



ARTS CORPUS
YEAR 12

DO.



WELCOME.



photo by Jonathan Alcantara

by Elizabeth Whitford
arts corps executive director

DEAR COMMUNITY,

What a year! We moved from dreaming to planning to doing. Over the past few years Arts Corps has faced many challenges related to the struggling economy. But rather than hunker down, we remained bold in our ambition and actions. We led the Seattle pilot of a national service initiative and made plans to launch a whole school arts infusion program to show what is possible when all young people have the opportunity to learn in and through the arts. And finally, we committed to growing the leadership of youth in and through our programs.

At Arts Corps, imagination is deeply valued. It is with this creative habit of mind, along with considerable problem solving,

collaboration and persistence, that we have been able to take these very ambitious ideas—youth leadership, arts-rich schools, artists in national service—and put them into action.

In fall of 2012, Arts Corps launched our AmeriCorps Artist-in-Service program, building off the success of our 2009 pilot of MusicianCorps. This is, to our knowledge, the first arts-based AmeriCorps program in Washington state, and one of only a handful in the nation.

With the Creative Schools Initiative, Arts Corps is embarking on a long held ambition: to demonstrate the transformative impact on learning, teaching and school culture that comes from high quality arts learning

integrated throughout the school day. This new project, made possible through the visionary investments of the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, musician Dave Matthews, and JPMorgan Chase Foundation, was developed over this past year and officially launched in the middle school grades at Madrona and Orca K-8 schools in August 2012.

Finally, Arts Corps is deepening our investment in the leadership of our students, especially in our teen programs. Youth Speaks Seattle—a program of Arts Corps since 2011—is leading the way, building new avenues for youth to directly shape and organize our programs while wielding their creative power to advocate for greater opportunities and justice for themselves and their peers. ►

ARTS EDUCATION AND INEQUITY

- A national study by the National Endowment for the Arts reported that African American and Latino young adults in 2008 were half as likely as their white peers to report having had a childhood arts education.
- A recent report by Seattle Public Schools showed this inequity also exists locally. According to this 2012 report, Asian, black and Latino elementary students are underrepresented in music classes. For middle and high school students:
 - Black and Latino students' odds of enrolling in an arts class were 33% and 31% lower than white students.
 - Special education students' odds of enrolling in arts classes were 27% lower than non-special education students' odds.
 - Advanced student status was associated with a three-fold increase in the odds of enrolling in arts classes.

Middle school drumline students at La Festa del Arte
photo by Jonathan Alcantara



photo by Rita Alcantara
An Arts Corps student in the Creative Schools program

At Arts Corps, curating transformative learning opportunities for young people will always be our first priority. We cannot do this, however, without also working to address the conditions that have led to such great inequity in young people's education. For this reason we are taking a leadership role to address systemic inequities in arts education.

This is an exciting and transformative year for arts learning. We thank you for investing and believing in our mission, and we invite you to join us in this leap forward. There are so many ways of supporting Arts Corps, from volunteering to spreading the word, and giving at a level that is meaningful to you. Please. **DO.**

Elizabeth Whitford
Executive Director

- The Seattle K-12 Arts Learning Collaborative has called on Arts Corps to improve the quality of arts learning in Seattle Public Schools by helping teachers foster and document their students' growing 21st Century Skills (creative thinking, critical thinking, collaboration, and persistence). This project has resulted in nationally leading, high-quality unit plans and performance based assessments that build intentional opportunities to develop and explore 21st Century Skills.
- Arts Corps is active in the Road Map Project, which aims to close the achievement gap in south Seattle and south King County. Working alongside youth development and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math [STEM] organizations, we have been helping to develop common assessments to measure and cultivate student motivation and 21st Century Skills central to school success across this high need region.
- Arts Corps' work has always focused on filling the gap in access to high quality arts education—a gap shaped by persistent injustices related to race and class. Over the past several years, we have invested more deeply in personal and organizational reflection and leadership which includes social justice skill development for young people, teaching artists, staff, and board. The National Guild for Community Arts Education, ArtsEd Washington, ACT Theatre, and other local and national arts education organizations are now tapping Arts Corps for training and support in developing culturally responsive programming and anti-racist organizational practices.



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LEAD.

CREATIVE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE MODELS UNCHARTED POSSIBILITIES FOR ARTS AND EDUCATION

Arts Corps is proud to launch the Creative Schools Initiative, a program that aims to impact student learning and development in the school day through service, teaching artistry, and arts integration.

Thanks to leadership investments from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, musician Dave

Matthews, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, and Boeing, Arts Corps has rolled out this program at two south Seattle middle schools serving diverse student bodies that reflect the spectrum of economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds of the surrounding communities.

