



ARTS CORPS  
YEAR 13

**PROOF**

# WELCOME



## DEAR COMMUNITY,

A donor once told me that one of the things he loves most about Arts Corps is that we are so unexpected — a small, scrappy arts education organization with big unexpected ambitions, steadily taking steps to transform education and youth development in our region and beyond.

That insight has stuck with me for years because it's so true. In the past year, we have made major headway in our admittedly ambitious agenda.

We served 2,518 students and provided 36,199 hours of arts instruction. We launched our Creative Schools Initiative, a model for transforming learning in middle schools through whole-school arts integration. We expanded our teen artist program, an investment in

the creative voice and leadership of young people, many of whom are low-income youth of color facing systemic oppressions and using their creativity for personal and collective liberation.

We stepped into a leadership role locally and nationally, working closely with the Creative Advantage, a city-school district partnership aimed at closing the opportunity gap in access to arts education in Seattle schools. We partnered with youth development leaders to develop shared goals and assessments of the mindsets and 21st century skills linked to school and life success so that we can have a greater collective impact. And we trained teaching artists and leaders of arts education organizations on culturally responsive teaching practices.

How has all of this been possible? Proof.

Proof comes in many forms.

**Proof is data.** Year by year, independent impact studies find that our students show significant growth in their creative practices and mindsets associated with academic and life success, such as persistence and discipline. Eighty-nine percent of students who strongly disagreed with the statement "I finish whatever I begin" prior to their classes report improvement after participation in an Arts Corps class.

For our school-based collaborations, we are now expanding our lens to evaluate our impact on students' academic behaviors. Classroom teachers reported that 51 percent of their students demonstrated an increased ability to pay attention in class as a result of their participation in the Creative Schools Initiative.

**Proof is stories.** Again and again, students and teachers tell us we are making a difference: "I liked being able to express myself without judgment." ... "Our teacher gives us an atmosphere of trying. We can never say 'can't' because she knows we can."

**Proof is Mary Lambert.** This rising star in the music world and subject of our cover story is proof that transformative social change is possible when we invest in the voice and leadership of our youth. An alumna of Arts Corps' Youth Speaks program, Mary lent her voice to the movement for marriage equality and proved that if young artists believe in themselves and their ideas, they can shape history.

**Proof is replication.** Seattle Public Schools hired Arts Corps to bring our focus on creativity and other 21st century skills into school-day arts learning. We worked with local art teachers to expand student assessments and develop strategies to cultivate those skills in their

photo by Justine LaViolette

Seattle slam team member, Kiawe, performs at the Youth Speaks Seattle 2013 Grand Slam.

# WELCOME

classrooms. Through this work, we influenced the district's strategic plan to include goals for 21st century skill development goals across curricula.

**Proof is recognition.** Out of more than 350 school arts organizations nominated nationwide, the White House singled out Arts Corps' excellence when announcing the winners of the 2012 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award.

First Lady Michelle Obama praised Arts Corps and 11 other award winners for teaching youth "that no matter what life throws their way, if they draw on their own talent and courage and creativity, if they are persistent and tenacious and bold ... then they can truly make something extraordinary of their lives."

Over the years, we've had our instant champions — those who understand Arts Corps' work in their gut, who readily believe in our power to transform lives.

We've also had our skeptics. Some are people who have a hard time relating to our work because of the low-caliber arts education they had in their youth. Others don't seem to realize that the high-quality arts education they received is a rarity for far too many youth today.

We've heard too many times that an arts education is nice to have, but not a must-have. We've heard that the arts should be a much lower priority in our education system than basic learning in math and reading.

**With proof, we are committed to turning our skeptics into champions. The evidence is compelling: Arts education is a powerful lever for closing the opportunity gap in education. The work we do at Arts Corps is helping young people reach their full potential in school and in life. I know we can all agree that is what all young people deserve.**

Elizabeth Whitford  
Executive Director



### TEACHING ARTISTS

- Shannon Andersen
- Jerome Aparis
- Daemond Arrindell
- Roberto Ascalon
- Lauren Atkinson
- Cham Ba
- Charhys Bailey
- Zoey Belyea
- Sumayya Diop
- Silvio Dos Reis
- Vicky Edmonds
- Robert Eyerman
- Amber Flame
- Florentino Francisco
- Geoffrey Garza
- Nate Herth
- Maxie Jamal
- Tina LaPadula
- David Lasky
- Henry Luke
- Fides "Anna" Mabanta
- Carter McGlasson
- Eduardo Mendonça
- Erica Merritt
- Amos Miller
- Carla Moreno
- Dora Oliveira Newman
- Daniel Pak
- Arturo Rodriguez
- Jaala Smith
- Lana Sundberg
- Sammy Tekle
- Gabriel Teodros Donald
- Jave Yoshimoto

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- Romeo Daniels
- Michael Dunford
- Theo Garcia
- Justin Hamacher
- Mylen Huggins
- Mohammed Jagana
- Donte Johnson
- Lisa Mackie
- Christine Miles
- Rafael Newman
- Troy Osaki
- Steven Silverman
- Kiley Sullivan
- Sean Suttikeeree
- Celine Vazquez
- Nasteeha Warsame
- Decontee Wea
- Zoe Wick
- Jeffrey Young

# CONTENT



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- Patrick Mullins, graphic designer



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## MAKE ART ANYWAY



### WHITE HOUSE AWARDS ARTS CORPS WITH TOP NATIONAL HONOR

In November 2012, Arts Corps traveled to Washington, D.C., to accept the nation's highest honor for after-school arts and humanities programs. We were one of 12 programs across the United States to receive the 2012 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award.

