

# MIDCASTING

## Toward Just Futures: Creative Youth Development's Waymaking to Systems Change Through and Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic

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**The Lewis Prize for Music 2021**

# Contents

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<b>An Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2020 Grantmaking</b> The Lewis Prize for Music’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic	<b>6</b>
<b>The Creative Youth Development Music Field Survey</b> Systems Change, Justice Orientation and Community Response In & Before the Pandemic	<b>9</b>
<b>Case Studies</b> Justice Orientations and Direct Service Across Music CYD Organizations	<b>18</b>
<b>Reflections from the Field</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Implications for the Future of Creative Youth Development</b> Possible Strategies to Support Systems Change	<b>38</b>
<b>Special Thanks</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>The Lewis Prize for Music</b>	<b>43</b>

# An Introduction

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“Just hire young people for the kinds of jobs that we want to do: community work, entrepreneurship and arts opportunities.”

*– Blacc, a 17 year old activist speaking to former President Obama during the My Brother's Keeper Alliance Leadership Forum, May 2021*

**YOUNG PEOPLE** are clear about what they want and need to thrive. They also know that adults are largely responsible for the systems that lift them up or hold them back. When adults listen closely and act responsibly, they become essential collaborators with young people. When they don't, young people become victims to inequitable systems.

Creative Youth Development (CYD) practitioners across the country constantly bridge gaps and counter harmful systems. Their aptitude for walking alongside young people has been on full display as the crisis of 2020 intensified, from the onset of COVID-19, economic inequality, the racial justice uprisings, and a school year of prolonged virtual education, CYD programs stepped forward for the benefit of young people, families and communities.

Research on systemic change seeded by creative youth development is underrepresented in the field. In the past, funders, researchers and the media have given the most attention to CYD artistic experiences that compliment principles of CYD. The field has long

been recognized for filling gaps in arts education that manifest most substantially in schools with majority BIPOC student populations. These stakeholders have generally paid less attention to the role CYD programs play in addressing young people's holistic health including; material wellbeing, workforce preparation, and mental health needs. Needs that have all been created by the same systems that limit their access to arts learning.

Last year, The Lewis Prize for Music collaborated with 41 CYD organizations and witnessed them addressing the full range of youth and family needs, especially for those in the least resourced circumstances. These programs quickly provided technology access and virtual instruction, academic tutoring, meal delivery, income replacement and even access to housing. These wraparound services evolved over the summer to become new operating norms by September.

The more we understood about the holistic efforts of CYD programs, the more we saw the close connection between the artistic programming,

wellbeing supports, and equitable systems change. This connection was affirmed when we awarded three of our COVID Response Fund grantees our \$500,000 Accelerator Awards because of their systems change leadership.

With this report, we invite you to join us in discovering the full scope and shape of Creative Youth Development's contributions to the personal, community and civic health of the young people in the United States. We've sought to model CYD values with the inclusion of young adult voices alongside more mature authors and researchers. We've included national data and local stories that lead to important questions for us all to answer together.

Thank you to The Lewis Prize awardees and grantees for sharing the stories of their work. Thank you to our guest authors and to the hundreds of CYD programs and practitioners who responded to our survey request. Thank you to our Knowledge Generation team of Arielle Julia Brown, Karen Cueva and Alexis Jackson for leading this research and compilation.

We hope this report gives everyone deep insight into the holistic potency of CYD to achieve a fair and just future that puts young people and their creativity in the lead to take us there.

**Dalouge Smith, CEO**  
September, 2021

# Executive Summary

## Midcasting\* Toward Just Futures: Creative Youth Development’s Waymaking to Systems Change Through and Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic.

*\*Midcasting is the act of planning and imagining pathways between a present reality and a set of possible futures.*

**SINCE THE ONSET** of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, Creative Youth Development (CYD) organizations have been expanding their work to provide

greater support to students, families, and communities impacted by the pandemic. To strengthen this response from the field, The Lewis Prize for Music

offered a COVID-19 Response grant to 32 organizations of varying size and geographic location. Totalling \$1.25 million dollars, the fund supported organizations that were leading direct response efforts in their communities. Alongside digital adaptation of regular program activities, these efforts offered mental health support, food access, housing security, civic engagement support, and academic support, among other things. Additionally, many CYD organizations supported youth engagement in various forms of movement building, including the Black Lives Matter movement and work against voter suppression.



Enriching Lives Through Music (San Rafael, CA) — Food Distribution — 2020

Witnessing the stories these organizations told about the impact of this expanded work in their communities, we at The Lewis Prize for Music decided to begin a larger effort to track the ways in which CYD organizations have shown up in their communities as catalysts for change, before and during the pandemic. We saw similar stories in our Accelerator Award grantmaking process.

All of this confluence brought us to the realization that communities are likely to receive direct services from a music-based youth-serving organization in ways that are adjacent to how they might receive support from a social service agency or an NGO known for direct service support. We set out to learn more about this work via a field wide survey shared with the music CYD field in the spring of 2021.

This paper is a compilation of **data collected from over 280 music CYD organizations** alongside the **voices of youth leaders** and prominent CYD researchers. In alignment with our grantmaking, this report centers organizations in the field whose work is rooted in serving the most marginalized young people in their communities. It takes into account the impact that CYD organizations have had in their communities since the pandemic, and also how young people, at this inflection point in our history, are being positioned to innovate, plan, and imagine new pathways toward just futures beyond.

Included in the paper are essays from two youth leaders: Jakayla Furr from Hyde Square Task Force and Rachel Jackson from the Saint Louis Story Stitchers Artists Collective. There are also two CYD outside researchers, Raquel Jimenez and Denise Montgomery. The paper also looks at case studies about systems change and direct services

at Hyde Square Task Force, David's Harp Foundation, Neutral Zone, and Zumix. The paper concludes with recommendations and questions meant to guide and propel us into deeper collective support of music-based CYD-led systems change.

Through the process of undertaking this research, we have continued to learn how music CYD organizations, when deeply engaged, build trusted relationships in the full lives and communities of the young people they serve. We see the intersection of this deep trust-building relational work with CYD's internal justice orientations, direct service and immediate needs responsiveness, movement building and partnerships as a nexus of systems change. 35% of respondents identified with working at this nexus.

Following our research on this intersection of practices, additional disaggregation of this analysis showed that BIPOC-led organizations and multi-genre pedagogical spaces tended to show higher justice indicators. We champion the work of funding, amplification and support for BIPOC-led and multi-genre pedagogical spaces in our recommendations. We conclude this white paper with a series of questions meant to facilitate midcasting for readers.

We entitled this paper *Midcasting Toward Just Futures: Creative Youth Development's Waymaking to Systems Change Through and Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic* because we were interested in considering the work of CYD as an effort of midcasting. Midcasting is a framework coined by Dennis List as an articulation of how one or a body of people might dream of a suite of possible futures and map a way forward to those futures given the current systems in place.

We believe that CYD organizations are creating spaces for radical imagination grounded in the redressing of fundamental human needs. This powerful youth-empowered work is creating new pathways toward change. This paper is an effort to learn how music CYD organizations are doing this work. Consequently, this paper is an invitation, particularly for funders, policy makers, researchers and others to consider how we can bolster and expand this powerful youth-driven work of midcasting toward just futures.

#### THE QUESTIONS WE ARE WORKING WITH INCLUDE:

- How can the field of music-based CYD center freedom and justice for all young people and their communities?
- What are the most effective practices for sharing stories about the impact of music CYD-led systems change?
- How do we center the stories and outreach strategies of young people as we share about the work of this field over the last year and beyond?
- In light of the depth of response to crisis from music CYD organizations in the pandemic, and before the pandemic, how can we re-evaluate and re-consider what communal emergency preparedness is?
- How can we systematically define emergency circumstances so CYD organizations are recognized and supported in their work to fill systemic gaps in access to equitable social connection, education, mental health support, food access, housing security, income stability, etc. that exist daily for too many young people and families?

# 2020 Grantmaking

# The Lewis Prize for Music's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

**AS THE COVID-19** pandemic emerged in the United States, Creative Youth Development (CYD) programs mobilized and began adapting to meet the needs of young people and families in their communities. The Lewis Prize for Music (TLPM) quickly decided to establish a COVID-19 Community Response Fund and awarded \$1.25 million to 32 CYD organizations that responded to the pressing needs of the young people served by their programs. This was not created as an organizational relief fund, but as a resource to CYD organizations who were quickly pivoting to provide relief to the most hard hit families in their communities.

The COVID-19 Community Response Fund was publicly announced on April 14th. Applications were received April 20th-May 8th. A panel of external adult and young adult Reviewers read applications through May and recommended the strongest applications forward. TLPM staff team reviewed the recommendations and

sent a final list of recommended grants to the Board of Directors for approval in early June. The 32 COVID-19 Community Response Fund grants were announced on June 16th, with 15 grantees receiving \$25,000 and 17 receiving \$50,000 each.

The grantee organizations self-reported revealing anecdotes of how CYD organizations are able to respond to their communities to provide direct services that go beyond music-making to help create systemic change. In addition to continually providing music instruction that pivoted to virtual learning, CYD organizations were elevating mental health supports, offering free COVID testing, partnering with the U.S. Census Bureau to ensure accurate counts of community members, and fundraising to provide direct payment to families in need. Through a balance of artistic training and social service support, TLPM believes CYD organizations are uniquely positioned within communities to propel systems change.