The inaugural Creative Schools sites are Orca K-8 and Madrona K-8, both of which are committed to enhancing student learning and school culture through the arts. Each site is working with a dedicated teaching artist who



photo by Rita Alcantara
Creative Schools Teaching Artist Nate Herth with students

is collaborating with teachers to create engaging projects that are rooted in student inquiry and build creative and critical thinking skills. To further support arts learning during and after school, an Arts Corps AmeriCorps artist-in-service is also working at each site. By spending high numbers of hours for multiple years at their school sites, teaching artists and artists-in-service will have opportunities

Orca K-8 Creative Schools Mission Statement:

To create genuine learning experiences and collaborations that integrate student artistic voice with other core disciplines and to explore identity and purpose in the context of community, creating a greater awareness of diverse experiences and working toward collective outcomes.

Students at Orca K-8 are working with Teaching Artist Nate Herth and Artist-in-Service Sammy Tekle to research archetypes as a means of understanding social studies. Students will discuss storytelling from diverse perspectives, using contemporary and historical source documents such as text, video, song, visual art, theatre, and dance. Drawing from their personal stories, students will create projects that explore myth as metaphor, journey as discovery, and the illumination of one's purpose.

Madrona K-8 Creative School Mission Statement:

To create opportunities for students from historically marginalized backgrounds to creatively engage their communities in reflecting on and responding to oppression while developing sources of inspiration through the arts.

Students at Madrona are working with Teaching Artist Charhys Bailey and Artist-in-Service Zoey Belyea to integrate storytelling, poetry, memoir and fiction with their studies of language arts and social studies. Charhys and Zoey will focus on stories and texts that are relevant to students and help them to express their learning through projects such as dramatic interpretations, poetry slams and playwriting.

for deeply exploring how to create and sustain an arts-rich school environment.

We are often asked about the academic impact of our programs, and our own research has shown a positive correlation between participation in Arts Corps classes and school performance (attendance, test scores), in addition to increasing students' creative capacities. With this new full scale project, we will have the opportunity to explore these impacts more fully—looking at the academic achievement, motivation, and the creative and critical thinking skill development of our students, as well as our impact on school culture. Through this project, we not only have the opportunity to reach students without access to learning through the arts, but we will also contribute to a school culture and learning environment that will help them become more engaged and successful in school.

AmeriCorps Artists-in-Service

Zoey Belyea, Creative Schools artist-in-service
Henry Luke, Youth Speaks Seattle artist-in-service
Jaala Smith, service learning artist-in-service
Sammy Tekle, Creative Schools artist-in-service
Jave Yoshimoto, service learning artist-in-service



ARTS CORPS JOINS THE NATIONAL SERVICE MOVEMENT

During his first campaign, President Obama called for a national "Artist Corps" to bring artists as public servants into low-income and underserved communities to engage youth in arts and arts learning.

Arts Corps responded to the call and piloted MusicianCorps Seattle in 2009. Through this pilot, four accomplished musicians and experienced teaching artists committed to a year of service to do transformative work with youth, schools and communities through music instruction and civic engagement.

Building on that powerful program, Arts Corps is entering the national service movement and has been awarded 5 AmeriCorps artist placements through Washington Service Corps, marking Arts Corps as a leader in the movement for artists in national service. Our five-member AmeriCorps team includes a number of Arts Corps alumni ready to help other young people in their community follow the path that nurtured them, as well as master level teaching artists excited by the opportunity to dig in personally and professionally through full time service in schools. This extraordinary team is now infusing five Seattle public schools and Youngstown Cultural Arts Center with engaging youth arts experiences designed to help youth flourish and develop lifelong creative capacities. ■



photo by Sue Kitchel

Pictured clockwise from left: Tina LaPadula, Jaala Smith, Zoey Belyea, Jave Yoshimoto, Erica Merritt, Henry Luke, Lara Davis, Sammy Tekle

INSPIRE.



photo by Justine LaViolette

ARTS CORPS STUDENT DAVID, GRADE 10, SHARES HIS STORY

My name is David and I'm a breakdancer, better known as a "b-boy." I have been breakdancing ever since I started middle school as a 7th grader and now I'm currently a sophomore in high school. I first encountered breakdancing when I saw a couple of my old friends doing this particular breakdance move called a "flare." I was in awe at what they could do with their body with such ease. All that kept running through my head was, "I want to learn and do that too!"

I was introduced to Arts Corps by an old friend of mine. I remember when I attended the first class, I was feeling a mixture of emotions. I barely knew anyone. I felt so shy and timid, but also excited and eager to learn.

Not only did close bonds form when I made new friends, I also became inspired by them as well. I was amazed by how much they and the other students around me improved over the years. Because of that, I was motivated to practice and become a better breakdancer.

"Taking these classes affected my life in so many ways and it continues to change my future."

I learned the true meaning of motivation and integrity. I grew up without a father figure in my life. The closest males in my life that I could say became closest to a father figure to me would be my uncle Samoeun and Jerome [Aparis, Arts Corps breakdancing teacher].

Jerome is always encouraging me to do more, to improve, to help others and to always do my best. I was so motivated and inspired by Jerome that I started a breakdance club after school that runs once a week because I know there are a lot of kids out there who don't have the same opportunity as me to attend Arts Corps classes.