Arts Corps was chosen from a pool of more than 350 nominations

and 50 finalists that are making a lasting difference in young people's lives by encouraging them to think critically and express themselves creatively. This work not only helps youth discover and nurture their talents, it improves academic scores and graduation rates. It enhances life skills and helps young people develop positive and lasting relationships with peers and adults.

"We hope this award will draw attention to the documented fact that programs like ours are essential investments not just in the lives of our young people but in our community, as well," said Arts Corps Executive Director Elizabeth Whitford. "We're incredibly proud of this

achievement and of the young people, volunteers, supporters, board and staff who made it possible."

Elizabeth and David, a gifted Arts Corps break dancer, accepted the award in the East Room of the White House after First Lady Michelle Obama raved about this work to inspire young people by laying new pathways to creativity, expression and achievement outside of the regular school day.

**"Arts Corps really says it best in their motto. Their motto is, 'Make art anyway.' ... That's what your programs are doing every single day," Mrs. Obama said.**

"You teach them that no matter what life throws their way, if they draw on their own talent and courage and creativity, if they are persistent and tenacious and bold ... then they can truly make something extraordinary of their lives," Mrs. Obama added. "Because that's what we expect: nothing but extraordinary."

The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities administers the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Institute of Museum and Library Services. To learn more about it, visit <http://www.nahyp.org>.

## IN THE FIRST LADY'S WORDS ...

You are pushing and inspiring our kids. You're revealing their boundless promise, and teaching them to believe in themselves. Because of the programs that you all run, young people are learning break dancing, hip hop, African drumming ... traditional music. They're putting on plays, publishing poems and articles, and working on museum exhibits. They're becoming historians, designers and champion debaters. ...

You make all this happen on shoestring budgets; you do it in unbelievable ways, in some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable. And I know that you put a lot of late nights and long hours in to give these kids opportunities worthy of their promise.

But you keep on doing this year after year because you have seen firsthand the transformative power of the arts and arts education in the lives of young people across this country. You know that the skills that you're teaching — skills like problem-solving and teamwork, self-

expression — these skills aren't just valuable in the studio or in the theater, but they are critical in the classroom and will be in the workplace when you all get there. ...

You see kids who never considered going to college finally saying to themselves, well, if I can publish my own writing; if I can create my own artwork; if I can get up

in front of all these people and perform anywhere, including the East Room of the White House, well, then certainly I can go to college, right? Of course I can continue my education and expand my ambitions and pursue my dreams, right? You are here. You can do anything. ■



## THE ASCENSION OF MARY LAMBERT



photo by John Keatley

### A YOUTH SPEAKS SEATTLE ALUM

It's been one amazing year for a terrifically talented musician who credits Youth Speaks Seattle with helping her find her true voice.

Mary Lambert wrote and sings the soulful hooks in "Same Love" — the marriage equality anthem by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis that became a hit during Washington State's successful bid to legalize same-sex marriage.

"I can't change ... even if I could ... even if I wanted to ... my love, my love, my love. She keeps me warm ..."

She spun the lyrics of that hook into her own solo single,

"She Keeps Me Warm," adding violins, piano and poignant new verses that give her gorgeous voice more room to amaze. She released the song's groundbreaking video that tells the love-at-first-sight story of two queer women. It got half a million views on YouTube the first week it was out.

She dazzled at MTV's 2013 Video Music Awards, performing "Same Love" with Macklemore, Ryan Lewis and Jennifer Hudson. She's toured with them all over the country, has headlined dozens of her own shows and opened for the likes of Tegan and Sara.

When we asked her to sit down with us and talk about Youth Speaks Seattle and the impact it had on her growth as an artist, she jumped at the chance — just as she did when we invited her to perform at our annual La Festa del Arte fundraiser.



Cover photography by John Keatley

That night, she raved with passion and eloquence about how Youth Speaks helped her overcome a dark and challenging time in life plagued by drug abuse and suicide attempts:

#### IN MARY'S WORDS ...

"At Youth Speaks, I nurtured my craft. I was literally on fire for poetry. ... I felt vulnerable but also felt very safe .... On stage with the Youth Speaks and Arts Corps family, I found the strength to be a proud, gay artist. I wanted to live again just so I could go to the next poetry slam.

I was addicted to the vulnerability, to the humanity of writing. I believe that art saves lives. It can change everything. It can influence an entire society.

Arts Corps doesn't only provide arts education for the impact of the individual like me, but it provides a positive impact to the entire community. I believe that without the power of vulnerability and learning to speak my truth on stage, I never would've had the courage to write "Same Love" ...

I found the strength to survive and be on stage here today because of the work that Arts Corps does. You are funding the next generation of people like me who are afraid, voiceless and lacking community support to express themselves. ... Arts Corps is about much more than just incredible creativity. Young people are empowered and fight to change their schools and improve their education.

It's here that we stand up for equality and social change. When you invest in Arts Corps, you are investing in the thousands of young people that will grow to be thoughtful, empowered and imaginative adults. We are changing the frickin' world here, guys!"

In September, shortly after the VMAs, Mary met with us in a Youngstown Cultural Arts Center studio, across the hall from the theater where she performed her first poetry slam. Looking back on the writing circles and open mics and traveling the country to compete against stunningly creative poets, she called Youth Speaks



photo by Jonathan Alcantara

Mary makes the case at Arts Corps' 2013 La Festa del Arte

Seattle "one of the biggest turning points in my life."

