

Annual Impact Report

2024-2025



Arts for Learning WNY's mission is to inspire, expand learning, and strengthen our community through engagement with the arts.

artsforlearningwny.org



Dear Friends of Arts for Learning WNY,

As we reflect on Fiscal Year 2024-2025, we are filled with both gratitude and excitement. **This year marked a significant milestone for Arts for Learning WNY as we transitioned into a new chapter - moving into our new home at the Tri-Main Center.** We are energized by the potential of this creative space and all it represents: growth, collaboration, and a renewed commitment to our mission.

This move also marked the culmination of more than a decade of partnership with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, which generously housed our offices for over ten years. We are deeply thankful for the support, space, and sense of community the Library provided during a transformative period in our organization's history. While our offices are no longer located there, we look forward to continuing our strong relationship with the library system in new and creative ways moving forward.

Our work this year took place against the backdrop of an evolving educational landscape. With reductions in federal funding and a shrinking emphasis on arts and culture in education, students across our region are facing diminished access to the enriching experiences they deserve. Yet, even in this challenging environment, **we have remained steadfast in our belief that every student should have the opportunity to learn, grow, and express themselves through the arts.**

Arts-integrated learning continues to play a vital role in the lives of young people - sparking curiosity, building confidence, and strengthening essential skills like critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving. Through school residencies, community partnerships, and out-of-school programs, our Teaching Artists have reached tens of thousands of students, helping them connect with their world in meaningful and creative ways.

As we look ahead from our new home at the Tri-Main Center, we carry with us a sense of purpose and optimism. **We remain committed to amplifying student voices, expanding access to quality arts-integrated education, and working alongside schools and community organizations to ensure creativity remains at the heart of learning.**

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Your belief in our work sustains us, and we are grateful for your continued partnership.

With appreciation,

Leanne Deshaies

Leanne Deshaies
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, PRESIDENT

Amelia Schrader

Amelia Schrader
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Funding at a Glance

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	2023-2024		2024-2025	
Contributions	\$33,537	4%	\$47,656	5.20%
Government Grants	\$393,130	53%	\$154,306	16.83%
Foundation Grants	\$293,392	39%	\$421,388	45.96%
Program Income	\$21,195	3%	\$229,678	25.05%
Miscellaneous Income	\$4,147	1%	\$7,779	0.85%
Transfer of Net Assets			\$56,000	6.11%
Total	\$745,401	100%	\$916,807	100%
EXPENSES	2023-2024		2024-2025	
Programs and Services	\$581,847	85%	\$611,283	80.36%
Management	\$85,930	13%	\$146,624	19.28%
Fundraising	\$12,330	2%	\$2,776	0.36%
Total	\$660,997	100%	\$760,683	100%
Change in Assets	\$60,789		\$87,144	

Commitment to Our Community

At Arts for Learning WNY, our work is grounded in a deep commitment to the students, children, and families we serve. We believe every child deserves access to high-quality, culturally relevant learning experiences - regardless of zip code or income level.

That’s why we launched our Arts-Integration Kits, distributed at no cost in under-resourced communities. Each kit features a carefully selected picture book in which children can see themselves, their families, and their neighborhoods reflected. These stories are authored by diverse voices and chosen to honor the rich cultural fabric of our region.

Designed to spark curiosity, creativity, and connection, the kits pair each book with hands-on art activities that encourage children and families to explore storytelling through drawing, dancing, acting, and imaginative play.

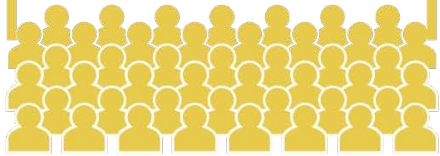
They celebrate everyday moments where learning and creativity come to life, while affirming every child’s story, identity, and perspective.

By centering children’s lived experiences and promoting joyful, meaningful engagement with the arts, our Arts-Integration Kits foster literacy, self-expression, and family connection in communities with limited access to arts education.

27,567 INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS received hands-on access to arts integrated programming

3,481 COMMUNITY MEMBERS WERE ENTERTAINED & EDUCATED THROUGH OUR CREATIVE FAMILY PROGRAMMING SERIES

OUR TEACHING ARTISTS PRESENTED 712 WORKSHOPS, PERFORMANCES, AND RESIDENCIES



12 PERFORMING ARTISTS
11 TEACHING ARTISTS
11 CULTURAL PARTNERS



developed and delivered quality arts integrated learning experiences in all subject areas

78 SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, SUMMER CAMPS, AND COMMUNITY SITES served in Western New York

THE ARTS PARTNERS FOR LEARNING INITIATIVE COLLABORATED WITH 7 ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS IN WESTERN NEW YORK, offering 17 unique educational programs for 760 students

36 TEEN APPRENTICES WERE HIRED THROUGH ARTWORKS

and trained under Teaching Artists to learn art forms while gaining basic job and college readiness skills

6 SCHOOLS IN 3 DIFFERENT DISTRICTS AND 2 DIFFERENT COUNTIES participated in the Whole School Partnership Program, with over 950 students and 23 teachers served

Check out our Arts-Integration Page





Our Board and Staff

Just as essential to our work is our committed Board of Directors and Staff who dedicate their time and heart in service to our mission and champion our cause.