Memphis Music Initiative (Memphis, TN)

## COVID-19 Community Response Fund Grantees

**317 Main Community Music Center** (Yarmouth, ME)

**A Place Called Home** (Los Angeles, CA)

**Beyond the Bars** (Philadelphia, PA)

**Beyond the Natural** (Baltimore, MD)

**Cambridge Community Center** (Cambridge, MA)

**Center of Life** (Pittsburgh, PA)

**Crescendo Detroit** (Detroit, MI)

**Enriching Lives Through Music** (San Rafael, CA)

**FAME – Foundation for the Advancement of Music & Education** (Bowie, MD)

**Hyde Square Task Force** (Jamaica Plain, MA)

**Memphis Music Initiative** (Memphis, TN)

**MEOW Cares, Inc.** (Montgomery, AL)

**Music Beyond Measure** (Montclair, NJ)

**Neutral Zone** (Ann Arbor, MI)

**New City Kids** (Jersey City, NJ)

**Pico Youth & Family Center** (Santa Monica, CA)

**Play on Philly** (Philadelphia, PA)

**ROCA Music Program** (Brownsville, TX)

**RYSE Youth Center** (Richmond, CA)

**Saint Louis Story Stitchers Artists Collective** (St. Louis, MO)

**Stax Music Academy** (Memphis, TN)

**Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village** (Flint, MI)

**The Choir School of Delaware** (Wilmington, DE)

**The Heartbeat Music Project** (Crownpoint, NM)

**The HUBB** (Newark, NJ)

**The Jessye Norman School of the Arts, Inc.** (Augusta, GA)

**The TETRA** (Detroit, MI)

**White Hall Arts Academy** (Los Angeles, CA)

**Youth Empowerment Project** (New Orleans, LA)

**Youth on Record** (Denver, CO)

**YR Media** (Oakland, CA)

**ZUMIX** (East Boston, MA)

## 2020 Accelerator Awardees

**Community MusicWorks**  
(Providence, RI)

**My Voice Music**  
(Portland, OR)

**The David's Harp Foundation**  
(San Diego, CA)

## 2021 Accelerator Awardees

**Beyond the Bars**  
(Philadelphia, PA)

**Hyde Square Task Force**  
(Boston, MA)

**Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit**  
(Detroit, MI)

**Saint Louis Story Stitchers Artists Collective**  
(Saint Louis, MO)

## 2020 Infusion Awardees

**Grand Canyon Music Festival/NACAP**  
(Grand Canyon, AZ)

**Los Cenzontles Cultural Arts Academy**  
(San Pablo, CA)

**The Roots of Music**  
(New Orleans, LA)

**We Are Culture Creators**  
(Detroit, MI)

## 2021 Infusion Awardees

**Academy of Music Production Education and Development (AMPED)**

**Atlanta Music Project**  
(Atlanta, GA)

**Women's Audio Mission**  
(San Francisco, CA)

## 2020 Finalist Awardees

**Project 440**  
(Philadelphia, PA)

**Spy Hop Productions**  
(Salt Lake City, UT)

## 2021 Catalyst Awardee

**We Are Culture Creators**  
(Detroit, MI)

## The Accelerator Awards and Systems Change

TLPM's internal definition and communication around systems change continued to evolve in our second year of funding. This was reflected in the application questions by asking organizations to report specific macro and civic systems that their CYD work is influencing.

Macro systems operate in society at large and shape the formal civic systems. Examples of macro systems include cultural preservation, racial justice, immigrant inclusion, gender and LGBTQIA+ equality, disability justice, environmental justice, food security, and economic opportunity.

Civic systems are functions of society operated, regulated and funded by local, state and national government as well as other resourced entities like corporations, associations, and philanthropies. Examples of civic systems include: education, child welfare, correctional/justice system, policing, workforce training, employment, housing/shelter, immigration, healthcare, or political/

democratic participation. (Citation: This definition of macro systems change is inspired and influenced by the work of the Leeway Foundation.)

TLPM application evaluators selected organizations who had a solid progressive change initiative underway and were beginning to see progress toward a tipping point in their systems change work. Though the COVID-19 Community Response Fund and Accelerator Awards processes were markedly different in purpose and design, they surfaced consistent results with three COVID Fund grantees receiving \$500,000 Accelerator Awards.

This explicit alignment across the two separate funding approaches confirmed the nexus of systems change TLPM had previously begun to discern. This overlap between community response work and systems change pursuits had been anecdotally visible throughout the year in the activities of TLPM's 2020 awardees and COVID Fund grantees. Seeing it affirmed again by the 2021 awards, TLPM determined to gather more fieldwide data in order to more specifically identify key characteristics of systems change in music CYD activities.



Beyond the Bars (Philadelphia, PA) • Photo Credit Matthew Kerr



# The Creative Youth Development Music Field Survey

Systems Change, Justice Orientation  
and Community Response In  
& Before the Pandemic

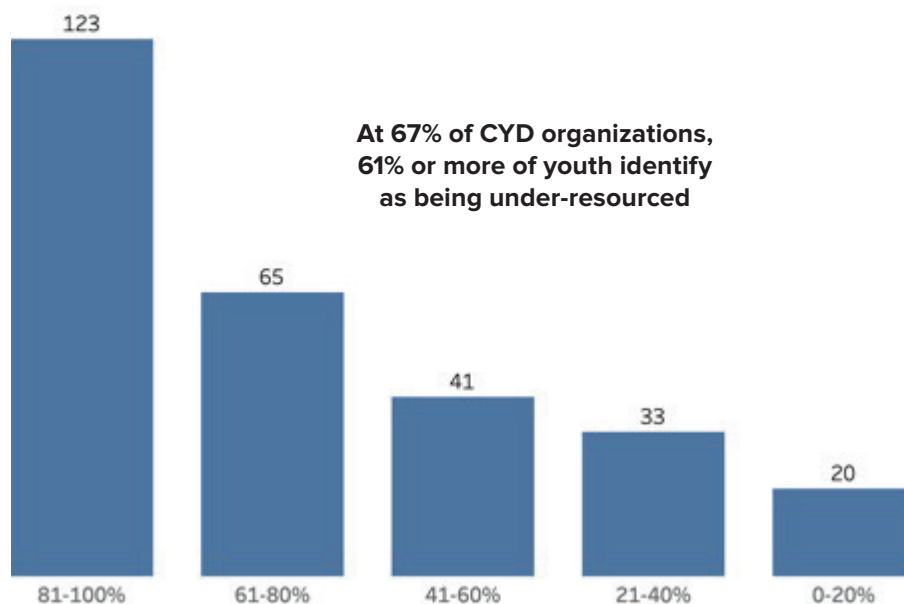
**WHEN THE PANDEMIC** began, Indian activist and author, Arundhati Roy lifted a framing of the Pandemic as a Portal, or an opportunity to rebuild and step into a more just world. Concurrently, we were developing our COVID-19 Response grantmaking and thinking deeply about the capacities of the moment to transform the unjust and broken systems in the United States. Having recently written and published our systems change definition, we were regularly in a variety of conversations about the work that constitutes systems change in the Creative Youth Development (CYD) field.

Beginning with an analysis of 42 musical practices' capacities to bolster human rights and affect social change, continuing to learn from our awardees and grantees about what systems change

looks like in practice, and studying the work of other researchers considering systems change, has taught us what we know of systems change and CYD. We've learned that CYD organizations moving toward systemic change tend to the whole lives, needs and requests of young people and their communities. Witnessing the work of our grantees and awardees, we've found there to be a connection between the high level strategies of working for decarceration, racial justice and gender justice alongside on-the-ground responsiveness to issues of food security, housing security and mental health. We began to consider how we might learn and share more from this confluence of systems change and adaptive responses to immediate community needs that CYD organizations lead in their communities. The CYD music field survey was

developed to consider how music CYD organizations were, in the moment and over time, showing up for their communities. We opened the survey for four weeks from mid-February to mid-March 2021. Questions reviewed many demographics including; leader gender and race, zip code, organization budget size and fluctuation in the pandemic, estimates of percentages of young people served who are experiencing circumstances of marginalization, musical genres taught, virtual programming, youth technology access, organizational partnerships, direct services offered before and during the pandemic, internal markers of justice orientations and support of youth in joining and leading justice movements.

## Organizations Serving Under-Resourced Youth



Percentage of youth from under-resourced circumstances served at responding CYD organizations

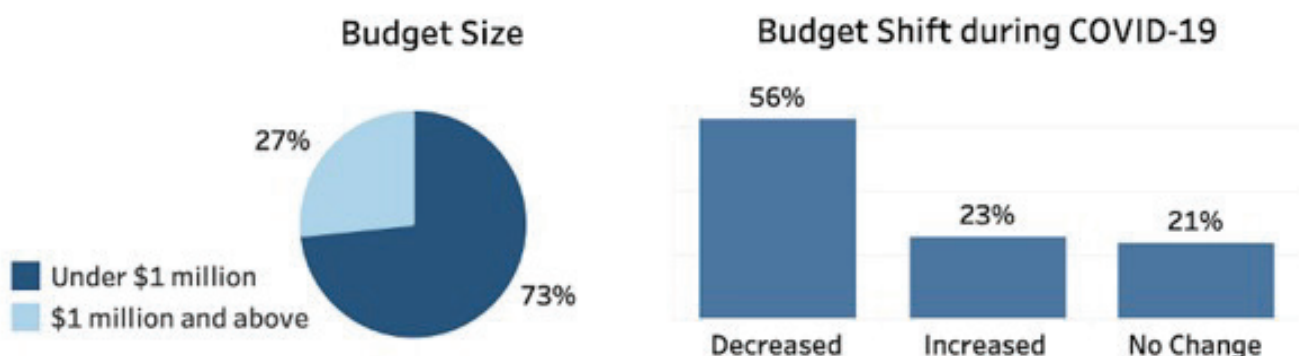
# Music Creative Youth Development at A Glance

## The COVID-Response and Systems Change Survey

Of 280 total respondents consisting of music CYD organizations across the United States, we saw the following breakdowns:

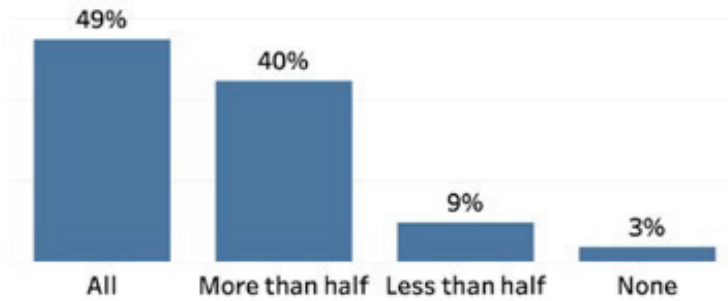
- Respondent organizations represented 233 distinct zip codes and a wide range of communities across the United States.
- Across all respondent organizations, the racial identity of leadership was 57% White and 43% BIPOC (57% White, 26% Black, 14% Latinx, 4% Asian, 1.4% MENA, .4% First Peoples, and 1.5% other).
- The gender identity of leadership was 58% cis-women, 41% cis-men, .7% gender non-conforming (non-binary) and .4% trans-women.
- 26.7% had operating budgets of \$1 million or more dollars while 73% operate below \$1 million dollars. (15.4% had budgets of 500K-999,999K, 18.5% had budgets of 250K-499,999K, 19.6% had budgets of 100k-249,999k, 18.9% had budgets of 99,999K or less)
- 56% of respondent organizations saw budget decreases in the pandemic, 21% saw their budgets remain the same, and 23% saw budget increases in the pandemic.
- Program respondents represented 100 combinations of single and multidisciplinary musical genre pedagogies.
- At the time of the survey, 48% of the respondents had moved 100% of their programs to virtual programming, 40% had moved more than half of their programs to virtual, 9% had moved less than half of their programs to virtual and 3.2% had moved none of their programs to virtual spaces.
- 75% of programs said that the majority of their youth have access to technology, 19% noted that the majority of their youth did not have access to technology and 6% did not know whether their youth have access to technology.
- 55% of programs saw an expansion of organizational and community partnerships in the pandemic, while 45% did not expand organizational and community partnerships.