It was the first time she felt part of a community that deeply cared about her, believed in her and wanted to see her succeed. It gave her the confidence to speak her mind, to be unabashedly honest.

As her career takes off, Mary says what means more to her than any measure of fame are the letters she gets from fans who say her music has helped them come out to their parents or kick an eating disorder and embrace their bodies as beautiful.

"The fact that I get to impact people on a daily basis in a very human way — it almost feels too good," she says. "Like it's a dream." ■



# PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE



photo by April Hedeng  
Brazilian Dancer, Arts Corps Student Showcase

At Arts Corps, we think deeply about social justice. Every day we take action, make mistakes, learn, and grow our practice of collaborating with one another and the youth in our communities to use the arts as a tool for righting personal and institutional injustice and bringing about lasting social change. Our challenge is to inspire young people to change the world, to make it a more just and equitable place, through the powerful tools of music and dance and visual arts and poetry. Here are some of our reflections on social justice, in words and images:

### What drew you to Arts Corps' social justice initiatives?

I loved the idea of being part of an organization that constantly works at its edges to learn more, grow more and strive for a stronger community by broadening youths' access to the arts. I believe that giving artistic outlets to youth who often come from oppressed communities provides them tools to heal,

build resilience, and realize their vision of what it means to be an artist. My job is to support youth in their leadership so they feel empowered to hold adults accountable, make decisions about their lives and learn to advocate for themselves through art.

— Devon de Leña,  
community partnerships and teen program manager

### How has social justice become so central to Arts Corps' work?

Arts Corps' programs are rich and enlivening, creating experiences that all youth should have access to. Yet there is an opportunity gap as large as the Grand Canyon when it comes to access to this kind of learning opportunity. The force that has dug the canyon over centuries is institutionalized racism. Over the last several years, a small force of committed Arts Corps staff and teaching artists have worked to sharpen the organization's focus on the inequity and oppression that underlies everything we do. Through a courageous commitment to truth — and with a lot of confrontation, tears, love and persistence — this small force has slowly evolved into an organization-wide understanding that we are a social justice organization to the core. This is an ongoing inquiry and truing-up process. We are continuously renewing and deepening our



photo by Sally Phnoux  
Youth Speaks Seattle alumnus and AmeriCorps member Henry Luke

commitment to creating a more just society by closing the arts access gap and filling that canyon with exceptional arts and soul-touching experiences for all youth.  
— Liza Sheehan,  
Arts Corps board president

### What does social justice mean to you, and why is it important to you as an artist?

Social justice to me is all about equality through one another, understanding the value of human rights, and accepting all individuals for who they are. Artists need to be engaged in social justice because we have a voice in our art. Everything we do expresses who we are. Especially since what I do involves a mic, I feel an obligation to speak for those who can't.

— Travis Thompson,  
Arts Corps SPOKES youth leader and founder of "Voices of Burien"

### PROOF

**69%** of partner sites serve populations where the majority of students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

**78%** of Arts Corps students were youth of color.

Political cartoon by Bellagrace, 7th grade, Creative Schools Initiative, Orca K-8

## NEW SOCIAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE

In early October, we hosted our first-ever Arts Education & Social Justice Institute for arts teachers, teaching artists and creative facilitators eager to deepen their practice of teaching the arts through a social justice lens.

For two thought-provoking days, we focused on laying the groundwork with local and national statistics about the access gap in arts learning, and the powerful links between arts education and the struggle for educational equity and transformative social change.

Through personal reflection, group activities, and participatory theater exercises, we identified, unpacked and challenged manifestations of institutional racism, sexism, heterosexism and adultism in the classroom and beyond.

The Social Justice and Arts Education Institute builds on the leadership Arts Corps has demonstrated over the last several years to provide racial justice and anti-oppression training to organizations across the country working to advance arts education and youth development. ■



Collaborative painting by 8th grade students, Creative Schools Initiative, Orca K-8



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



photo by April Heding

Abigail, second from right, performs at Arts Corps' 2013 Student Showcase.

## MEET ARTS CORPS STUDENT ABIGAIL

Whenever we start a new class, it usually takes youth a while to warm up to their teaching artist, to feel comfortable trying new things, taking risks in front of their peers, and expressing themselves.

Not so with Abigail, a student at Northgate Elementary School. She stood out as a natural leader from day one of her Brazilian drumming class. She shared her thoughts with confidence, encouraged others to do the same, and respected differences of opinion, says her Arts Corps teaching artist, Eduardo Mendonça.

She instinctively embraced Eduardo's goals of the class:

“using the music, the drums to make a safe space, to help young children to think creatively, to be able to make decisions, to analyze what they can do individually and collectively for the sake of community.”

When the class was preparing for their annual Showcase performance, Abigail “really acted as a natural classroom assistant by making sure all the students were participating fully, being respected in their creativity. She grew in order to help other children express themselves in the same way that she was expressing herself,” Eduardo says.

Asked what she likes about Brazilian drumming, Abigail says, “You get to do a lot of fun stuff with instruments and dance around and play games, and learn new rhythms. ... I learned about different kinds of drummers and

I learned about new places. And I loved it when we had to go to the performance and perform. It was kind of fun just being in a crowd.”

She also learned a lot about collaboration.

“We have to work all together and make up one little rhythm, a big one,” Abigail says. “And we have to always listen to each other and agree on something we want to do.” ■

### PROOF

**93%** of students who strongly disagreed with the statement “I can come up with lots of ideas” prior to their classes report positive change after participation in an Arts Corps class.