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Paola Torres
ON-SITE PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

Our Teaching Artists

Our current roster of Teaching Artists are the educators who inspire and empower students across WNY through innovative, creative, and inclusive arts-integrated programs.

VISUAL ART

Cassandra Argeros

Emma Brittain

Kelly Betschen

Kristin Brandt

Laura Chenault

Rashaad Holley

Tauri Odimosu

THEATRE

Melissa Kate

DANCE

B.flo Girls

Charis Humphrey

Cynthia Vogel

MUSIC

Ringo Brill

LITERARY ART

Robin Jordan

PERFORMANCE

Airigami

**Andy Parker and the
Weather Machine**

Benjamin Berry

Cindy Hanna

Devi Bollywood Dance

Diaspora Drumming

Doug Rougeux

Doug Yeomans

**Judd Sunshine of the
Hill Brothers**

Janice Spagnola

Kevin McCarthy

Mohamed Diaby

PUSH Physical Theatre

Red Tie Variety

Taylor Made Jazz

The Wondermakers

Enjoy this workshop introduction presented by
MASTER TEACHING ARTIST KRISTIN BRANDT



Our Partners

Arts integration powerfully enhances learning by engaging students in creative, meaningful experiences that deepen understanding and foster critical thinking. When the arts are woven into academic content, students connect with material in more personal and dynamic ways – boosting retention, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. This approach supports diverse learning styles, builds confidence, and cultivates a more inclusive and joyful classroom environment. Our partner schools and community centers have embraced arts integration, resulting in improved academic outcomes, stronger student engagement, and a more positive, connected school and community.

SCHOOL PARTNERS

- Allendale Elementary School
- Big Tree Elementary School
- BPS #33 Bilingual Center
- BPS #006 Buffalo Elementary School of Technology
- BPS #156 Frederick Law Olmsted High School
- BPS #18 Dr. Antonia Pantoja Community School of Academic Excellence
- BPS #192 Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts
- BPS #197 Math Science Technology Preparatory School
- BPS #3 D'Youville Porter Campus School
- BPS #301 Burgard High School
- BPS #31 Harriet Ross Tubman School
- BPS #45 International School
- BPS #48 Martin Luther King Cultural Institute
- BPS #53 Community School
- BPS #59 Dr. Charles Drew Science Magnet
- BPS #64 Frederick Law Olmsted School
- BPS #65 Roosevelt Early Childhood Center
- BPS #76 Herman Badillo Bilingual Academy
- BPS #81 School
- BPS #94 West Hertel Academy
- BPS #95 Waterfront Elementary School
- BPS #97 Harvey Austin School
- BPS #99 Stanley M. Makowski Early Childhood Center
- BPS #415 Middle Early College High School

- Buffalo Commons Charter School
- Buffalo Public School District
- Buffalo United Charter School
- Cattaraugus - Little Valley High School
- Cayuga Heights Elementary School
- Cleveland Hill Elementary School
- Ellicottville Central MS/HS
- Elmwood Village Charter School - Hertel
- Global Concepts Charter School
- Holland Central School District
- Kendall Elementary School
- Lafayette High School
- Letchworth Central School District
- Maple East Elementary School
- New Buffalo School of Culinary Art and Hospitality Management
- Northwood Elementary School
- Oak Orchard Elementary School
- Perry Central High School
- REACH Academy Middle School
- St. Joseph University School
- Tapestry Charter School
- The Summit Center
- Warsaw Middle High School
- Westminster Community Charter School
- Winchester Potters Elementary School