Breakdancing is not just a hobby or a sport to me; it's much more than that. It's a lifestyle and I do it every single day. I learned to express myself better and to socialize with other people who have the same interests. Breakdancing helped me make friends because I now know how to interact with other people, not just people who are into breakdancing like I am. ■

On the cover:
David's breakdance movements become a light painting.

Cover photo by
Justine LaViolette



SPEAK.

2012 SLAM TEAM MEMBERS DONTÉ & RAVEN REFLECT ON THEIR JOURNEY

Photography By Kari Champoux



What does Youth Speaks Seattle mean to you, or how has it informed your poetry?

Donté: Youth Speaks has been kind of like a family on a roller coaster because it's been really crazy, but crazy in a good way.

Raven: I don't think I knew what a family was until I joined Youth Speaks. Everybody is supportive in some way and they want to see you succeed. Before Youth Speaks I was really shy and didn't share any important parts of myself with anybody. And then to feel really supported and to find people who actually care about me and have my best interests at hand and coming out of my shell and just changing into a completely different person, but for the better. So Youth Speaks, it's family, its home, it's like a place to grow, it means a lot to me, like a lot a lot.

Can you give a little background on what Brave New Voices International Poetry Slam is and what it's like to compete in the Seattle slam series to get to BNV?

Raven: BNV is a youth [poetry slam] competition. It happens in a different city every year and teams from all over the country come and some even out of the country. It's a world full of poets; they do what you do, they understand you.

My first time going to BNV in 2011 was crazy because I never slammed in any kind of competition before. I remember [competing in] the first slam. I was so scared. Going to BNV is the ultimate reward for the slam series and making it on the team. ▶



Donté and Raven performing at the 2012 Youth Speaks Seattle grand slam finale



The other members of the 2012 Youth Speaks Seattle Slam Team Clockwise: Steena Burbano, Phin Dauphine, and Troy Osaki

Donté: The first Youth Speaks slam I went to was when I was in 9th grade and I was just like, “This is so amazing! I am never going to be able to do that because, you know, I’m not that kind of poet. It’s never going to happen.” My first year slamming was last year and I was 17. I didn’t make it on the team. But I remember [thinking], “I’ll just keep writing and go for it again next year.” And I did it! I just kept writing and made it to Brave New Voices. I was in awe for most of the time there. It’s 3:00 in the morning and people are all over the place spitting poetry and doing like open mics in their rooms. I’ve never been in a spot where there were so many people like me in one place at a time.

Can you speak to what happened at Brave New Voices this year?

Donté: We all sat down at our first team meeting and the coaches asked, “What do you want to do at Brave New Voices? Do you want to just have fun? Or do you want to win?” And we were all like “We want to have fun and we want to win!”

Most of the time we were trying to write poems and getting to know each other really well. We were always so happy to see each other. Then writing some pieces for some people got really heavy and it was...

Raven: It was a journey

Donté: Oh! It was such a journey!

Raven: I did this poem called “Flat Iron” which is about me cutting off my hair and deciding to go natural as opposed to following the same pattern of generations and generations of black women depending on a flat iron to make their hair straight so that they can fit in and feel beautiful. I wrote it like five times and it was just so much of me. I never cried while performing it but I always cried before I went up. Whenever I would perform it I just felt still. And completely open and vulnerable. It’s the most emotional poem, most truthful poem that I have ever written. Everybody wrote these poems that were so honest and open and really gave away a lot.

Donté: Some heavy emotion from this team. Every time we would have a practice you could feel it. We cried a lot as a team. It really made a difference because it showed how much we were there for each other and how we were as a team because we all were hella down to be strong for one another.

Raven: We were up so late because earlier that same day we found out we made it into semifinals. We were the only west coast team in our bout with New York and Philly, which are two teams who everybody goes crazy for. A coach from another team came up to us saying things that were not supportive, like...

Donté: ...like, “I don’t even know how Seattle got into this bout.”

Raven: ...and “You’re going into the bloodbath, I hope you make it through.” Why would you say that? We were just thinking to ourselves, “People are getting really caught up in this. Brave New Voices has been around for a really long time and it would suck for it to completely transform into something that’s just about competition.”

Donté: Specifically there was a lot of energy coming from [other] coaches [to win]. And the youth were just like, “We don’t really care anything about that. We’re trying to make new friends here, we’re not trying to destroy everything.” It was really strange.

Raven: So we stayed up really late to write this poem to say, “You know, this is not like what it’s supposed to be.” It was a crazy night but then in the morning it was go-time and we did all of our poems in the same way that we had formatted. We did this poem last. You’re only allowed to have four people on the stage at a time and there are five of us. We intentionally disqualified ourselves and we were really nervous about the response.