## ARTISTS IN SERVICE



photo by Rita Alcantara



photo by Tania Westby

Cleveland High School students paint murals at Rainier Beach Urban Farm, left, and the Aki Kurose Middle School community repaint their school murals, right, in projects organized by AmeriCorps member Jaala Smith.

## BRINGING ART TO THE COMMUNITY WITH AMERICORPS

Our first team of AmeriCorps artists-in-service had a tremendous year working with youth in five Seattle public schools and Youngstown Cultural Arts Center. Zoey Beleya, Henry Luke, Jaala Smith, Sammy Tekle and Jave Yoshimoto made up one of the first arts-based AmeriCorps teams in Washington state. They taught arts-integrated classes during the school day, arts and service learning classes after school and brought leadership to our Youth Speaks Seattle program. Arts Corps' AmeriCorps team is supported by Washington Service Corps.



photo by Tania Westby  
Mia Williams, Principal, Aki Kurose Middle School, thanking volunteers

## ART RENEWAL DAY

More than 180 people in the community turned out for Aki Kurose Middle School's Art Renewal Day on a late April Saturday to repaint the murals that line the school's hallways. With the guidance of AmeriCorps member Jaala Smith, a group of students researched and analyzed the many murals quoting world leaders and artists. They thought deeply about what each mural meant and why it was important to honor and respect the hallways that surround them. “In renewing our school, we renew ourselves.” Paul Kurose, son of the school's namesake, helped paint a new mural that honors his mother. The mural pays tribute to Akiko Kurose's legacy as a pacifist and educational activist: “If you don't have peace within yourself learning cannot take place.” ■



photo by Devon de Leña

## WELCOME, NEW AMERICORPS!

Four Artists in Service are joining us for our second year with AmeriCorps. They are (left to right): Elizabeth Farmer, Amy Piñon, Shelby Handler and Moni Tep.

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP

### AMPING UP LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ARTISTS

For the past 13 years, Arts Corps has been nurturing youths' artistry and creativity through classes with experienced teaching artists from our community.

Many of our teaching artists have worked with teens for multiple years and have seen them grow as leaders and artists. And our Youth Speaks Seattle program has been hiring young people to organize and lead many aspects of the program.

This year, we are expanding our model for teen artists to give them more intentional opportunities for leadership, developing their social justice analysis and supporting them to organize performance opportunities for teen artists in our community. (Read more about this in "Training a New Generation of Spokes Leaders" on page 14.)

As young artists grow into leaders, how can teaching artists be supportive and responsible adult allies?

"One of the most important things our teaching artists do to inspire leadership is to stay out of the way," says Chris Zweigle, a Youth Speaks alum, mentor and Arts Corps board member. "It's a little messy sometimes, but it's also really powerful," Zweigle says.

Daniel Pak, teaching artist for West Seattle High School's music production class, has supported several students for four straight years. Their band Free Juice started out as a novice group of freshman musicians, performed five gigs last year and recorded tracks at Pearl Jam's Studio Litho in Fremont.

Pak lets youth make their own professional decisions and to experience creative learning by encouraging them not to be afraid of making mistakes. "Leadership takes accountability, courage, and perseverance," Pak says. "My philosophy is to use music and music production as a conduit to increase their life skills."



Emily and Rafael photos by April Hedging  
Emily performing with Free Juice at the Youngstown Cultural Arts Center



Rafael performing and speaking at Arts Corps' 2013 Student Showcase



photo by Sally Phnouk

Hamda performing at the 2013 Youth Speaks Seattle Grand Slam, where she won her way on to the Seattle team to compete at the national slam competition, Brave New Voices.

#### EMILY FREE JUICE FRONTWOMAN

On the first day of music production class, most kids shy away from the mic. Not Emily. She walked up to it and started freestyling a blues tune, stunning her teacher with the tone and pitch of her voice.

During her first year with Arts Corps, Emily developed amazing songwriting skills and discovered her confidence on stage as the lead singer of Free Juice, a band she and her classmates formed in Daniel Pak's music production class at West Seattle High School.

"By the second year she had audiences screaming and clapping enthusiastically at the end of their sets," Pak says.

A woman approached Emily after one of her shows and said, "You have such high confidence for a woman your age!"

"I used to be really insecure," Emily says, "then I figured out I did the best on stage when I was just doing what I wanted to do ... not trying to do anything special."

She views the band as a chance to grow as an artist, a person, a leader.

"I'm trying to see all the opportunity that's beyond it."

#### PROOF

"This class has taught me more than just producing music, it gave me life lessons that will always stick with me." ~student in Arts Corps' music production class taught by Daniel Pak.

I don't think of it like it's just something I do every Tuesday," she says. "This doesn't have to be something that ends when you graduate."

#### RAFAEL BREAK DANCE LEADER

Rafael has become a leader in Arts Corps' break dancing program in recent years. He's a student who routinely assumes the role of teacher when our teaching artists ask him to demonstrate a new move for his classmates. It's an empowering feeling that has made him more open-minded and curious about others' views.

"I've learned to give more room for people to voice their opinions – to be patient with other people's ideas ... not just in break dancing but in school as well."

#### HAMDA SPOKEN WORD STANDOUT

Hamda has always had a way with words. She used to keep most of her poetry to herself, and she wrote a lot like she carried herself in conversation — very politely.

When some friends encouraged her to get involved with Youth Speaks Seattle, it took her a while to warm up to the idea.

"Just the thought of getting up there and having my poetry scored really freaked me out," she says.

