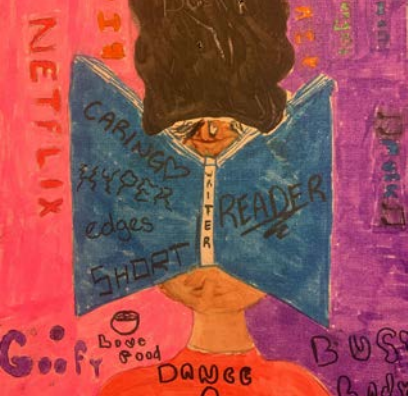


Outreach Programs | Encounters: Life Skills Seminars

Encounters

In our inaugural pivot to virtual programming, TAEP partnered with 9189 Creative Services to present our first Virtual Encounters series to youth in grades 8-12. 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.

More than **76**
students participated!



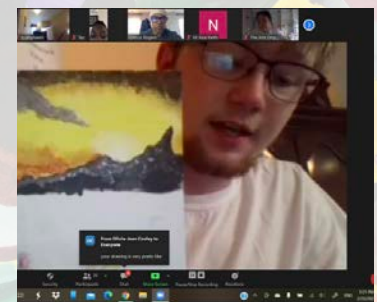
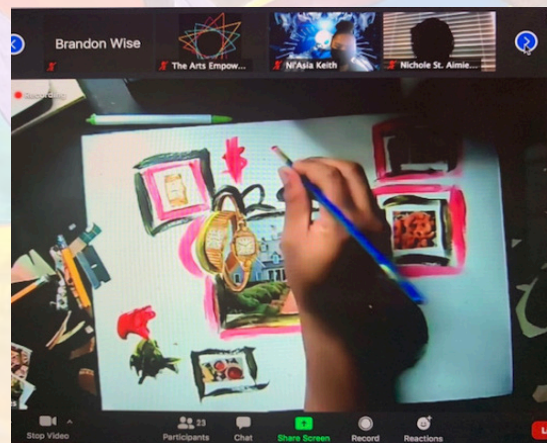
A beautiful piece of student artwork from one of our Encounters workshops.



Children's book author, Gordon C. James, author of "Ode to the Fresh Cut" leading our Halo Dreams Encounters Seminar.



Instructor and recording artist, Jason Jett, leading a seminar about jobs in music and sound production.



Outreach Programs | HeART Packs



Excited student receiving his HeART pack full of art supplies and educational activities!



Volunteers assembling HeART packs for our students.

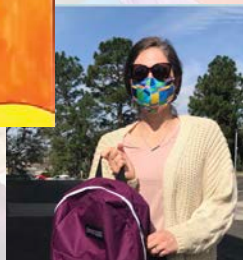


Board Member Molly Shah and her family helping assemble HeART Packs.

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. Partnering with Protiviti Consulting, Gensler Architecture, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Safe Alliance, and the YWCA, we distributed 268 HeART packs in 2021.

These special packs give kids 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 for our kids.



Corporate Partner and New Horizon Sponsor Gensler lead virtual "Design 101" classes for 25 community students during the summer and sponsored over 75 HeART Packs.



Corporate Partner Protiviti sponsored Holiday HeART Packs and virtual "Portrait Potential" classes for over 70 students.



2021 Year In Review



Student and CMPD Officer working collaboratively on a painting during our Promoting Peace + Justice Program.