Everybody loved it and coaches from other teams were coming up to us saying, “Wow, you really taught me something.” ■

The following is an excerpt from **Bloodbath**, the team poem written and performed by the 2012 Seattle Slam Team at Brave New Voices:

Steena Burbano
Phin Dauphine
Donté Johnson
Troy Osaki
Raven Taylor

As straight as an edge is
it doesn’t add dimension
to minds
as crooked as a classroom leans
poetry has helped me stand tall
poetry stays accessible
to silenced voices
it has reinstated the meaning
of education
I have never felt so welcome
please do not ruin this

I did not slam back home
writing every day
trying to improve my writing
to become a target

We came here
to build relationships
and community
to honor each other’s stories

I am the only person
who can share mine
and we are the only ones
who can tell ours





Birthplace

As I stand at the "Birthplace of Seattle"
my life
flashes before me.
The world has much been changed
in my many years.
And like this city, I have weathered many
many
storms.
We are the same.
Celebrated in life,
but what will become of us
in death.

-Marco
West Seattle High School

MAKE.

**ARTS CORPS
BRINGS
MOHAI'S
ARCHIVES
TO LIFE**

Punctum / Poetry

"A photograph's punctum is that accident of photographic detail which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)... for punctum is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole..."

Roland Barthes,
Camera Lucida

Is it the lonely dirt road that winds into the distance? Is it the awkward tilt of the boy's cap? Is it the defiant look in the old woman's eyes? What is the thing that punches through a photograph and pierces a viewer's thoughts and sensibilities?

Throughout the 2011-2012 school year, The Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) and Arts Corps collaborated in working with Seattle high school students to bring MOHAI's photographic archives to life through the expressive power of poetry and spoken word.

Teaching Artist Roberto Ascalon and Classroom Assistant Justine LaViolette worked with 68 students from Cleveland and West Seattle High Schools and ten Youth Speaks Seattle members who helped to select and record audio tracks of the top pieces at Stone Gossard's Studio LITHO. The audio tracks, the student's original poetry, along with oral histories that the student's videotaped portraying current life in the 206, are now part of MOHAI's archives and Seattle history. Classroom images from photographer Susie Fitzhugh round out this powerful exhibition entitled Punctum/Poetry, the first show in the museum's Community Focus Galley when MOHAI reopens at their new Lake Union site in December 2012.



MOHAI, 1986.5.52212.1, Protestors and police on I-5, Seattle, May 5, 1970

Protest

For the first time in my life I
knew what I felt.
I could never uncover my true
emotion.
I could release myself.
I could be part of something
bigger than me.
I was not alone.
I felt anger, sadness, uprising, and
dedication.
I felt pride in my self for
stepping up for what I
and others believe in.
I was no longer a pawn in
their game.
I was now an individual.

-Josh
West Seattle High School



MOHAI, 1986.5G.615.3, Aviator Ruth Elder, 1929

Untitled

Do you ever wonder how it feels to be a lady pilot surrounded by men?
I think I do.
See, you're put in a position where everything you do is being judged by men. They try to flirt with you, insult you But if they only knew you could do everything they could. It's kind of exciting having the same challenges as the males. We're pretty equal but the challenge is harder on my side. Being a woman in a male position isn't easy, but I do it day by day.
Yes, I am a pilot.

-Galiysha
Cleveland High School



MOHAI, 1986.5.40746, Soldier receives a medal from Eleanor Roosevelt, 1943

Tootsie Rolls

Tootsie Rolls
Your sweet sticky taste
Gum the walls of my soul
Kept nice and warm in a chest pocket
Close to the heart
Feel the love
6 at a time
Gimme more gimme more
Don't ever let someone tell you
You're not welcome
Come on Sunday
In your best suit and tie
I accept you.
A grandfather's love is like no other
The solution to your problems is
Not in a bottle bottom
Your past war experiences fight
With your post war family
We love you
Though granny cannot stand
The bitter taste of your name
We admire you
Feed us your Tootsie Rolly love
And let us not forget
Let us not forget the midday Arby's runs
Because a mother's love was reserved for herself
Or a father's love found in a balled up fist
Or even a grandmother's love
Poured on top of your head in milky soggy cereal
Because you weren't hungry
Let us not forget a man's Tootsie Rolled goodness
Wrapped up
Ready to be devoured
I love Tootsie Rolls
Tootsie Rolls loves me.

-Margaret
Cleveland High School

CHANGE.**TEACHING ARTIST EDUARDO MENDONÇA'S JOURNEY OF JUSTICE, ART AND EDUCATION**

Teaching Artist and world famous Brazilian musician Eduardo Mendonça has been with Arts Corps since its beginning in 2000. He continues to teach and has expanded his role as the Faculty Development Manager, helping Arts Corps' faculty of 30+ teaching artists develop and grow in their teaching through coaching, mentoring, reflection, and lesson planning.

My work in social justice-informed arts began back in my home country of Brazil. I studied the teachings and techniques of Augusto Boal during my studies at the Católica de Salvador in Brazil where I received a degree in Arts Education. Boal was a Brazilian director who founded The Theatre of the Oppressed as a way to promote social and political change.