### Organizational Budgets

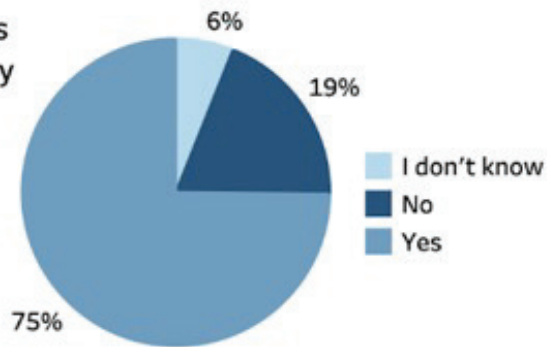


## Virtual Programming & Tech Access

### Virtual Programming



### Youth Access to Technology

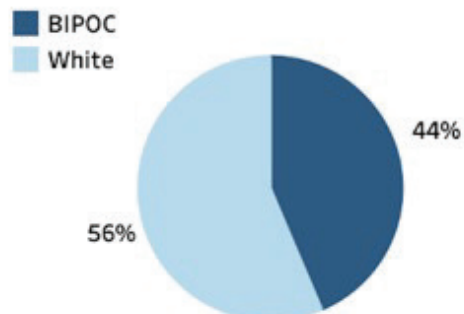


## Leadership Identity

### Gender Identity

Cis-gender woman	57.8%
Cis-gender man	41.1%
Gender non-conforming (non-binary)	0.7%
Trans-gender woman	0.4%

### Racial Identity



# A Nexus of Systems Change Practice in Music CYD

**TRACKING ALL OF** these elements are important to us as we endeavor to better support systems change with the field of music CYD. We explicitly executed this research with requests for all of this information in order to understand nuanced trends around positive social change and systems change in the field. Many of the findings we review in this paper are analyzed and presented in intersectional ways. Inspired by the knowledge production of Kimberle Crenshaw, the analysis presented looks at many of the aforementioned questions in concert with each other to gather a clear and nuanced understanding of how these complex Creative Youth Development organizations affect change in their communities.

Of all the factors we sought to learn about, five key indicators now stand out as reflective of positive social change and systems change in CYD at this moment in time.

We have looked at the intersections of the following markers to better understand how the field of music CYD has responded to their young people's and community's needs in this moment and beyond.

- 1 Partnership expansion in the pandemic
- 2 Movement building support for young people
- 3 Direct services offered before the pandemic
- 4 Direct services offered during the pandemic
- 5 Internal justice orientation

In addition, we examined these indicators in relation to the racial identity of the organizations' leaders and the multiplicity of musical genres they teach.

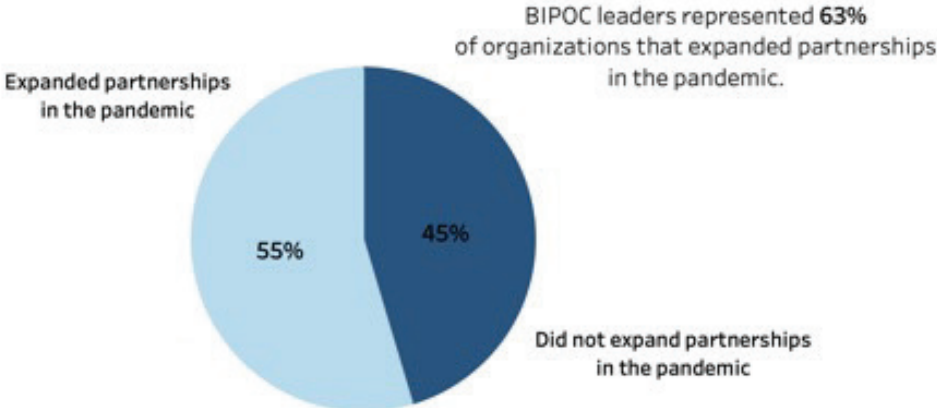
98 of the 280 respondents, or 35% of the survey participants, articulated that they worked across all five activity areas: their partnerships expanded, they met direct needs of their communities before and during the pandemic, had a variety of markers of an internal justice orientation, and supported their young people in movement building work across a variety of social movements. The more refined analysis that follows illuminates what has led us to see the five indicators as a suite of complementary practices that deliver a multi-pronged approach to positive social change towards systems change.

## On Partnership

Partnership, be it across CYD organizations, with other local non-arts organizations, local government or beyond, is core to the work of systems change at local, regional and national levels. Partnerships across sectors are common in music CYD organizations engaging in systems change work. In a pandemic, no less, the work of meeting the needs of the most marginalized in any given community must be a collective effort.

55% of respondents engaged and expanded partnerships in their work in the pandemic. Of the 154 organizations that saw growth in partnerships, 137 of them or, 89%, offered multiple direct services to their community beyond their core programming. This number is significantly contrasted with the 123 organizations (45%) whose partnerships did not grow. Of this 123, 97 or 79% were able to offer multiple direct services to their communities.

## Community Partnerships



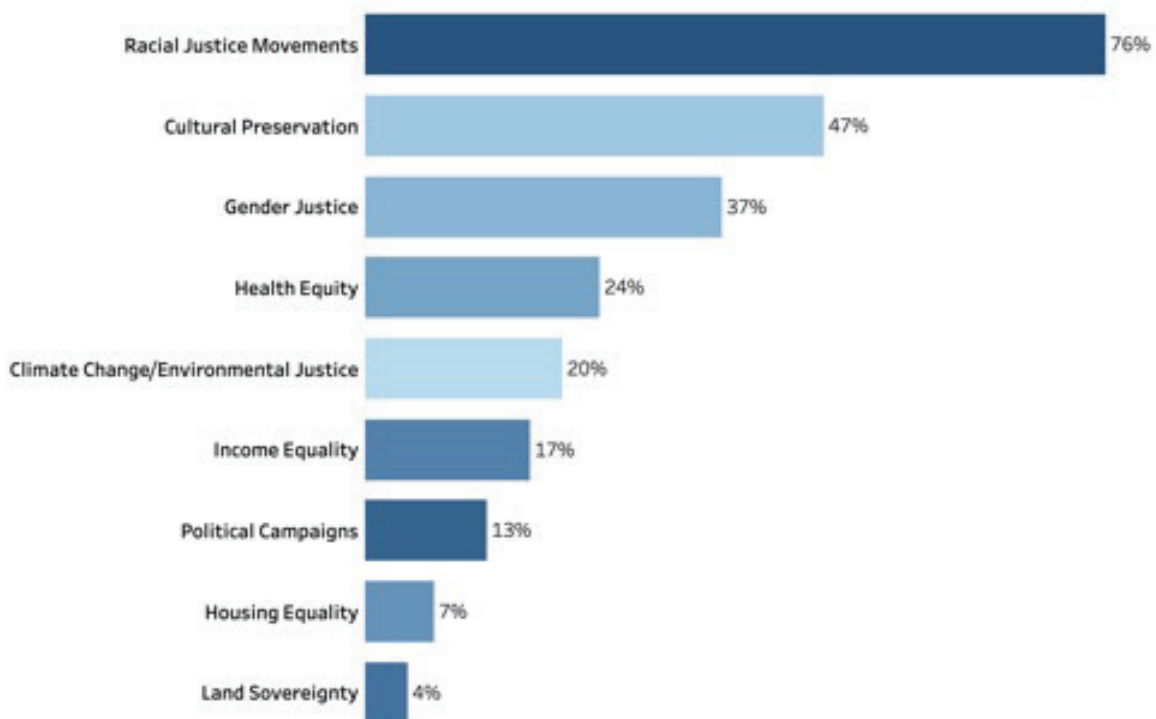
**THESE CONTRASTS DEMONSTRATE** how expanding partnerships makes CYD organizations even more effective at serving their communities. Additionally, we found correlations between internal justice orientations and partnership expansion. For example, organizations with community representative boards were more likely to have expanded partnerships in 2020. We found that 108 of the 164 organizations (67%) with indicators of community-representative board leadership saw increases in partnership. This percentage is markedly higher than the 55% we see in the general respondent pool.

## On Movement Building and Fostering Youth Leadership

**IN THE MIDST** and in the wake of uprisings calling for justice for stolen Black lives, even in the middle of a pandemic, young people led movements for racial justice, gender justice, environmental justice, health equity, income equality, disability justice and more. Significantly fewer organizations responded to this question about movement support (182 of the 280 organizations surveyed responded to this optional question.) Of the respondents that answered,

76% of organizations identified they were supporting young people in getting connected to and growing in leadership around racial justice movements in their communities. 63% of these organizations indicated increased partnership activity which is greater than the percentage of the general pool.

### Youth Social Movement Involvement Supported by Organizations



## On Direct Service Before and During the Pandemic

**DIRECT SERVICE WORK** has been a mainstay of CYD offerings since long before the pandemic. Direct services not only work to close gaps in the immediate human needs in a community, but they also work to help CYD organizations build trust with the young people they serve. In the field survey and in our analysis of its data, we codified “direct service” as offerings of resources beyond music instruction that tend to the whole human needs of a young person and their family.