After finally checking out a poetry slam, she decided to give it a try, embracing it as a chance to dive into a whole new realm of self-expression. At first the writing circles threw her off. ►

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Then they became a safe place to take artistic risks.

“Spoken word gave me a medium where I didn’t have to be polite in my writing,” Hamda says. “I would be able to call out somebody’s ignorance without apologizing for it.”

Henry Luke, the 2012-13 Youth Speaks Artist-in-Service who mentored Hamda, raves about the intelligence and strong analysis of the world that Hamda shares in her poetry and performances.

“She’s also very kind, which is an underestimated leadership skill,” Henry says. “If you can’t genuinely connect with people, you’re not going to create a strong community. She was integral to the team and making sure everyone was really meshed together.” ■

### PROOF

**100%** of students in the Teen Artist Program reported learning from each other often or always.



photo by Justine LaViolette

Poets cheering each other on, 2013 Youth Speaks Seattle Grand Slam, Seattle Town Hall

## TRAINING A NEW GENERATION OF SPOKES LEADERS

This fall, we launched a new leadership program to train young poets, dancers, singers and artists to become members of Arts Corps’ Spokes Leadership Council. We recruited 15 teen artists and activists from our after-school classes, our Youth Speaks Seattle program and the community to take part in our 10-week Arts Liberation and Leadership Institute (ALLI).

In October, Spokes Leaders started meeting once a week to build organizing skills, learn how to plan and promote events, facilitate meetings and be effective ambassadors to the community. They are learning what social justice analysis is all about — how they can use their voice and their artistry to fight injustice and drive social change.

After graduating, Spokes Leaders will break out into three groups. One group will organize monthly open mics across Seattle to give teen dancers, singers and poets opportunities to perform. Another will lead afterschool clubs and writing circles in their schools. Another will organize the 2014 Youth Speaks Seattle poetry Slam series.

## TEACHING ARTIST PROFILE



photo © Susie Fitzhugh

### DORA OLIVIERA NEWMAN: INSPIRING CONFIDENCE, BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH DANCE

Dora Oliveira Newman has taught Afro-Brazilian dance to hundreds of Arts Corps students over the past decade. Trained in jazz, ballet and modern dance as well as the folkloric traditions of her native country, she has toured the world as the principal dancer with Olodum, an internationally renowned cultural group based in Salvador, Brazil that fights racism and fosters pride and self-esteem among Afro-Brazilians.

Dora is a stunning talent. “When she demonstrates something, you can’t take your eyes off her. She’s beautiful to watch,” says Tina LaPadula, Arts Corps’ education director.

Every year, her students amaze us with their moves and the confidence they exude on stage — as a group and as individuals. The way they rise to the occasion is just one of many measures of Dora’s excellence as a teaching artist.

She motivates everyone in her classes to participate by creating a safe space where youth feel comfortable taking risks — or taking their time until they’re ready to.

“Some kids start off very shy with their bodies,” Dora says. When she invites the class to warm up, or try out new moves, she encourages them to improvise and never forces anyone to participate. The class is so fun, no one lingers on the sidelines for very long.

Dora has a way of entrancing students of all ages and skill levels, always with a combination of playfulness and high expectations. Younger kids play follow the leader and find themselves moving their bodies in ways they’ve never moved before.

Dora’s dance exercises for younger kids incorporate lots of animal movements. Be a bird on tiptoes. Now fly. Now you’re a tiger, walk fast. You’re a turtle, go slow.

Some of her lessons are rooted in the Afro-Brazilian tradition of transforming simple, everyday motions like sweeping the floor

or hanging up laundry into dance moves. A theme that threads through everything she teaches is that bodies are beautifully creative vehicles for telling stories through dance. A lot of her students stick with her, year after year.

### PROOF

**99%** of students in Arts Corps after school classes report their teaching artist is an excellent teacher always or often.

“Dora’s really excellent at cultivating relationships, not just with the students but with the parents,” Tina says. “She will go out of her way to make a personal connection with parents, which isn’t easy to do in after-school programs. She’s pretty exceptional at community-building — making everyone feel a part of it.”

Like every great teacher, Dora is as humble as she is gifted. “Every day I teach, I always learn something new from my students,” Dora says, “some new skill, some new technique.” ■

## A TEACHER REFLECTS



photos by Rita Alcantara

### A YEAR OF CREATIVITY & COLLABORATION WITH ARTS CORPS

In sixth grade, Tanisha Brandon-Felder had an eye-opening experience that was both painful and inspiring. She beamed with pride as she turned in a short story, only to have her teacher accuse her of plagiarizing it.

“It was really awful — but also motivating,” she says. “If my writing is so outstanding my teacher thinks I plagiarized it — then wow, I must be talented. It made me realize I could be creative,” she says.

Tanisha continued to write and other teachers recognized her

talent and prodded her to keep on. She kept journals, self-published two books, and became a teacher herself. At Orca K-8, she jumps at every chance to inspire her sixth-graders to approach their language arts and social studies lessons as journeys where they can let their creativity roam free.

She’s one of several teachers at Orca and Madrona K-8 who partnered with Arts Corps through our new Creative Schools Initiative. All last year, teaching artist Nate Herth and AmeriCorps artist-in-service Sammy Tekle worked with Tanisha and other Orca middle school teachers to create engaging projects that encouraged students to think critically and cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and others.

### CREATIVE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

Arts Corps’ Creative Schools Initiative is building a model for educational change. Our goal is to foster a long-term positive impact on student learning and school culture by providing high-quality integrated arts experiences in schools.