During this time I also began my teaching artist career, bringing Theatre of the Oppressed and more to Escola Parque, a unique arts-based Brazilian public school where I later served as principal for five years. This school was created by Anísio Spínola Teixeira, an icon who reformed the Brazilian educational system by creating the movement called Escola Nova

which sought non-traditional ways to teach and non traditional ways to learn.

Studying Boal and working in underserved communities in Brazil helped me to exercise my leadership onstage, with my family and friends, in the classroom, and at the office as a facilitator for positive community change. In my roles, I look to bring a practice of active reflection to keep us accountable to what we propose, receive or witness. Boal thought, for example, theaters were built with walls by dominant classes where active actors performed for passive audiences who were delivering and receiving with no questions. Similarly, our traditional education system is set up in this way. Our work at Arts Corps strives to engage communities by shifting traditional, passive teacher/student and manager/faculty relationships to a model that respects voices and differences through positive facilitation.

The message of respecting difference starts from the instruments I bring to my classroom which are a mix of very expensive Brazilian drums blended perfectly with instruments made from recycled materials.



photo © Susie Fitzhugh

We not only talk about respecting differences, but we are performing respect on differences. My goal is for students to experience the richness of participation, which is a balance of receiving academic information, ideas and self-expression.

In the United States and Brazil, I see arts education practiced by impressively talented and smart people. I also see budgets for arts being cut or disappearing in both Americas—South and North—as an analogy of stopping arts and artists from helping citizens to think differently and to build societies with more political and social equality. ■

IMPACT.



photo © Susie Fitzhugh

Arts Corps teaching artists, board and staff at our annual retreat

OUR IMPACT IN 2011/2012

Arts Corps classes are proven to develop creative habits of mind. Program evaluation confirms that Arts Corps students are significantly more likely to agree that they come up with lots of ideas (imagination), think before making a decision (critical thinking), try things even when they might fail (courage), work at something until they get better (persistence), and know when they have done a good job (reflection) after participation in an Arts Corps class.

15% of middle and high school youth reported that their Arts Corps class was their first arts class ever.

75% of Arts Corps students were children of color.

2,477 youth in grades K-12 learned powerfully through the arts in Arts Corps' in-school residencies, after-school classes, and workshops—a 30% increase over 2010-11.

66% of partner sites served a population in which the majority of students qualify for free and reduced price lunch.

32,673 hours of high quality arts instruction were delivered by 30 professional teaching artists in myriad art forms, including dance, music, visual arts, spoken word, and theatre.

168 classes, workshops, and special projects were brought to 39 schools, after-school sites, community centers and residential treatment centers.

TEACHING ARTISTS

Shannon Andersen
Jerome Aparis
Daemond Arrindell
Roberto Ascalon
Lauren Atkinson
Felipe Canete
Alisha Dall'osto
Vicky Edmonds
Robert Eyerman
Florentino Francisco
Geoffrey Garza
Stephany Hazelrigg
Maxie Jamal
Laura "Piece" Kelley
David Lasky
Tina LaPadula
Brent McDonald
Eduardo Mendonça
Erica Merritt
Tomás Oliva Jr.
Dora Oliveira-Newman
Fever One
Elizabeth Ortega
Daniel Pak
Arturo Rodriguez
Tikka Sears
Lana Sundberg
Aaron Walker-Loud
Hollis Wong-Wear

Visit www.artscorps.org/evaluation to read the full 2011/2012 program evaluation report.

PARTNER.

1. Aki Kurose Middle School Academy*
2. Bailey Gatzert Elementary School
3. Ballinger Homes
4. Beacon Hill Elementary (CDSA)
5. BF Day Elementary School
6. Broadview-Thomson K-8
7. Cedarhurst Elementary
8. Chief Sealth High School*
9. Cleveland High School
10. College Place Middle School
11. Delridge Community Center
12. Denice Hunt Townhomes‡
13. Denny International Middle School†
14. Denny Park Apartments‡
15. Franklin High School*
16. Hamilton International Middle School*
17. Hazel Valley Elementary School
18. Hilltop Elementary
19. John Muir Elementary (Powerful Schools)
20. Kimball Elementary
21. Madrona K-8*
22. Meadowbrook View Apartments‡
23. Mercer Middle School†
24. Montlake Elementary School
25. Northwest African American Museum
26. Orca K-8
27. Pinehurst K-8 School
28. Rainier Community Center
29. Sanislo Elementary School (CDSA)
30. Seattle Girls School
31. South Park Community Center
32. South Shore K-8 (Kids Co.)
33. Southwest Interagency Academy
34. Spruce Street Secure Crisis Residential Center
35. Van Asselt Elementary (Tiny Tots Development Center)
36. Washington Middle School*
37. West Seattle High School*
38. Whitman Middle School†
39. Youngstown Cultural Arts Center

* YMCA Community Learning Center
† Seattle Parks & Recreation Community Learning Center
‡ Low Income Housing Institute



BUILD.



photo by Amy Benson, NonFiction Media

Roberto Ascalon has been a poetry teaching artist with Arts Corps since 2003 and now serves as faculty lead for Arts Corps' Social Justice Committee.