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Alden Ewell Library
- Alice, Ever After Books
- Arcade Free Library
- BestSelf Behavioral Health, Inc
- Boys and Girls Club Lakeshore (Eden)
- Boys and Girls Club of Northern Chatauqua County
- Broadway Market
- Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
- Buffalo Museum of Science
- Burning Books
- Byron-Bergen Public Library
- Canalside
- Cassadaga Branch Library
- Castellani Art Museum
- Clarence Public Library
- Community Free Library
- Cordelia Greene Library
- Corfu Free Library
- Cuba Circulating Library
- East Clinton Branch Library
- Elaine M. Panty Branch Library
- Ellicottville Memorial Library
- Erie 1BOCES
- Erie County Youth Detention Center
- Family Help Center
- Gateway-Longview
- Kenan Arts Center
- Lancaster Public Library
- Leroy Cole Library
- Minerva Free Library
- Newstead Public Library
- Niagara Falls Public Library
- North Park Branch Library
- Northwest Buffalo Community Center
- People Inc.
- Perry Public Library
- Police Athletic League
- Salamanca Public Library
- Sanborn Public Library
- Steven's Memorial Public Library
- The Belle Center
- West Side Community Services
- Woodward Memorial Library
- Yates Community Library
- YWCA



Our Supporters

Our supporters make it possible to serve as a reliable connector between artists and organizations; enabling Arts for Learning to provide over 88% of our high-quality, arts-integrated programming free of charge to schools, libraries, and community centers across all eight counties of Western New York.

UP TO \$249

Various Anonymous Donors
Neil Aquino
Beth Atanacio
Mr. & Mrs. James & Patricia Boje
David Jenkins & Madeline Boland
Robert & Elizabeth Booth
Angelo Calabrese
Sanford & Diane Church
Elana Cunningham
Amber D'Vina Wyatt
Michael & Carol Daniels
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\$250- 499

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Uniland Development Company
Holly Weissman Levy

\$500-999

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BriarBrothers Brewing Company
Leanne Deshaies
Jason Desiderio
Mr. Jeffrey Douglas

Laura Douglas
Zachary Jenkins
Sanford & Margery Nobel
Michael Thomas

\$1,000-4,999

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Five Star Bank
Joseph Golombek, Jr., Buffalo Common Council
James Howe
Rich Products, Better Our Communities
Spaulding Family Foundation
West Herr Auto Group

\$5,000-9,999

Bryan Bollman, Buffalo Common Council
Children's Foundation of Erie County
Conable Family Foundation
Hodgson Russ LLP
Joel P. Feroletto, Buffalo Common Council
Josephine Goodyear Foundation
NexTier Bank
Niagara Area Foundation
Rich Family Foundation

\$10,000-24,999

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo
The Cullen Foundation of Western New York
Daniel C. and Beatrice M. Fisher Fund
David A. Rivera, Buffalo Common Council
Erie County Department of Environment & Planning
M&T Charitable Foundation
Majority Leader Leah Halton-Pope, Buffalo Common Council
Mitch Nowakowski, Buffalo Common Council
The Peter & Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation
The Stenclik Family Charitable Fund
Wyoming Foundation
Zeneta B. Everhart, Buffalo Common Council

\$25,000+

Erie County Department of Mental Health
Erie County Department of Youth Services
Fund for the Arts
New York State Council on the Arts
Wilfred and Joan Larson Fund
William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust
Young Audiences, Inc.

ARTIST PALETTE MEMBERS

Jessica Basil
Karen Camp
Stephen & Kirsten Craft-Rabent
Arlow Linton, Esq.
Lynette & Michael Rabent
Pamela White
Amy Wlosinski

IN HONOR OF

Angelo Calabrese in honor of Michael Leslie
James Boje in honor of Leanne Deshaies
Jody Galvin in honor of Heather Kimmins
Susan Graham in honor of Terry Darlak
Kathleen Short in honor of Michael Leslie
Tim Marren in honor of Michael Leslie
Stella Fey in honor of James Howe
Michael Rabent in honor of Allison Rabent
Denise & Kevin Towey in honor of Allison Rabent
Katie Gardiner in honor of Allison Rabent
Wendy Pierce in honor of Beth Ireland
Ms. Karen Spaulding in honor of Amelia Schrader
Maureen Millane in honor of the Arts for Learning Board & Staff
Charnice McMillion-Martin in honor of Miss Karen Camp
Michael & Carol Daniels in honor of their family

IN MEMORY OF

Alecia M. Shaffer in memory of Becky Schuler
Mary Anne Rokitka in memory of Judy Rokitka
Paul Homer in memory of Margaret Wincene

Programs Spotlight



In celebration of the Erie Canal Bicentennial, *Traveling the Erie Canal* – *The Traveling Museum* brings the story of the canal’s creation, expansion, and impact directly to young learners. This hands-on pop-up museum features authentic artifacts from the 1800s to early 1900s, inviting children, families, and educators to explore history through touch and discovery. Presented as a workshop residency for 4th graders at Waterfront Elementary in partnership with the Young Audiences Inc. RAISE program and the Department of Education, the museum also offered free weekly public workshops at Canalside as part of the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation’s Bicentennial Celebration.