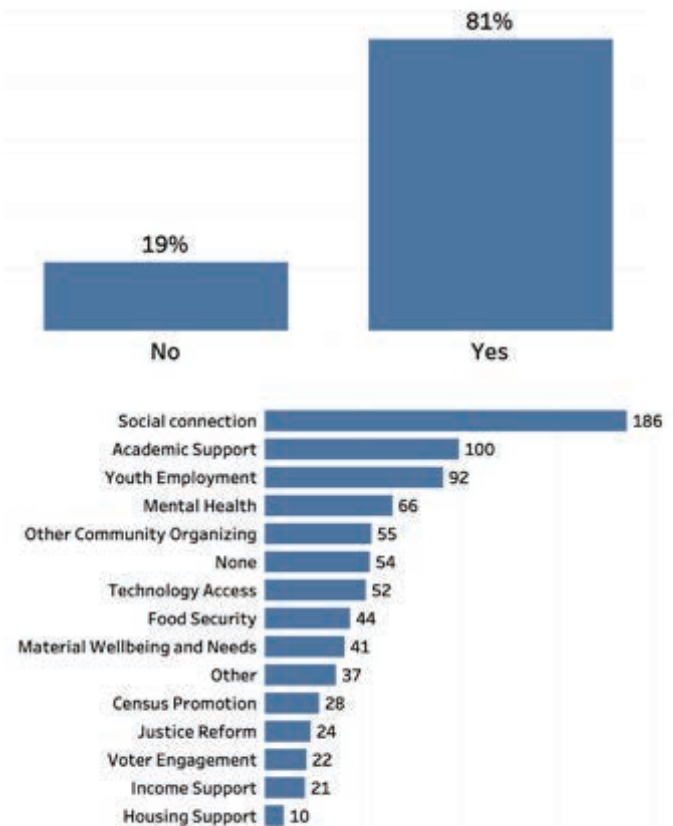
Direct services tracked in the survey include support for housing, income, academics, food security, mental health, justice reform, material wellbeing and needs, social connection, youth employment, voter engagement, technology access, census promotion, COVID-19 education, and other community organizing.

81% of respondent organizations identified with offering direct services to their communities before the pandemic. This grew to 85% of organizations offering direct services in the midst of pandemic. Additionally, the number of organizations that rose to the challenge of supporting their

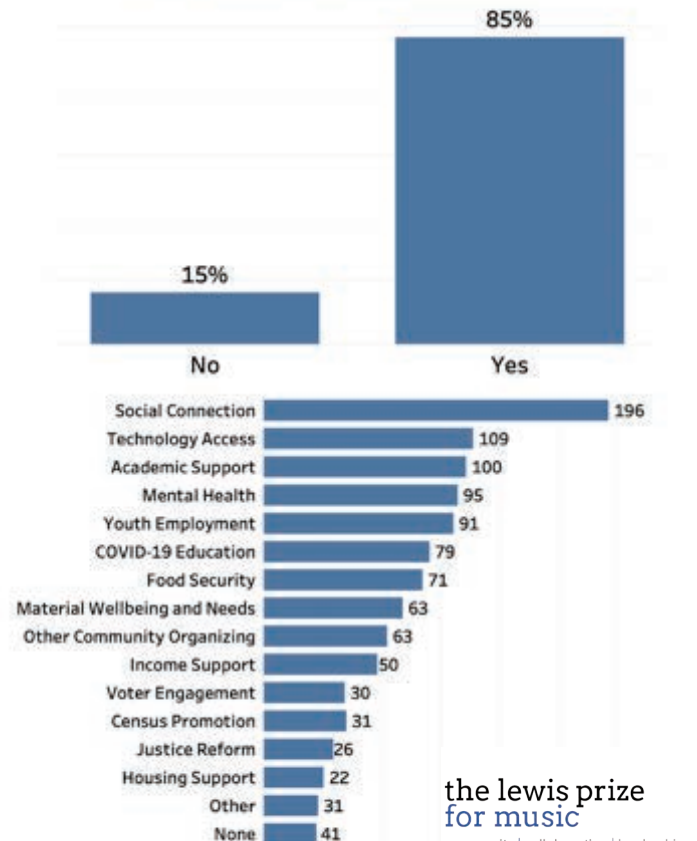
communities with housing support, income support and technology access doubled. The number of organizations that rose to the challenge of supporting their communities with food security, mental health support and material wellbeing and needs grew by one third. These substantial increases in specific direct services show that organizations were adding multiple new supports to those they had in place prior to COVID-19.

## Direct Services

Organizations offering direct services before the COVID-19 Pandemic



Organizations offering direct services during the COVID-19 Pandemic



## On Internal Justice Orientation

**INTERNAL JUSTICE ORIENTATION** is a metric that we developed to track the ways in which practices at CYD organizations are working towards modeling the just worlds that CYD organizations endeavor to help build.

Metrics accounted for in this field survey included the following; having a majority culturally specific program, having culturally responsive pedagogy, having geographic accessibility (or transportation support for young people), having an all free program, scholarship/tuition underwriting for youth and families with needs, diversity amongst

teaching staff that reflects community/youth served, diversity amongst upper level staff that reflects the community/youth served, diversity amongst the board that reflects the community/youth served, having youth alumni teaching artists/staff, having a Youth Council, youth board membership, and having an equity, diversity and inclusion plan/policy in place.

Of the 277 respondent organizations, 166 organizations, or (60%) listed youth board service and/or board diversity as an internal justice orientation. 74, or 76%, of the 98 organizations, who work at this nexus of systems change had community representative boards, including racially and economically

diverse board leadership and youth leadership.

In addition, markers of internal justice orientation were remarkably compounding. Diverse board representation was often accompanied by other markers of internal justice orientations. The relationships between these internal justice practices, direct service provision and movement building with young people reifies that internal practices that center youth voice, community representation and other internal practices that center power-sharing, equity, diversity and inclusion go hand in hand with effecting positive social change beyond the organization.



Pico Youth and Family Center (Santa Monica, CA)  
Photography by Alex Aldana



## Other Areas of Foci | BIPOC Leadership and Multiple Musical Genres

**IN ADDITION TO** the core metrics listed above, we have also paid close attention to the impact that BIPOC leadership has on the systems change orientations of an organization. We also reviewed and considered the impact that multi-genre pedagogical approaches have on systems change work. The points of analysis that follow engage these areas of foci alongside the aforementioned systems change indicators.

### The Difference that BIPOC Leadership Makes

**BLACK, INDIGENOUS AND other leaders of color (BIPOC)** often share experiential knowledge and robust analysis of circumstances of marginalization with the young people they serve. Correspondingly, BIPOC leadership often includes a capacity to engage culturally specific practices and traditions that can offer affirmation via representation while engendering CYD spaces as safe and familiar. In addition to supporting organizations in these explicit ways, BIPOC leadership often had an impact on internal justice orientation, direct service provision, partnership and movement building support. The following examples demonstrate the ways in which BIPOC leadership is notably advantageous to CYD organizations looking to affect systems change.

- **35% of respondents or 98 organizations were doing work across the areas of partnership expansion, continuous direct service provision, movement building with young people and internal justice orientation. However, 63 of the 98 organizations working across these levels have BIPOC leadership. This means that 64% of the organizations working at this nexus of systems change are BIPOC led. This is remarkable considering that BIPOC leadership only accounts for 44% of the total survey respondents.**
- **64% of the BIPOC led respondent organizations saw expansions in their partnerships in the pandemic. 49% of white led organizations saw expansions in their partnerships in the pandemic. Again, BIPOC leadership exceeded the general pool percentage in this category.**
- **54% of the respondents who supported young people in getting involved in racial justice movements were BIPOC led. This question was not answered by all respondents. Even with the lesser number of replies to this question, 81% of the BIPOC respondents to the general survey supported young people in getting involved in movements.**

### Multidisciplinary Pedagogy and Systems Change

**100 DISTINCT COMBINATIONS** of musical genres were represented across the pedagogies of the respondent

organizations in the field survey. The Lewis Prize for Music defines multi-genre pedagogy as teaching three or more musical genres or traditions. We observed that in organizations where multi-genre pedagogy is practiced, many markers of systems change orientation were more present. These observations have led us to consider the ways in which multi-genre music CYD organizations may be intentionally building program structures that are both responsive to young people and outfitted toward systems change orientations. The following examples demonstrate how multi-genre music CYD organizations are showing up for justice work.

- **186 or 66% of organizations surveyed state that 61% or higher of the youth they serve are from marginalized backgrounds. 118 or 64% of the organizations serving these majority marginalized youth are multi-genre (3 or more genre) teaching organizations.**
- **92 or 78% of the 118 serving marginalized youth are multi-genre (3 or more genre) teaching organizations supporting young people in movement work. This is a remarkable number considering not all respondents completed the movement work question.**
- **93% of multi-genre organizations serving majority marginalized youth provided direct services before the pandemic, far exceeding the 80% figure for the total pool.**

# Case Studies

Justice Orientations and Direct Service  
Across Music CYD Organizations

The following case studies feature the work of The Lewis Prize for Music Grantees and Awardees whose efforts in the COVID-19 pandemic worked at the nexus of systems change orientation as outlined in this paper to move toward positive social change and systems change. These examples are intended to provide practical insight into the variety of ways CYD music organizations simultaneously provide services and champion systems change. We are confident CYD programs across the country are undertaking this work in ways that best meet and understand the circumstances of their respective communities just as these organizations have. There is no singular example that can represent the richness and diversity of the CYD field just as there is no community that can be held up as fully representative of the United States. This diversity of practice, and locally rooted character, is one of the CYD field's greatest strengths.

# The David's Harp Foundation

**MISSION:** To inspire, educate and empower system affected and homeless youth to achieve academic success through music education, sound engineering and multimedia production.

**LOCATION:** SAN DIEGO, CA

**WEBSITE:** davidsharpfoundation.org



## On Systems Change Work During The Pandemic:

**AFTER BUILDING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS**, both in person and virtually, throughout the pandemic lockdowns in 2020, our effort to help transform the Juvenile Justice system was successful beyond our plans or expectations. In August of 2020, the San Diego County Probation Department's Reentry Service Officer at East Mesa Juvenile Detention facility personally invited our Artist Mentors to contribute to the community reentry meeting for a TDHF student named Randell (a pseudonym). The cross-sector decision-making table then centered our Artist Mentors into the design of his reentry program. Joseph Mack, our Director of Programming, proposed Randell's probation include TDHF programming

four days weekly. The entire table agreed (at his parent's request) that our music program be a primary point of Randell's schedule throughout his probationary period.