Anna Von Essen is a non-profit and small business consultant and principal of Vessel Strategy. After many years of volunteering for and championing Arts Corps, Annie joined the board of directors in July 2012.

Robbie and Annie are married.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BUILD COMMUNITY?

Why do you continue to step up for Arts Corps?

Robbie: I love Arts Corps. I really love Arts Corps. And I've worked out a life that is built around doing only the things I love. I believe in the structure of the organization and the way it works with its teaching artists. I believe in the mission of reaching the kids that we reach. Working at Arts Corps is being the person that I want to be.

Annie: Rob and I got married this summer and at the same time I became a member of the [Arts Corps] board. Arts Corps really became a family thing after that.

Arts Corps is one of those organizations that is questioning and striving continuously to get closer to their mission – both in delivering more arts opportunities to young people, but also questioning why young people aren't receiving arts opportunities. Arts Corps pushes that even on a national level and they do it with integrity and ongoing reflection.

I also really believe in the mission. It's critical that we raise young people to engage with problems differently, to play and be creative, to enjoy visual arts and spoken word, to question and think differently, to learn about all of the things happening inside their head and their heart and that those things are really beautiful and really powerful and really important. Arts and arts education – when taught with the desire for all of those things—really does that.

What is your involvement in grassroots fundraising?

Robbie: I'm just starting with the fundraising [at Arts Corps], but I've participated in La Festa del Arte for many years.

Annie: And you speak to people about Arts Corps in public settings and with friends and family. You're an ambassador.

I'm just starting to work with Arts Corps in grassroots fundraising. Two years ago I was in a giving

project with the Social Justice Fund. I started to put the pieces together about how grassroots fundraising is about having a deeper understanding to your own experience around money and giving.

I'm really excited to bring my energy around the power of grassroots fundraising to Arts Corps because it's strongly in line with the mission. We can do really incredible creative things.

Grassroots means that you're fundraising from all different group levels and class levels and community levels ... that we figure out ways for everybody to be giving at a level that feels right.

What do love and social justice have to do with this work?

Robbie: It's about a deep abiding love for trying to make things right and better in this world. But it's also about my love of art. So doing this work is about increasing those possibilities for myself and for other people. The possibilities for art and love. The people who need it are most likely poor and brown. The system doesn't give them much love; it's just true. Do I go into a classroom raising my fist in the air? Sometimes. Thinking Social Justice? Sometimes. But is it about doing a poem? Or trying to make a relationship happen? Or giving witness to some youth?

That's much more about it, and that happens to be social justice.

Annie: With Arts Corps it's an opportunity for young people to be with a loving teacher of the arts and hear, "You spending time in your head and then expressing what's in your head and heart through words or drawing or dance or music and that is good." That's an extension of love.



photo by Jonathan Alcantara
Festa 2012, Robbie presenting the MOHAI project

Robbie: The end game is about love and the child in front of you. Love in the room and creating a loving more just world.

What ways could Arts Corps better engage the community in grassroots fundraising?

Robbie: What I want to do is make it like, "Oh I can give 25 cents a day." I want to

make it smaller chunks and understandable chunks. Make giving comprehensible.

Especially as a poor artist, I see giving differently. And I see where my students come from. I think they see it differently.

What are myths that get in the way of fundraising?

Robbie: That you don't have enough to give. Or that some people just don't give. There are access points and you have to reframe giving and what that means to access certain communities differently.

Annie: And how to set up the space for the giving to happen. When families or young people share a long-term experience of growth that they've seen or been part of, that's giving back. We believe everyone has an ability to give and it's valuable for everybody to be giving at some level to Arts Corps.

Robbie: It can be really empowering, for our families especially, because money is so tricky and people think about it so deeply. The minute that you give money to an organization you're immediately invested in it.

Annie: When you feel grateful and excited to give and you give an amount that has meaning to you, there's a feeling of investment. That's really empowering. ■



IGNITE.

REFLECTIONS ON ARTS EDUCATION

WITH TEACHING ARTIST
LAUREN ATKINSON

Tell me about your work and its connection with social justice issues.

Access to a high quality education, one where all students have access to arts learning, has long been a social justice issue for me. I come from a working class background, the daughter of man who entered the military as way to escape his life of poverty and his future of working in a coal mine. I moved through 11 schools by the time I graduated from high school. With all of this I had the opportunity to observe and experience many problems with the education system.

My awareness of what could be possible in an engaging learning environment happened when my father was stationed in England. I attended one of their state middle schools in an integrated arts project based program that wove in the disciplines of visual, performing, and written arts. I was excited to go to school and became a confident, intrinsically motivated learner.