- It’s a pilot program at Orca K-8 and Madrona K-8 schools.
- One teaching artist and one AmeriCorps Artist in Service at each Creative Schools site collaborate with middle school teachers to integrate their art form with the curriculum and support an arts-rich learning environment at the school.
- The program is having a positive impact on student learning and development, teacher practice, and school climate and culture.

• Teachers and teaching artists are working to develop long-term collaborations to create and teach curriculum that is both culturally responsive and project-based. They work closely to address content standards while giving students opportunities to develop their creative habits of mind.



Teaching Artist Nate Herth, Orca K-8

In one project, Tanisha and Nate taught a geography unit through a series of visual art experiences that explored map making. Students measured and drew maps to various scales, they designed a personalized compass rose in their sketchbooks and they collaborated with their peers to build models of cities and landscapes. To further solidify their understanding of landforms and bodies of water, Sammy choreographed and taught

a dance based on their vocabulary words and the cardinal directions, which they practiced and performed in the classroom. Day by day, the focus on creativity gave students more confidence to think boldly and challenge themselves.

When they worked on self-portraits, some kids struggled with self-consciousness. “We had to figure out how do we

look at ourselves and not judge ourselves? How do we look at each other and not judge each other?” says Tanisha, who is interning with Arts Corps as a doctoral candidate in the University of Washington’s Leadership for Learning program.

So instead of creating a traditional realistic portrait, students came up with the idea of using transparency paper over their self-portraits, turning them into geometric abstract art pieces.

“They understood we’re all vulnerable in this,” Tanisha says. “We’re all going to be artistic. We’re going to share something.”

Many students in Tanisha’s class made huge strides as they ventured outside their comfort zones. A boy named Khalill was one of them. At the start of the year, he acted out a lot in class, didn’t do much homework. ►

### RESULTS

Highlights from an independent evaluation of our Creative Schools Initiative:

**100%** of classroom teachers report moderate to extreme satisfaction with the overall Creative Schools Initiative.

Teachers reported that **51%** of students demonstrated an increased ability to pay attention in class as a result of Creative Schools Initiative.

**36%** of students report an increased ability to stay focused on goals.

For **51%** of students, teachers report an increased ability to come up with creative ideas.

**33%** of students report an increased ability to do even the hardest school work.

## A TEACHER REFLECTS



He loved to dance, so when artist-in-service Sammy started working with Tanisha's students, Khalill seemed amazed that break dancing could play a part in a vocabulary lesson.

Khalill started paying attention more in class and channeled his energies into language arts. He led a monthlong book club, read Cynthia Lord's *Rules* cover to cover, completed all his assignments, kept his group on track, and everyone in his group did well on final projects.

By the end of the year, Tanisha says he was "a whole different person." A leader.

"Khalill sticks out to me as proof that if there's a way to channel creativity and give kids a way

to shine, they can do it in other places, too," Tanisha says. "There needs to be a way for them to expand their minds and ask the questions and create things. It makes them better learners."

The Creative Schools Initiative continues at Orca and Madrona K-8 this year, with funding from the Horton Family Fund, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, Laird Norton Foundation, Medina Foundation and Boeing. ■

### PROOF

**206** classes, workshops, and special projects were brought to **40** schools, after-school sites, community centers and residential treatment centers.

**2,518** of youth in grades K-12 learned powerfully through the arts in Arts Corps' in-school residencies, after-school classes and Creative Schools Initiative



Drawing became Khalill's thing during our first year of weaving the arts into his language arts and social studies classes at Orca K-8.

"I'm really good at it. Once I start, I can't stop. You just gotta give me something, and I'll do it. ... I don't care if it's out of order. Because art is art. Art can be anything."

## RAISING FUNDS ROLLATHON STYLE



photos by Justine LaViolette

We had an absolute blast hosting our first-ever Rollathon this year. More than 100 people decked out in fabulous costumes skated their hearts out and made the event a fantastic success on many levels.

In teams, Rollathoners reached out to their social networks and raised \$15,000 — more than twice our goal. Most gifts ranged from \$10 to \$50, and many came from people who were giving to Arts Corps for the first time. Arts Corps deeply values donations of every size that we receive from our communities. We are so thrilled that we reached a broader and more diverse cross-section of our community with this very fun opportunity to invest in Arts Corps.

Tina Urso-McDaniel, a longtime Arts Corps supporter, worked tirelessly to make the Rollathon happen. Tina describes how exhilarating it was to step up her involvement:

As I've become more involved in philanthropy, I've wondered why there aren't more fun, low-cost fundraising events giving

regular people the ability to participate, as well as engaging people who don't do big-money events because they don't see themselves as "philanthropists." So when Rita Alcantara [Arts Corps' Communications and Grants Manager] asked me to help with an inaugural casual rollerskate fundraising event for Arts Corps' teen programs — not knowing I also loved rollerskating — I was like "Um... YEAH!"

It was naturally fun to help form an event that was all about costumes, rollerskates, and community. But it also got me much more engaged with Arts Corps than I had been as just a donor. I also saw first-hand how creative and supportive the internal workings of the organization were.

Besides the uncertain adventure of a first-year endeavor, the experience also helped me push myself to take personal risks, from speaking up in meetings to the seemingly daunting prospect of fundraising for my own team.

While there were moments where I doubted both myself and Rollathon's outcome, I ended up being blown away by the support and participation of everyone involved. Seeing the



Tina Urso-McDaniel (center) and her Rollathon team, the Leroy Browns

power of small, team-network-based donations combine for an amazing doubling of our goal, and having every team show up in costume with lots of enthusiasm was really inspiring. It also gave me confidence in my own effectiveness as a philanthropist.