Once Randell was released, his Juvenile Supervision Officer welcomed our Artist Mentors to further shape his probation. TDHF staff crafted an amended probation plan to allow Randell to sell his music production online as part of our Audio BizPod Program. Before this moment, an art nonprofit had never acted in a primary contact role for youth on juvenile probation in the supervision phase of the process.

Over the following 6 months, Randell thrived in his new TDHF community. He progressed with his education, began a paid content creation internship at TDHF, and received his first music

"Feeling like you have no power within a system at all, being able to do nothing solid, that was the feeling. And I think the kids feel that. But also, as people that love the kids, we feel that. We try to mask it in a way that tries to bring comfort to young people in their process sometimes. But re-imagining...re-imagining this thing, and how systems change is done. I'm really energized about this working more closely with people in these systems because for so long systems have felt so adversarial. And I think that they are. In their nature, they are...I think that people in systems feel that as well."

*– Brandon Steppe,  
Executive Director,  
The David's Harp Foundation*

commission for the "Arts Empower Mega Conference" in October 2020. At the end of August 2021, Randell was positively commended by the judge who said that he was "...amazed by his transformation during his probation period". The court successfully terminated Randell's probation and is in the process of sealing his juvenile court records. Randell is now a full time content creator supporting himself through music and audio post production. Because of his success, TDHF now regularly has a seat at the table in support of other youth who are navigating probation and are widening their field of opportunities.

## On Direct Service and Mutual Aid In The Pandemic:

**MUTUAL SUPPORT WAS** a response effort built from scratch to address the financial crisis brought on by the job loss of COVID-19, particularly for undocumented and mixed-status families. As such, it was an emotionally intense, tiring and an evolving aspect of our programming. From March through June, we saw a beautiful will to volunteer among our families; 29 families offered to deliver food, household goods and baby products to 98 families in need of support. As the pandemic waxed on, we found it difficult to sustain the same level of family-to-family support as people needed to return to work, and new routines and needs made life busy again. We built stronger relationships with the other community-organizations involved with Eastie Mutual Aid, including Eastie Farm and MLCS. Over time, we were able to scale-up a mini supply chain by careful coordination to ensure that more families were served and fewer time resources were duplicated. In addition to the provision of food, ZUMIX

**MISSION:** ZUMIX Empowers young people to build successful futures for themselves, transforming lives and community through music, technology, and creative employment

**LOCATION:** Boston, MA

**WEBSITE:** [zumix.org](http://zumix.org)



Mutual Support was able to leverage a total of \$235,815 to support families in paying back rent. Within this sum, 55 families received a \$500 direct payment from our partnership with the Family Independence Initiative (\$27,500 total). Five families received funds from the Boston Rental Relief Fund,

with accompaniment and advocacy by ZUMIX (\$32,700 total). 21 families received funds from RAFT, the state-level rental assistance program, with help from ZUMIX (\$170,615 total). Ten families received a direct payment of \$500 from ZUMIX (\$5,000 total), funded by individual donors.

“The City is developing a new master plan for this community, but there’s so many new voices in that. It’s everything from real estate development and rezoning in public discussion. I think that there’s some conflicting ideas about what’s best for this neighborhood. There are also environmental issues- we are a waterfront community, and there have been conversations around environmental justice and just what’s going on here. But if you have built a certain kind of resilience, and if your community—along with yourself are dedicated to trying to lift each other up, and that community continues to be part of your village 20 years later, that’s just profound.”

– *Madeleine Steczynski, Co-founder and Executive Director, Zumix*

# The Neutral Zone



**MISSION:** The Neutral Zone is a diverse, youth-driven teen center dedicated to promoting personal growth through artistic expression, community leadership and the exchange of ideas.

**LOCATION:** Ann Arbor, MI

**WEBSITE:** [neutral-zone.org](http://neutral-zone.org)

“Youth who walk through our doors engage with our creative outlets to share their voice, their story, their pain, their joy. Our music and artistic programs are a way to powerfully engage youth. We strive to give them a community that supports, encourages, and uplifts them. But we can do more. We also need to provide critical support services if we are really going to care for our youth. And if you only do one and not the other, then we are not fully addressing how to support our young people to be successful. Future Corps is saying yes to the creative arts and adding a pathway of meaningful support and services to economically transform youth lives.”

– *Lori Roddy, Executive Director,  
Neutral Zone*

## On Youth Workforce Development and Employment Through The Pandemic:

**WE HAVE EXPANDED** our Future Corps Program during Covid - starting a new cohort of teens in October 2020. This program is designed to support a 10 year intervention for youth who face significant challenges to support them beyond high school from 14-24 years old. The program provides workforce development training with Michigan Works, employment with the City of Ann Arbor, a full tuition scholarship at Washtenaw Community College, and a mentorship program that ties together community members to build

a circle of support and accountability. Our aim is to systematically shift the way institutions engage, support and provide transformative opportunities for BIPOC youth to become successful adults.

One major change this year is that we have expanded our relationship with Michigan Works, our local unemployment agency, to make the City of Ann Arbor a worksite of Michigan Works. This allows our youth to be employed with the city and the payment comes from Michigan Works. This new partnership also encouraged Michigan Works to shift employee wages to a living wage, a requirement for the City of Ann Arbor's participation.

# Hyde Square Task Force

**MISSION:** We amplify the power, creativity, and voices of youth, connecting them to Afro-Latin culture and heritage so they can create a diverse, vibrant Latin Quarter and build a just, equitable Boston.

**LOCATION:** Boston, MA

**WEBSITE:** [hydesquare.org](http://hydesquare.org)

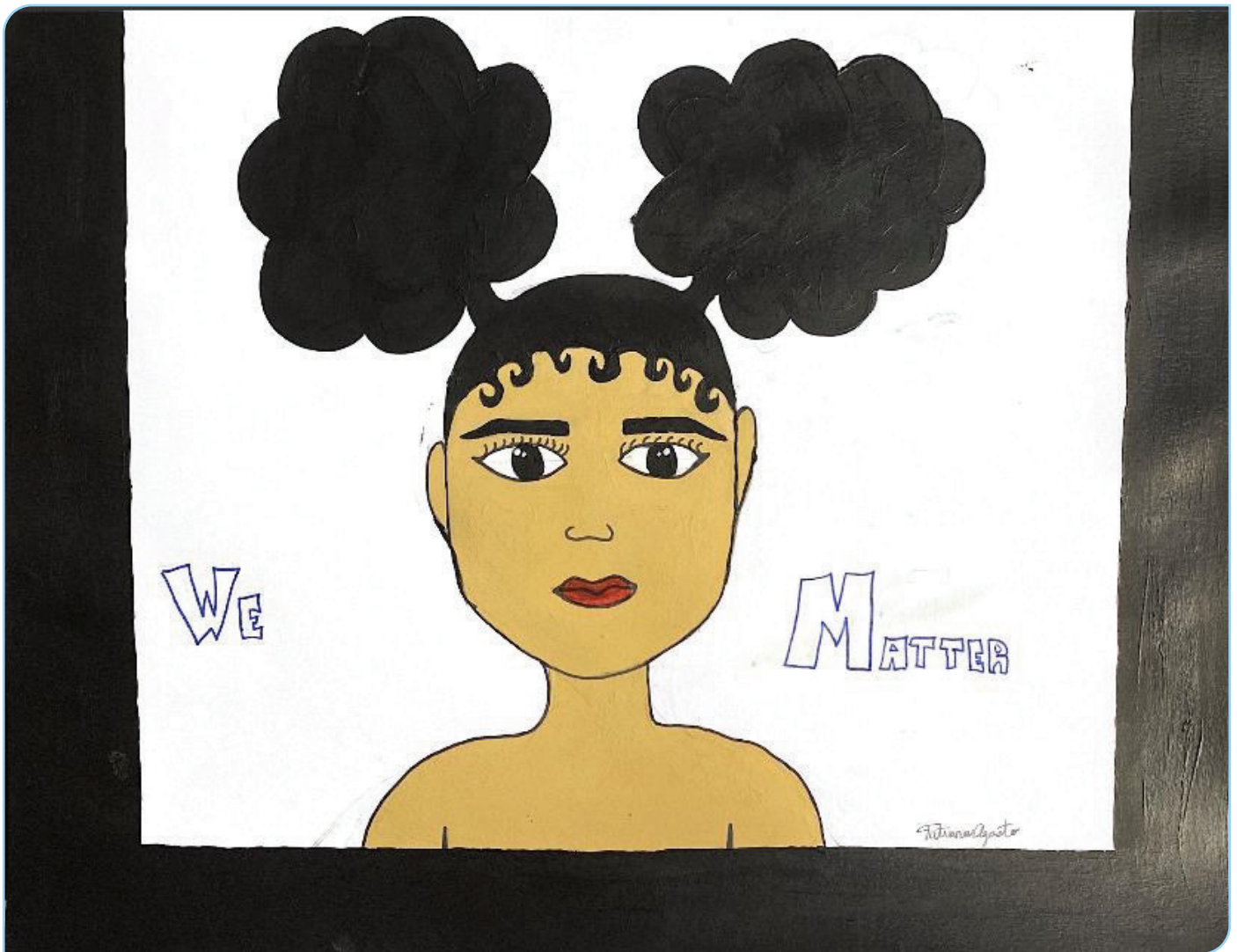
## On Youth Organizing In The Pandemic:

**MIC** is one of three Afro-Latin arts teams that are part of our core Jóvenes en Acción/Youth in Action (JEA) program. JEA is an innovative, integrated program model that offers out-of-school time supports to youth in grades 8-12 in Afro-Latin Arts (MIC plus our dance and theatre teams), Civic Engagement and Youth Organizing, and Education and Career Pathways. In addition to their music training through MIC, as part of the Civic Engagement and Youth Organizing component of JEA, all MIC youth have participated in regular training on civic engagement and contemporary social justice issues, which contributes to their overall awareness of civic issues and how they might get involved in making or leading community change efforts. A small group of JEA youth (including some from MIC) then become Youth Organizers. JEA's Youth Organizers take on leadership roles as they co-lead campaigns focused on issues they identify as important.