I returned to the U.S. where art was a discouraged elective, and

the emphasis was on a standard testing, four-year university tract. I returned to being a shy, disengaged student but was able to stay committed to my arts learning in the small art department that became my oasis.

My art teacher was instrumental in preventing me from dropping out. In my last semester of school she encouraged me to attend an arts residency at Centrum Education in Port Townsend, Washington. I applied and was accepted. There I met my first teaching artists and decided I wanted to be an artist and teach others.

I managed to get into college and eventually art school, and through this journey of navigating school systems, their cultures and financial aid departments, I began to notice how different access to education and the arts was dependent on one's economic class and the color of their skin.

I became even more aware of this while working in Seattle during my time spent in before and after school programs and through my development in becoming a teaching artist. Seeing what the children



photo by Eduardo Mendonça

of Seattle have access to dependent on the neighborhood they lived in was shocking. Soon after, Arts Corps was formed and I was given the opportunity to work with so many kids that never had an arts class.

What keeps you in this work?

The children I work with are all smart. Their gifts become visible as we work together and they speak their truth and trust in their creative potential. Young people who are described as having behavior issues shine quite brightly when given the opportunity to have a different type of success that the arts can provide.

It has been empowering for me as a teaching artist to work with an

organization that uses the lens of social justice to navigate its own path and development, becoming a leader as an arts organization in this work.

Can you share a story about one of your classes or students?

This past summer I worked at a low-income housing community. Their summer program had 52 students with ages ranging from kindergarten to 8th grade.

I decided to go with my “Imaginaut” sewing project, which I designed to take my students on a creative visualization where they imagine and meet their “creative spirit” or Imaginaut. Once kids get the hang of it they become very focused and motivated to finish. The shining moment came on the final day when we put together an art exhibit to share with the community.

One student named Imram had a last minute idea to make “on” and “off” switches for each artist so they could be an interpretive center, similar to what he had experienced in a museum. I recognized this as a great opportunity to support this child's creative “aha” moment and his ability to creatively problem solve.

Before the show started, the students answered and wrote responses to writing prompts such



photo by Eduardo Mendonça

as “How did you solve problems that came up while making your Imaginaut? What most surprised you about this project?” This exercise helped students reflect and formulate their thoughts in order to speak confidently about their pieces. Once the art show started and parents began walking through, the kids all got really in to it and everyone had so much fun.

I encouraged Imran to be confident with his creative idea. Sewing the

Imaginaut was an experience he struggled with but worked through finishing. Seeing his idea realized at the art opening in front of his peers who saw him succeed in a new way was a truly affirming experience for Imram. We shared our delight in watching everyone getting into their interpretive roles. To say, “Yes we can,” to a student who most often hears “no” is powerful. ■



COMMIT.



photo by Justine LaViolette

REFLECTIONS ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

BY ERICA AND DECONTEE

Erica Merritt is a teaching artist and All-Access coordinator with Arts Corps. Decontee is a high school student and an Arts Corps program intern.

Erica: I met Decontee in 2005 when she was 10 years old. She frequented the Yesler Community Center after-school program where I was the coordinator of the Youth Art Program through the Nature Consortium. Decontee is the younger of two daughters raised by a single mother from West Africa. Decontee participated in Hip Hop Dance (taught by Rita Alcantara who is currently the communications and grant manager for Arts Corps.) I immediately noticed her passion and commitment for dance. While dancing she displayed focus and discipline, something she was currently struggling with in school and in her personal life. Hip Hop Dance was seemingly the only bargaining tool we had. She recently reconnected with her old hip-hop instructor Rita Alcantara who arranged for her to intern at Arts Corps as a program assistant.



photo © Susie Fitzhugh

Decontee: Erica is an awesome and joyful person to be around. The main thing that made our relationship grow was because I knew I could always count on her for honesty and her driving ambition when it comes to business. The most important thing that adults should know about young people is that our generation is not like theirs used to be and forcing change in us increases the behavior. Sometimes we know our right from wrong, but there are times when we don't truly understand so we find it better to learn from experience. Life is all about making and learning from mistakes.

Tell us about how you got involved with Arts Corps

Decontee: My involvement with Arts Corps started when I had a run in with one of my dance teachers, Rita Alcantara. We caught up with how things have been going for me and figured out an internship to get some skills for the path I'm heading down. I started helping out at the Arts Corps office and assisting in Maxie's [Jamal, Arts Corps teaching artist] dance class and Erica's singing classes. This internship gives me more insight into office experience and learning about different art around the community to see how the work and process gets done.