If the first year of Rollathon was this awesome, how much more will future years be? I can't wait to see! ■

## THANK YOU

### TO THE AMAZING PEOPLE WHO HAVE INVESTED IN ARTS CORPS.

#### \$50,000+

Horner Foundation  
The Horton Fund  
JPMorgan Chase Foundation  
National Endowment for the Arts

#### \$10,000 - \$49,999

Amazon  
The Boeing Company  
City of Seattle Office of Arts and Culture  
The Clowes Fund, Inc.  
Harvest Foundation  
Hasbro Children's Fund  
Sally Ketcham and Alyx Fier  
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National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards  
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#### \$5,000 - \$9,999

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PROOF

859

organizations and  
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1. A PLUS Youth Program
2. Aki Kurose Middle School Academy\*
3. Bailey-Gatzert Elementary School\*
4. Ballinger Homes
5. Broadview-Thomson K-8
6. Cedarhurst Elementary School
7. Chief Sealth High School\*
8. Cleveland High School
9. Daniel Elementary School
10. Delridge Community Center
11. Denny International Middle School†
12. Eckstein Middle School†
13. Emerson Elementary School^
14. Franklin High School\*
15. Hamilton International Middle School\*
16. Hilltop Elementary School
17. Kent Elementary School
18. Kimball Elementary School
19. LIHI – Denice Hunt Townhomes‡
20. LIHI – Denny Park Apartments‡
21. LIHI – Meadowbrook View Apartments‡
22. Madrona K-8\*
23. McClure Middle School†
24. Mercer Middle School†
25. Museum of History and Industry
26. Northgate Elementary School†
27. Open Window School
28. Orca K-8
29. Saint Therese School
30. Scenic Hill Elementary School
31. Seahurst Elementary School
32. Seattle Girls School
33. South Shore School
34. Southwest Interagency Academy
35. Spruce Street Secure Crisis Residential Center
36. Van Asselt Elementary School ^
37. Washington Middle School\*
38. West Seattle High School\*
39. Wing Luke Elementary School^
40. Youngstown Cultural Arts Center