After having a series of civic engagement and social justice-focused workshops last summer, youth had many discussions and decided they wanted to work on police reform. During the Fall of 2020, JEA's Youth Organizers met with State Senator Sonia Chang Diaz's Legislative Director and provided input into a State-wide police reform effort. These

Youth Organizers also met with 7 other youth organizing groups and had letters to the editor published in four local newspapers in support of the statewide police reform legislation that was being proposed. Recently, new statutes related to police reform were passed at the state and city levels.



Artwork by Tatiana Agosto at Hyde Square Task Force (Boston, MA)

“I look at young people and hear the voices of young people and I think that’s where their transformation is. And as adults, we need to step back and really listen and let them lead. How do we support them and provide them the tools that they need to be able to keep pushing forward and also be open to the new strategies and tactics that they bring to the table. What’s possible for them is different than for some of us who didn’t grow up with technology. Their ability to mobilize and to get the word out is so different from those of us who can not adapt to this new way of communicating, but this is how they do it. So I think the opportunity is there and the possibility. I get inspired by them all the time. If we continue to nurture that, the possibilities are there for them to continue to push for transformative change both locally and statewide and across the country.”

– *Celina Miranda, Executive Director, Hyde Square Task Force*



# Reflections from the Field

While we found insight through our direct surveying of the field, we wanted to center the voices and perspectives of youth and adult researchers whose inquiries have been on the frontlines of dreaming about the capacities of Creative Youth Development through this moment and beyond. The following essays from Jakayla Furr, Raquel Jimenez, Rachel Jackson and Denise Montgomery work to offer a constellation of thoughts and lived experiences in and around the field over the last year and a half. These essays move us from storytelling on mental health in the pandemic through to critical listening practices in the field. We hope that witnessing these conversations offers a new depth of witness with and for young people and the spaces that sustain them.

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## Creative Youth Development In the Context of Crisis

Raquel Jimenez, PhD candidate  
Harvard University

*Dear Friends,*

*I miss you—because we had so much fun together. When I see you again, I look forward to games and fun. My question to you is: do you want to have fun? I feel so happy talking to you. My friends are cool and nice and fun... I wish we could do the fun activities we used to do together.... When this pandemic is over, let's go to the park and play tag and hide-and-seek.*

*Sincerely,  
Jonathan*

These are the words of Jonathan, a fourth grader who studies bass and composition at the Conservatory Lab Charter School in Boston, Massachusetts. As part of a project at the Conservatory Lab Charter School, Jonathan was given an open-ended assignment: *Write a letter to something you miss due to COVID-related changes in your life. Compose and perform in a soundtrack that supports the tone and feeling of your letter.* Jonathan's resulting project is striking. In his letter, he shares vivid details of his pre-pandemic life: exchanging candy with his classmates; hearing laughter on

the school bus; playing tag at the park. His letter reads like a lyric poem to childhood friendship, and interwoven with the text is an expressive bassline that conveys the emotional tenor of the piece. When I talked with Jonathan, he explained that the piece is sad, but ultimately hopeful—and to accomplish this task, he wrote pizzicato chords with a lilting time feel to keep the piece moving forward. In this way, Jonathan places the text and music in a potent and lively conversation. While the text is a reflection on the past and the losses he's encountered, the melodic developments

are meant to gesture towards the future with optimism and resolve.

I believe that projects like Jonathan's carry some of the most fruitful seeds of creative youth development. In such projects, young people are being asked to *reflect* on meaningful experiences; they are given space to *imagine* hopeful futures; and they are given support as they work to *manifest* the contents of their imaginations. As an ethnographer of young artists and the creative learning communities that support them, my work suggests that young people are drawn to

the arts precisely for this reason. Creative learning experiences offer a means for engaging in profound—but often underappreciated—acts of civic imagination that encourage young people to stretch beyond current circumstances in order to reconcile what *is* with what *could* be.

Cultivating a sense of civic imagination is always important, but in this era of intensifying injustice and inequality, it is critical. It's obvious that we're living in a time of crisis. As I write this, the rise of domestic terrorism poses an existential threat to our democracy, climate change is upending lifeways in communities across the globe, and inequitable vaccine distribution coupled with ongoing skepticism means that the pandemic is far from over. These crises are commonly discussed. However our public conversations rarely pause to consider youth—except when coupled with concerns about “learning loss.” Yet the term learning loss fails to capture the full size and scope of the challenges facing our nation's youth. Young people that are coming of age in communities struggling with decades of disinvestment contend with a disproportionate share of our nation's inequalities; experience the failure of democratic institutions on a daily basis; and do not see their realities reflected in the vast majority of

their schooling experiences. As a result, young people are left grappling with a kind of collective cognitive dissonance as they work to reconcile the ideas they hold about the land of opportunity with the injustices that are woven into the fabric of society.

Against this backdrop, one of the most urgent roles of arts education lies in helping young people leverage the creative and communicative tools of the arts to confront the challenges they face. I believe this is the work of creative youth development—and in communities across the country, creative youth development is unfolding in powerful ways. From podcasts that surface untold community histories to original compositions intended to shift the mass incarceration narrative, young people are deeply invested in using the arts to make sense of their lived experiences and to make themselves seen and heard in public life. In this regard, it's important to note that creative youth development emerges from the distinct legacy of community arts education. Over the past hundred years, community arts organizations have supported the full goals of education in a pluralistic society by supporting creativity and free expression—particularly in communities that have

been marginalized by decades of discriminatory social policy. As a result, community arts organizations have been key sites of creative and intellectual opportunity, places where youth have the freedom to draw on their own funds of knowledge as they work to honor their cultural traditions while advancing the needs and interests of their communities.

But in this time of added uncertainty, something quite special is also unfolding. In creative youth development organizations across the country, young people are being asked to consider how can they connect their creative practices to current events, and how can they leverage the expressive power of the arts to create space for much-needed reflection, dialogue, and healing. As a result, I believe that young people like Jonathan are learning a powerful lesson about their roles in society. Young people are learning to recognize that they are not just the recipients of traumatic experience and the events that happen *to* them on a daily basis. Rather, young people are learning to see themselves as change-makers, as people who are capable of bringing new ideas to fruition—ideas that can orient us towards visions of life that are more robust, vibrant, and just.



### Raquel Jimenez

Raquel Jimenez is a PhD candidate at Harvard University and a Boston-based educator and cultural worker. Raquel's work focuses on young artists and the creative learning communities that support them. This interest is reflected in her dissertation research, a multi-year investigation that examines how youth engage with public artmaking practices to reimagine the post-industrial forces undermining their community, and how community arts education structures this process. Raquel teaches courses on art and culture at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Co-chaired the *Harvard Educational Review*, and has held a variety of positions in nonprofit arts

organizations. Her work is supported by the Ford Foundation and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

# I Envy My Thoughts

Rachel Aaliyah Jackson  
Poems and An Essay

Envy/Peace | Poem by Rachel A. Jackson

I envy my thoughts  
I envy the fantasies that swirl around my brain  
before I feel short of breath as anxiety places its  
two hands around my throat And squeeze tears  
from my eyes for depression to catch And throw  
into the ocean of what-ifs  
My mind form because of others  
I envy my thought  
I envy those who envy me  
Because they see the things I don't go through  
Much like a bandaid, the healing happens  
beneath the surface  
I envy my thoughts  
I envy my pencil for composing words  
I wish to say from my mouth  
But these lips only sing beautiful lullabies  
That causes nightmares  
I envy my thoughts  
I envy the lies that I tell myself  
Whenever I see peace I want to acquire for my  
household  
I envy my thoughts  
But I pray to God everyday begging for your  
presence

You are the promise He offers after the storm  
But sometimes I wish you can pull me from the  
midst of my chaos  
And protect me from the tongues of the ones  
who speak curses over me  
Like the clouds that distort my vision  
Walk by Faith and not by sight  
I pray to God everyday begging for your  
presence  
But I feel like you've abandoned me  
Like my chaos is too much to bear  
I cried out to the storms instead of God one day,  
"My chaos is too much to bear," I screamed.  
God silenced my tongue and demanded my ears  
to listen Then he placed me in solitude  
And whispered in my ear,  
"Yet the storms rage on the sun is always  
shining,  
The storms are temporary, but the one true Son  
is Forevermore." I envy my thoughts  
But I pray to God every day begging for your  
presence. — Metaphorical

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This is the poem I wrote after the death of my best friend William. I met William during my freshman year of high school. We were both suffering from depression and anxiety. I transferred from a new school and I just couldn't fit in and he had just moved to St. Louis.

We automatically clung to each other, we cried together, laughed together, and argued with each other. Our relationship was unbreakable. When he died I fell apart, all our memories flooded my mind daily. This caused a downward spiral which eventually

led to my seasonal depression starting earlier than usual. Despite this death, I still smiled, carried on with my sports, education, and other relationships. I often find myself tearing up because of this death.

I remember the conversations we had about mental health. I remember us talking about every time we felt like we couldn't push on and write. Every time we cried we wrote. Every time we fought, we wrote. Every time we wanted to give up, we wrote. After his death I wrote. And I wrote and I wrote. And even now I continue to write. I write mainly about mental health. I write about the times where no one took my mental health seriously. I write about the times older generations brush past my mental health and say "Give it to God," and I do. But that doesn't stop me from thinking about why do I still feel like this. Even though I have everything I need I still feel miserable.

The first thing I had to realize is that I'm not the only one who feels like this. I'm not the only person who has felt like I am alone in this world or that my life is filled with darkness. I stopped listening to those people who told me that these feelings are bad and embraced these feelings. I allowed these emotions and feelings to pass through me. This allowed me to find the root of my problem. Depression isn't bad.

Depression is considered a "mental illness" that affects your daily life. It can cause you to feel sad, have a loss

of interest, a change in appetite, feeling worthless or guilty, and thoughts of death or suicide. Depression affects over 15 million people across the country, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, a group that is trying to inform people about depression and its symptoms.

I've witnessed that in the Black community, mental health is rarely talked about. Often mental health is shunned and looked down upon. According to Mental Health America, nearly 65 percent of the black community, in the United States, have been through a depressing stage in their lives at least once. This is because of the backlash of history, racism, stereotypes, trauma, and negative treatment from teachers, bosses, co-workers, and peers.