I see life in an artistic way and enjoy art and Arts Corps offers a lot of those things. There's nothing better than doing what you love, because **without determination and passion, you wouldn't be able to give your best** especially if you're not interested. Like Maya Angelou said, "My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style." ■



photo by Justine LaViolette

'MOVE' with Decontee and Arts Corps b-boy David

ARTS CORPS CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Cham Ba
Erica Charleston
Max Clotfelter
Michael Dunford
Robert Eyerman
Elizabeth Gossard
Mysten Huggins
Mohamed Jagana
Rebecca Liu
Gloria Medina
Derci Musa
Cameron Nagashima
Roberta Nelson
Rafael Newman
Elizabeth Ortega
Steven Silverman
Kiley Sullivan
Sammy Tekle
Celine Vasquez
Adrian Watts-Driscoll
Amontaine Woods
Jeff Young



July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

INVEST.

THANK YOU TO ALL THE AMAZING PEOPLE WHO HAVE INVESTED IN ARTS CORPS.

\$50,000+

The Horner Foundation
JPMorgan Chase Foundation
Dave Matthews & Ashley Harper
National Endowment for the Arts
Paul G. Allen Family Foundation

\$25,000 - \$49,999

Grousemont Foundation
Laird Norton Family Foundation

\$10,000 - \$24,999

Beim Foundation
The Clowes Fund, Inc.
Hasbro Children's Fund
Jubilation Foundation
Margot Kenly & Bill Cumming
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The Seattle Foundation
Starbucks, KEXP and Seattle
Theatre Groups Little Big Show
benefit concert

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Virginia Anderson
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July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

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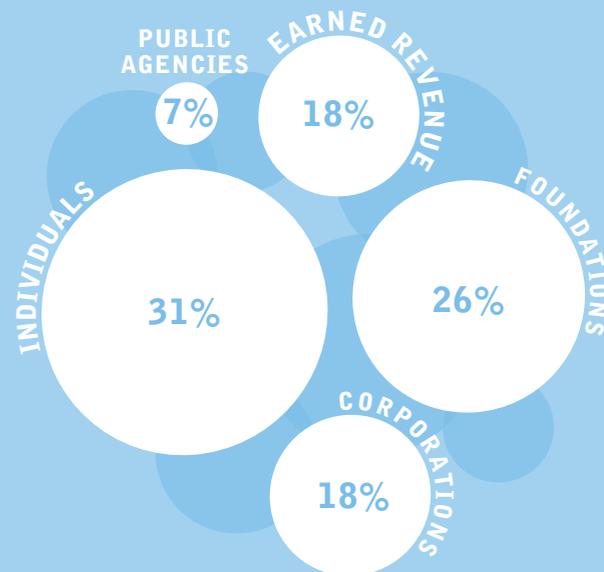
July 2011 - June 2012

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Current assets (cash)	\$310,627
Accounts receivable	\$24,415
Fixed assets (equipment)	\$29,338
Depreciation	-\$22,378
Total Assets	\$342,002
Less liabilities	\$26,053
Net assets	\$315,949
Net income	\$149,436
Restricted funds	\$148,542

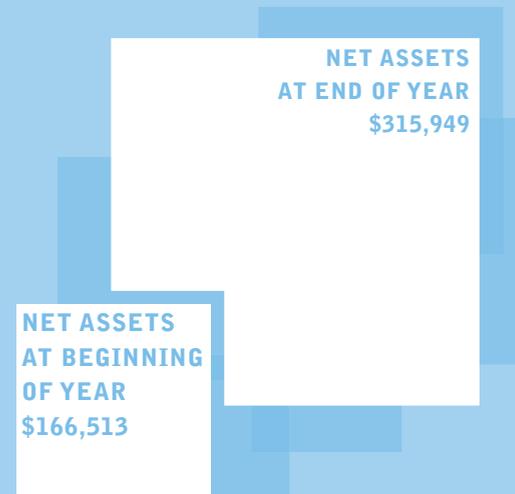
INCOME BY PERCENTAGE

TOTAL \$992,507



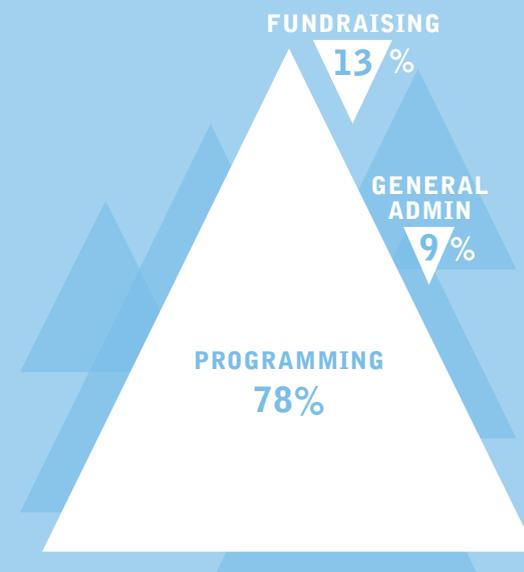
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

INCREASE OF \$149,436



EXPENDITURES BY PERCENTAGE

TOTAL \$843,071



Arts Corps student in a Punctum/Poetry workshop
photo © Susie Fitzhugh



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photo by Jonathan Alcantara

Brazilian Rhythms students perform at La Festa del Arte