268



HeART Packs distributed

more than

22



community partners



the arts empowerment project



31

programs presented

more than

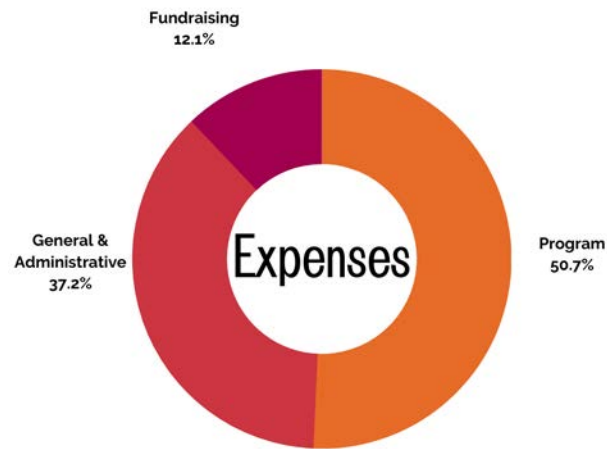
120

hours

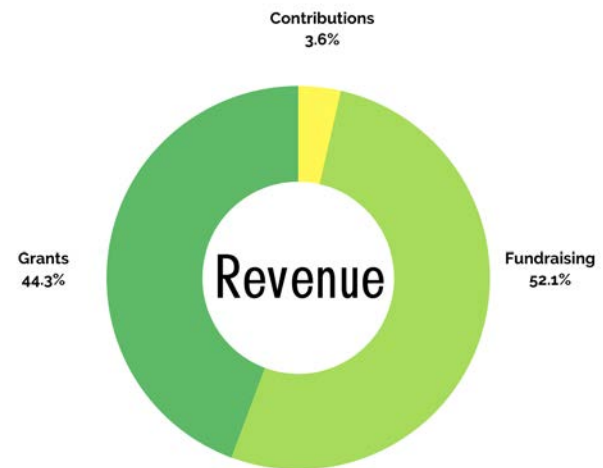


of original programming
and arts experiences

2021 Financial Summary



Programs	\$102,275.23
Fundraising	\$24,365.00
General & Administrative	\$75,029.44
<hr/>	
Total Expenses	\$201,669.67



Fundraising	\$113,164.00
Grants	\$96,250.00
Contributions	\$7,761.00
Interest Earned	\$6.59
<hr/>	
Total Revenue	\$217,181.59

Art Saves | Silent Auction + Social Justice Campaign



ART SAVES

Silent Auction

+

Social Justice Campaign for Children

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. Our philosophy that the arts are an essential tool for building life skills and bringing resilience to our youth 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 2nd Annual #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 2021, we raised over \$113K in donations and pledges thanks to our generous sponsors and donors. Thank you to everyone who helped make this successful campaign possible!

Raised over **\$113k** in donations, pledges, and auction items in 2021



Host Committee Members

Molly Shah (Chair)
Portia Key (Co-Chair)
Katie Caldwell
Adrienne McDonald
Leah Moody

Kimberly Morgan
Markita Payne
Katie Weeks
Carolyn Zimmerman

Art Saves Ambassadors

Whitley Adkins
Heather Harper
Katrina Hutchins
Stacey Michelle
Natalie Stewart



Art Saves Micro Events

In support of our Arts Saves Silent Auction and Fundraiser, hosts Katie and Michael Caldwell, Katie and Jason Weeks, Kimber Morgan, and Natalie Stewart, were generous enough to have these events at their homes. Former TAEP student Valencia Gorman, now working as a chef, contributed to the menus for each event.



Thank you to all of our hosts and guests for making these events a success and for supporting TAEP!

2021 Art Saves Sponsors

Visionary Sponsors



Heather and Jim Harper

New Horizons Sponsors

AMWINS



Gensler

Moore & Van Allen

Silver Sponsors



Luminary Sponsors

Littler



National Gypsum



Brilliant Sponsors

protiviti[®]
Face the Future with Confidence

Jay Hewlin

Kama & Joe Pierce



Women's Impact Fund 2021 Arts & Culture Grant

The Arts Empowerment Project is incredibly grateful for the generous award of \$63,000 and truly honored to be this year's Arts & Culture Grant recipient. This grant will help us advance our work of using the arts as a vehicle to foster resilience, build life skills, and provide inspiring opportunities for youth impacted by violence and trauma.

Sincere thanks to Women's Impact Fund for their investment and partnership, which will fund virtual programming and increase our capacity to help vulnerable youth do more than just survive; they will have the opportunity to thrive!



From left:

*Women's Impact Fund Grants
Chair Anne Perper, TAEP's
Founder and CEO Natalie Allen,
and Women's Impact Fund Board
Chair Anne Rankin.*



Community Partners

Referral Partners

26th Judicial District Court

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Central Carolinas

Mecklenburg County DSS-YFS

Nazareth Children's Home

Niner University Elementary School
at Amay James

Project 658

Safe Alliance

Thompson Child & Family Focus

YWCA Central Carolinas

Current Programming Partners

Arts Plus

Blumenthal Performing Arts

Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC)

Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Dept. (CMPD)

Children's Theatre of Charlotte

Fuzion Force

Johnson & Wales University

Local Visual + Performance Artists and Speakers

Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office

Mint Museum

The Harvey B. Gantt Center

The Levine Museum of the New South



Our Team

Board of Directors

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Vice Chair

Daniel Shama
2nd Vice Chair

Katie Rose-Higgins
Treasurer

Mary Beth Morgan
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Elizabeth Peterson-Vita, PhD

Kaitlin Powers

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Peter Qin

Molly Shah

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Yebin Lee

Kellie Lofton

Enger McCartney-Smith

Corey Mitchell

Kimberly Morgan

Joanne Rogers

Judge Louis A. Trosch, Jr.

Neely Verano

Melissa Vrana

Dwayne Wilson

Staff

Natalie Allen - *Founder & CEO*

Wendy Bentley- *Interim Program Director*

Leah Crews- *Program Coordinator*

Jonathan Gerstl -*Design and Social Media Coordinator*

Interns

Uyen Dinh

Ariel Brittain

Rebekah Shamberger





the arts empowerment project

The Arts Empowerment Project

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North
Carolina
Arts
Council
fifty years
of leadership



Culture For All.



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