Youth in the Young Generations program had the opportunity to explore and practice a variety of art forms. Of special note was Teaching Artist Laura Chenault, who introduced bookbinding techniques, guiding participants in creating beautifully crafted handmade books and experimenting with different binding styles. This workshop was part of a restorative justice arts initiative developed in partnership with Erie County’s Department of Mental Health and Probation.



In 2025, ArtWorks hired 36 teen apprentices - 10 in the fall and 26 in the spring - to participate in paid creative residencies led by Teaching Artists Laura Chenault (Book Arts), Cassondra Argeros (Glass Art), and Rashaad Holley (Fashion Design). Over each 12-week session, apprentices developed hands-on skills in bookbinding, sewing, sculpture, and glasswork while preparing original pieces for public showcases, including an exhibit at the Buffalo History Museum. Alongside their studio work, apprentices engaged in Professional Development Days focused on financial literacy, employee rights, public speaking, college preparation, and careers in the arts. They also visited the Corning Museum of Glass and Buffalo State’s RUNWAY fashion show, met professional artists, and spoke with Erie County Legislator Lawrence Dupre, gaining meaningful insight into the role of artists in community change.



What People Are Saying

"For the past two years the middle and high school English teachers have partnered with Arts for Learning to bring artists into the ELA classroom. This experience has been enlightening for both the educators. This year students had the pleasure of drawing, painting and expressing themselves through mediums that they don't normally have the opportunity to use during ELA class. The artist and myself worked together to ensure each lesson met the standards that I am required to teach but used out-of-the-box thinking to incorporate a variety of ways to allow students to become artists during the lessons. Their connections to themselves and the characters within the novel we were reading were something I had never seen before; it was a wonderful experience for all of us!"

Kara Bonn HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHER, ELA DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON, LETCHWORTH CSD

"Collaborating with Arts for Learning has allowed our library to overcome the financial barrier that has previously stopped us from being able to make arts programming a regular occurrence at our library. They work with so many talented artists who are experienced teaching throughout school and library settings. I have been impressed with every artist they have sent our way; in terms of the art they have created and the art they have helped my patrons create and their professionalism. I am so grateful for the partnership we have with them. Our patrons have had so much fun and learned so much through the programs they have sent to our library. Additionally, these programs have helped us reach new members of our community who were not previously using library services. This relationship has been invaluable to the library, and we can't wait to continue our partnership."

Rebecca Connolly LIBRARY DIRECTOR, CORDELIA A. GREENE LIBRARY

"Partnering with Arts for Learning WNY allows us the opportunity to expand and enhance our outreach to our residents with a focus on arts experiences. Providing an assortment of hands-on learning, performances and workshops for youth with and without intellectual disabilities, various learning styles and diverse cultural backgrounds ties perfectly into the Youth Bureau's mission of serving all youth in our community. Our residents benefit from these experiences, expanding their creativity and view of the art scene in Western New York."

Dawn Kinney EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TOWN OF CLARENCE YOUTH BUREAU

"We hosted several Arts for Learning programs here at the Cuba Library. Our patrons had the opportunity to learn and see a traveling museum of artifacts from the Erie Canal, as well as hear music about the Canal. Our patrons greatly enjoyed this valuable opportunity. As a small rural library, our community does not often have access to such programs. This type of service is so vital to providing access to history and art programming for rural communities such as ours."

Tina Dalton LIBRARY DIRECTOR, CUBA CIRCULATING LIBRARY

"This program impacted me more than just teaching creative skills - it nurtures emotional well-being, social development, and a sense of belonging, which are all crucial to a thriving school and community environment."

Shehrin Shehnaz ARTWORKS APPRENTICE

"My favorite part of ArtWorks was getting to work outside of my comfort zone. I got to try things that I wouldn't have otherwise tried, and I gained skills that I will continue to build on after my time with the program ends."

Samantha Fernandez ARTWORKS APPRENTICE





2495 Main St. Suite 443
Buffalo, NY 14214

artsforlearningwny.org



Education ▶ For over 60 years, we have been the leading arts education organization in Western New York seeking innovative, equitable, and inclusive ways to infuse arts into learning.

Inspiration ▶ We are committed to empowering local artists to teach and inspire young people and educators through new and meaningful creative arts experiences.

Connection ▶ By serving as a reliable connector between artists and organizations and providing high-quality education, we seamlessly fill a need to integrate arts into the classroom.

▶ info@artsforlearningwny.org
▶ artsforlearningwny.org
▶ (716) 881-0917



Affiliated with the national Young Audiences Arts for Learning