Black teenagers deal with this problem the most. Most of us, sadly, go through abuse in our household and don't know how to deal with it. We tend to keep it inside and hold it all our lives, eventually turning to unhealthy coping mechanisms like drugs or alcohol. Sometimes it feels as if we don't have a voice in this world. That if we express our feelings, we would be "too vocal" or "overdramatic." This is normally

found in classrooms or at work. Many believe that our voices are meant to be silenced. The stereotypes in this country created us to be beings who are aggressive and lack vulnerability. It is hard for us to open up let alone talk about these emotions. These thoughts become overwhelming and lead us to be more likely to attempt suicide than our white peers, according to Mental Health America.

How can we fix this? Number one. Listen. I like how this Article called Trying to Help a Depressed Teen? 9 Do's and Don'ts describe how to listen, "Avoid interrupting, finishing their sentences, or filling in their pauses. Let them share in their own time, even if it takes them a while to get the words out." That's all teens, like me ever want. We want adults and the older generations to listen. Truthfully, we don't care about how you dealt with depression "back in your day." Teens want to be heard, we want to be reassured. We're tired of being silent whenever we want to talk about politics, global warming, education because we're too young. These things are our future and we have the right to discuss these issues. Next, after we listen we should always reassure that these emotions are normal.



### Rachel Aaliyah Jackson

Rachel Aaliyah Jackson is a graduate of Metro High School/St. Louis Community College-Forest Park. She is currently a freshman at Webster University. Rachel is a central contributor to the Saint Louis Story Stitchers' StitchCast Studio podcast where she leads discussions on Black mental health and the capacities of storytelling and music in the work of healing. Rachel is an active member of the Saint Louis StoryStitchers Youth Council.

# Development in a Pandemic

Written by: Jakayla Furr

Walking into a global pandemic last March, I could have never expected the level of severity that we were all going to experience. From the beginning, I knew that it was going to be serious, but I didn't imagine how life altering my journey was about to become. Before COVID-19, I was always busy and my mind was preoccupied with my daily routine: school, youth program, homework, baby-sitting, etc. Because of my active lifestyle, it never occurred to me that I was extremely lonely. I had never realized this until I had to stay at home 24 hours a day, an experience that really shed light on my loneliness. This pandemic forced me to sit with all of my troubles and my difficult thoughts, pushing me to work through them to better myself and my quality of life in this new world. I found that I could use art such as poetry, spoken word, dance and music to my advantage to find my inner peace and happiness. Over the past year it was heart wrenching and difficult to get through some days, but now looking back on my character development, I wouldn't change a thing.

During this time music saved me from many sleepless nights and took my negative thoughts away. To hear artists articulate jumbled up emotions that I felt and transfer them into songs and match it with beats felt liberating. One song that will always speak to me is *Listen* by Beyonce, more specifically when she says "I'm not at home in my own home, And I've tried and tried to say what's on mind, You should have known." It was comforting to know that I wasn't alone and I could relate to someone that knew how to put those feelings into words

when I couldn't. In addition to music, dance was also a great friend. Taking the rhythm and having the ability to feel it with my body and create a dance with the beats is a skill that I am honored to have. As a dancer, I know that putting the music, lyrics and my emotions into nonverbal expression creatively shows the beauty of the arts and it is the best feeling in the world. I've also had a lot of support from Hyde Square Task Force. They've taught me many different styles of dance and different movements to express myself in a way that I would have never known how to do in the past.

Although I was going through a lot as an individual in quarantine, there was so much happening all around the country that made things even worse. Being an African American woman, I am deeply angered seeing my fellow people of color being murdered because of things like a cell phone, a pack of skittles, jogging, or simply sleeping in their own home. It pains me to know that there is no age limit to be exposed to ignorance, to know that it could be me or my brothers, parents, uncles, aunts, or anyone in my family. The most triggering factor was listening to all of the justifications for the police violence on the news and on social media. It was so difficult to hear the excuses when the families of the victims were in pain and pleading for justice that may not be served. It's been over a year since Breonna Taylor was murdered in her home and her family still hasn't had the closure of her killers being put in jail. The truth is no matter what, a person doesn't deserve to be put to death. Innocent people losing their lives to police brutality and white privilege is

sad and shameful. People of color are scared for their lives everywhere they go and even feel endangered while being in what should be the comfort of their own homes. As I dealt with all the anger inside that I felt because of the injustices happening all over the country, writing poetry was my outlet. One of my favorite quotes from *Black Lives Matter*, which is one of the poems I wrote is, "How are we expected to succeed in a system that is built against us? How are we supposed to feel protected if the protectors are the ones gunning us down?" I may not have a huge platform, but I use my resources to express my feelings and thoughts and seek solutions to these huge problems. Change needs to be made and my generation is going to be the start of it.

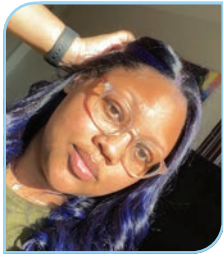
Activism is another avenue that has opened doors for me during these times. Being able to input my opinion as a youth leader about a Massachusetts Police Reform Bill was exciting. This topic is important to me because I want to protect people of color from a system that doesn't benefit them, a system that was intentionally created to demote them. Having the opportunity to write an op-ed about police reform that was published in a city-wide newspaper makes me feel like I am making an impact in my community. I feel like it is necessary for people to see the world and issues that take place from a younger person's perspective, which is exactly what happened when my piece was in the newspaper for everyone to see.

I take pride in my role in my household and my community, as an older sister of two brothers in a dangerous neighborhood,

and as a black female advocate. I like to be included in decisions that will be best for the community, but more specifically youth in my community. Youth needs are severely overlooked by many adults and it isn't helpful for their development because it leads them to taking a path that will put them in harm's way. Children are often under the influence of the people surrounding them, and if that's

violence and gang activity, then that is all that they know. As an individual I will continue to think for myself and all of the young people. I will advocate for them to have access to a brighter future as well as exercising their right to make it far enough to be successful. I will continue to be a youth organizer and make sure that I put my opinion into any issue that I feel is important. I will use my writing

skills to get my message across further than just in my community which I can do through Hyde Square Task Force. I will also continue to use my artistic skills to show people that it is acceptable to be yourself and to fight for people that can't fight for themselves, because in the end everyone needs fighting for.



### **Jakayla Furr**

My name is Jakayla Furr and I am a Junior in High School. A lot of my priorities in life are family based, and simply wanting the best for the people I care about most which I talk about quite a lot. I am also a youth organizer, which means I take part in my community and strive for the best thing for it. I've been doing this since my freshman year of high school, but I've always had a taste for being an advocate in my neighborhood. I've always been extremely dedicated and passionate, and honestly writing helps me with that. It helps my voice get out and helps me share my message about anything that I choose to speak on. Besides all of that, I am an artist. I use music, dance, and the power of words to express myself to the fullest extent. I take pride in my abilities and I hope to pass that on to generations after me.

# Listening and Prioritizing Connection with Young People in CYD Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Denise Montgomery

When night fell and remained in 2020 with the cascading crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and racial violence against people of color, young people turned to their creative youth development programs as crucial sources of connection and belonging. CYD programs met the moment by embracing values that drive their program practices: **deep listening** and **co-creating with young people**. Notably, CYD programs prioritized connection with youth in ways that can inform how we engage with young people going forward.

CYD organizations were innovative in their program adaptations as schools and out-of-school time programs alike scrambled to move to virtual environments. How did these programs

know what to do and which choices to make? Consistent with the CYD guiding principle of centering youth voice, CYD teaching artists and program staff asked young people what they needed and what they wanted in programming. Most importantly, they listened. (Montgomery, 2021).

“Lean into the practice [of CYD and amplifying youth voice],” advised DeLashea Strawder, Executive and Artistic Director of Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit (<https://mosaicdetroit.org>), a Lewis Prize for Music 2021 Accelerator Awardee. “Nothing for them without them.”

CYD youth program participants wielded significant influence over the shifts that occurred within their programs during

the COVID-19 pandemic. At a time when so much of young people’s lives was out of their control, to be able to shape how a program adapted was huge. Youth could see the responsiveness of CYD programs in real time with resource allocation and modified programming.

Further, CYD programs such as Spy Hop Productions in Salt Lake City (<https://spyhop.org>) conveyed their unwavering commitment to youth by continuing to show up for young people from the start of the pandemic. And practitioners kept the dialogue going, asking along the way what youth wanted and needed, because the landscape kept shifting.

WITH AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE...

WE'RE HERE  
FOR OUR YOUTH.



Spy Hop Productions, 2020 Lewis Prize for Music finalist awardee, communicates its unwavering support for young people during the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Belonging & Youth-Adult Partnership

The social isolation that was too many young people's reality prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was exacerbated during months of quarantining, cancelled celebrations, and online school (Goldberg, 2020). Youth needed healthy, affirming places to connect where they could process and share what they were experiencing. Many young people longed for spaces to come together and to express themselves creatively.

The David's Harp Foundation (<https://davidsharpfoundation.org>), a San Diego-based creative youth development organization and Lewis Prize for Music 2020 Accelerator Award recipient, moved quickly. "By June of 2020, we were online with all of our youth, including those experiencing incarceration, and used the Zoom platform to create spaces for young people . . . Music listening parties, beat making breakout rooms and 'the living room', a Zoom hangout space, are among the events that we adapted to maintain connection with youth. We also held movie nights on Zoom for young people," shared Brandon Steppe, Founder and Executive Director of The David's Harp Foundation (DHF).

"We focused on listening to what young people needed in this season," continued Steppe, who has spent years building trust, including by modeling openness in sharing his own life experiences, challenges, and joys. According to Steppe, "The preamble to listening is sharing who you are . . . the only way to get in that place of trusted adult relationship is to share who you are authentically" (Steppe, 2021).

The culture of The David's Harp Foundation, where every person is valued as having something to bring to the creative community, and where everyone is seen and heard and treated with respect, supports engagement and belonging. Steppe has long viewed centering youth voice as fundamental to young people's strong levels of engagement with this organization. He explained, "Allowing youth voice to dictate our program in a way that's pretty authentic is the reason why we're able to be relevant . . ." (Steppe, 2019).