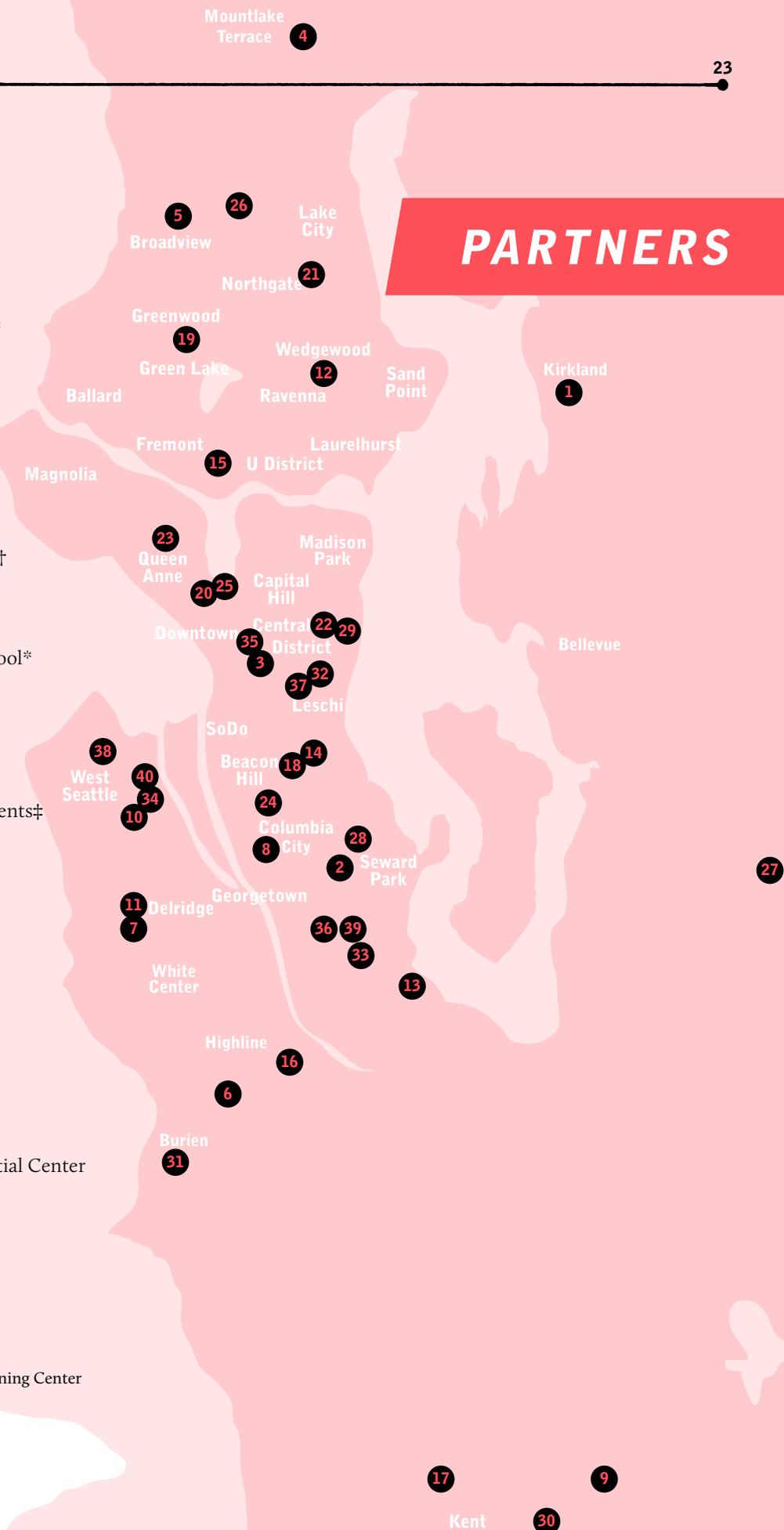
\* YMCA Community Learning Center

† Seattle Parks &amp; Recreation Community Learning Center

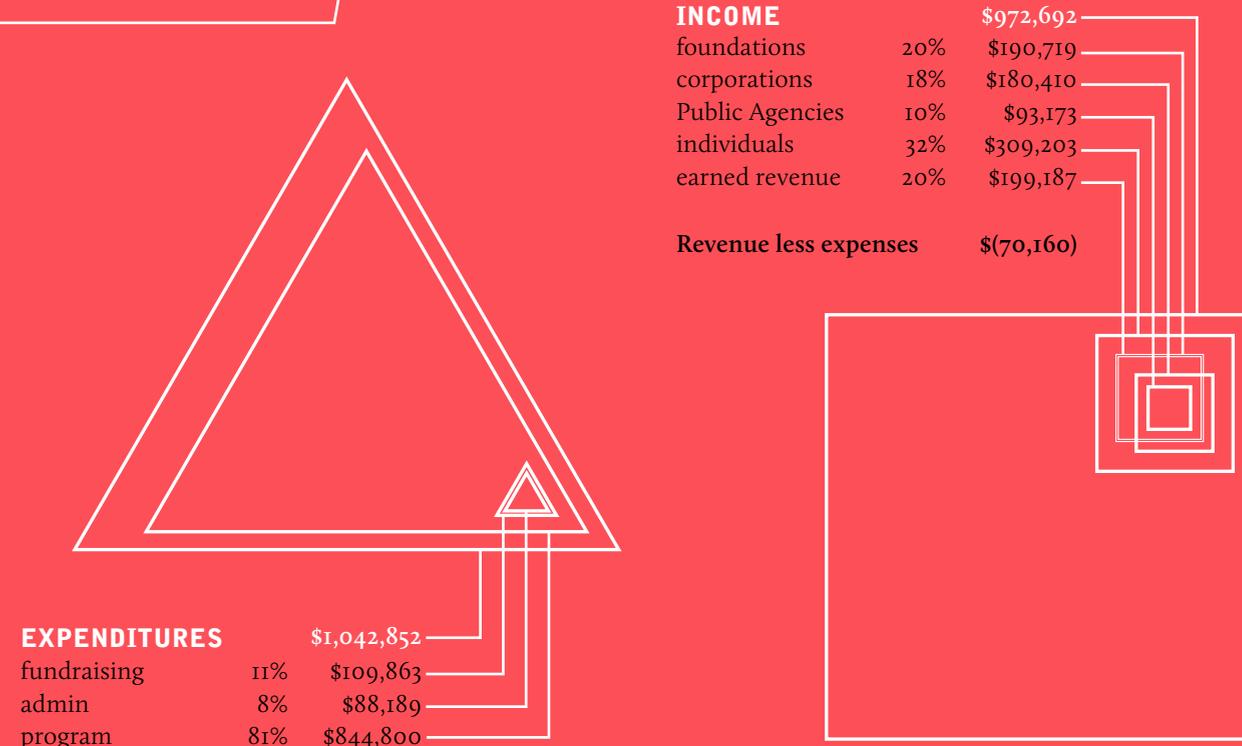
‡ Low Income Housing Institute

^ Tiny Tots Development Center

## PARTNERS



# 2012/2013 ANNUAL REPORT



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
<b>Assets</b>			
Current Assets (cash)	\$168,164	\$24,604	\$192,768
Accounts Receivable	\$64,700	\$-	\$64,700
Fixed Assets (equipment)	\$26,955	\$-	\$26,955
Depreciation	\$(15,061)	\$-	\$(15,061)
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$244,758</b>	<b>\$24,604</b>	<b>\$269,362</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>			
Liabilities	\$23,573	\$-	\$23,573
Net assets at beginning of year	\$167,407	\$148,542	\$315,949
Change in Net Assets	\$53,778	\$(123,938)	\$(70,160)
Total Net Assets	\$221,185	\$24,604	\$245,789
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$244,758</b>	<b>\$24,604</b>	<b>\$269,362</b>

**PROOF**

80% of our expenditures go directly to our programs. Funding **36,199** hours of high-quality arts instruction by **34** professional teaching artists in myriad art forms, including dance, music, visual arts, spoken word and theatre.

Visit [www.artscorps.org/evaluation](http://www.artscorps.org/evaluation) to read the full 2012/2013 program evaluation report.

## IN MEMORIAM

Felipe Cañete  
1976-2013



"As all of you did, I woke up feeling such a tremendous gratitude for last night, for all of you—my community, for our students and their families, for the triumph of art.

Thanks for walking the path of art and love and for doing what you are supposed to do in life, so we all create this paradise on earth.

Blessings, Felipe"

The words of our dear, departed teaching artist, Felipe Cañete, the night after his students' performed at Arts Corps' 2012 La Festa del Arte.

We remain inspired and forever transformed by this loving and joyous friend and teacher.



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6th Grade Student Self Portrait Maps with Abstract Overlays, Creative Schools Initiative, Orca K-8