For programs seeking to build or reflect on their program practices with regard to youth voice, Heng-Chieh Jamie Wu and colleagues developed a Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric (see table on the next page and <https://cerc.msu.edu/yaprubric/>). (Wu, H.-C. J., et al., 2016). The rubric builds on the work of Zeldin and colleagues that examined youth-adult partnerships and which put forth a framework of four core elements: authentic decision making, natural mentors, reciprocal activity, and community connectedness (Zeldin et al., 2013).

The elements of youth-adult partnerships are woven into the program practices at The David's Harp Foundation, as at other CYD programs. These intentional and nuanced approaches to programming are the result of reflective practice and an orientation toward "walking with youth", as Steppe describes his work.

The relationships that Steppe and his colleagues have with young people at DHF enable them to get to the heart of what young people might be communicating. A key example of this occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the adult mentors at DHF sought to understand why young people were not attending virtual school. Steppe explains, "...there's always this code switching with adults. Because what young people are communicating sometimes are just the branches and leaves to a deeper root of what they're really trying to communicate. So being able to listen within the context of relationship becomes extremely powerful . . . what youth were saying was 'we don't have Internet', but what they were really communicating was a deeper need for a community of support. That [message and understanding] only gets drawn out when you have a conversation that's not just hearing someone but that you can put in context because you know them. I think that, sometimes, is the missing link."

## Youth-Adult Partnership Rubric

<b>Dimension 1: Authentic Decision Making— Youth are involved in meaningful decision making</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	
1.1 Youths' voices are shared and valued.		
1.2 Youth participate in authentic decision making.		
1.3 Youth have key leadership roles or responsibilities.		
1.4 All youth fully participate in the conversation.		
1.5 The organization's culture or by-laws supports youth governance.		
<b>Dimension 2: Natural Mentors—Adults intentionally support relationships with youth to help them develop</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	
2.1 Adults support youth with appropriate boundaries.		
2.2 Adults are intentional in utilizing tasks to enhance youths' experiences and skills.		
2.3 Adults are able to work with youth to maintain an organized, inclusive, and collaborative environment for all.		
2.4 Adults are resourceful and intentional in enhancing youths' social capital.		
2.5 Adults are active listeners; youth reflect and develop own ideas.		
2.6 Adults help youth think through the complexity of issues and respect whatever conclusions they reach.		
2.7 Adults help youth think about goals and possibilities for the future and identify steps to achieve them.		
2.8 Adults celebrate youths' progress, strengths, and successes.		
<b>Dimension 3: Reciprocity—Youth and adults work together as partners</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	
3.1 Youth and adults create a mutual agenda.		
3.2 Youth and adults exchange ideas as supportive peers.		
3.3 Youth and adults work collaboratively as supportive peers.		
3.4 Youth and adults are co-learning partners.		
<b>Dimension 4: Community Connectedness— Youth are engaged in communities</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	
4.1 Youth develop a sense of community through program involvement.		
4.2 Youth are active contributors to the community.		
4.3 Youth gain essential social capital through program involvement.		
<b>Total: The average of four dimension scores</b>		<b>%</b>

(Wu, H.-C. J., et al., 2016).

# Engaging Youth Through Music & Community

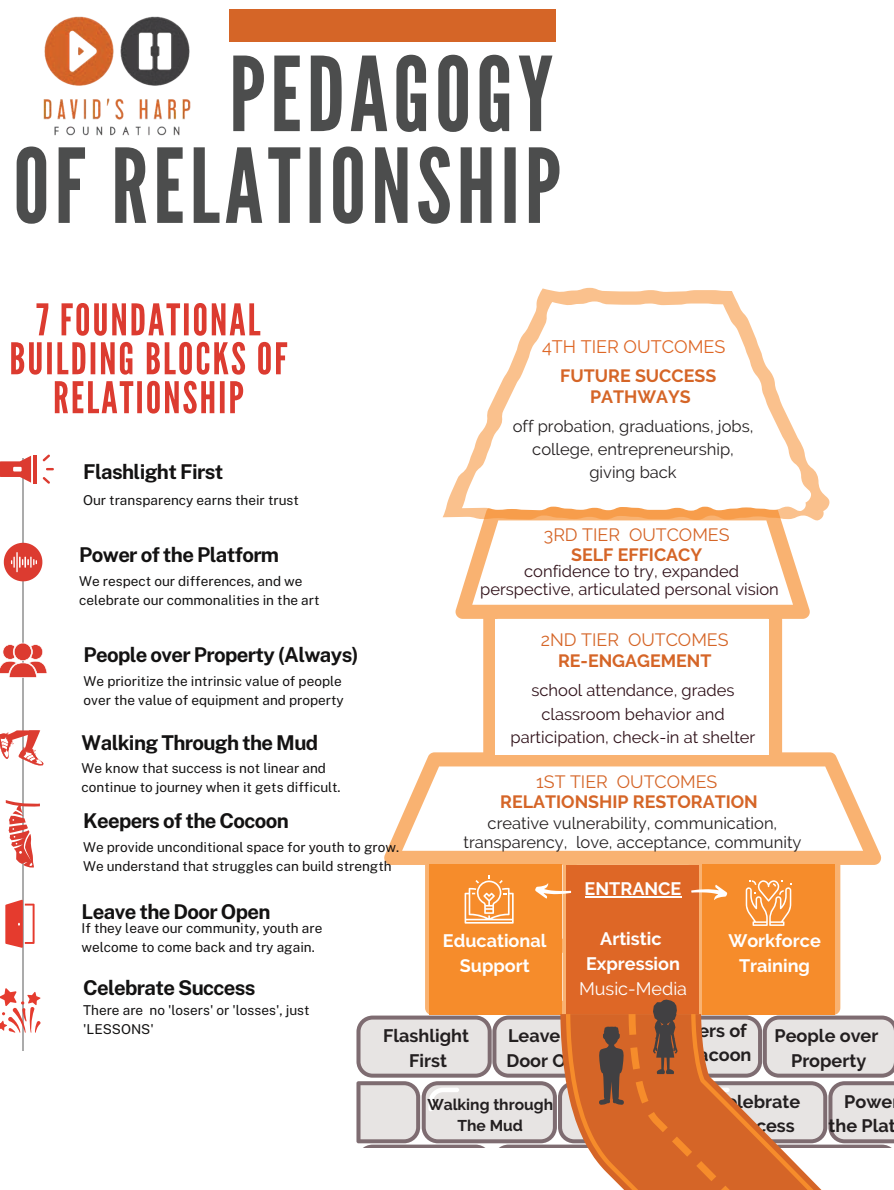
Youth engagement during the pandemic has been a massive challenge for schools and for CYD programs. The digital equity gap meant that some students were attending school on their phones or missing classes altogether. Not feeling seen or heard in online settings has contributed to virtual fatigue and subsequent opting out. Reports of the so-called *digital dropout rate* soared.

Amidst the challenging conditions of the pandemic, young people kept coming to CYD programs such as The David's Harp Foundation.

"We have learned that providing youth space to connect deeper with their artistic passion in a social online setting (opposite of what their distance learning school model is) was . . . important . . . These informal listening

parties simultaneously honored young people's work and provided additional opportunities to connect during these challenging times," explained Steppe.

Some of the strategies that DHF employed, beyond the guiding principles of listening to young people and prioritizing connection, included real time interactivity among young people, opportunities to engage in



*Pedagogy of Relationship, David's Harp Foundation, 2021. Used with permission.*

small group settings, and breaking up the monotony of quarantine with gatherings that involved creating together. “We’re really about youth development, and creativity is the platform for that youth development. I think it allows for genuine conversation, connection to be made,” stated Steppe.

Ultimately, after learning that 92% of the young people in their program were not attending virtual school, DHF created a Distance Learning Hub. The Distance Learning Hub provided a safe physical space, operated in accordance with public health guidelines, to attend online school. Most importantly, within the physical space was the caring community at DHF and the opportunity for hands-on creative endeavors during open periods during the online school day and deep artistic practice after the end of the school day. Not only did students re-engage

with school, their GPAs soared, their relationships with peers and adults in the DHF community deepened, and their artistic practices grew. By listening in the context of relationship, and understanding the necessity of belonging to positive community, the mentors at DHF successfully identified and addressed students’ pressing need for positive community during the pandemic.

Steppe explained The David’s Harp Foundation’s *Pedagogy of Relationship*: “All [positive outcomes shown are] built on a foundation of community. Artistic expression is where the kids want to enter in . . . They don’t want to enter in in relationship, per se. They want to enter in on artistic expression, so that’s where we open the door.” Steppe continued, “Young people come in for the art and find themselves on a very solid foundation [of a

relationship-focused community built on authentic listening and sharing.] The graphic depicts the progression and expansion of positive outcomes that encompass artistic expression, social and emotional development, and indicators of future success such as the pursuit of higher education and giving back to the community.

The entirety of DHF’s pedagogy and programs have been shaped by listening to young people. DHF engages youth in authentic decision-making and supports youth in creating programs that bear young people’s names as founders and co-founders. “There is no effective programming without listening,” advised Steppe. And DHF meets that listening with action. Steppe shared, “On a very core level young people are absolutely influencing and turning the organization.”

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## The Link Between Belonging and Hope

An abiding truth to carry forward from the efficacy of CYD programs such as David’s Harp Foundation in nurturing a sense of belonging among youth is the need to listen more to young people. Out-of-school, and in school, too.

Neema Avashia, an 8th grade civics teacher in the Boston public schools with two decades of experience and who was recognized as 2013 Educator of the Year in the city of Boston shared this wisdom in an Education Week article, “Students Respond to Adults’ Fixation on ‘Learning Loss’”:

*“If our educational response to the pandemic is more of the same tired approaches that we were already trying before the*

*pandemic—pages of standards, longer school days, more and more and more assessment—it will fail, just as it was failing prior to the pandemic. We have an opportunity to think and plan differently in this moment—to build a system that is responsive to the needs of the students it purports to serve. Doing so requires that we begin by listening to those young people and amplifying what they say they need, as opposed to what we as adults think they need.”*

Steppe relates, “Listening is everything to young people.” (Steppe, 2021) Listening to young people has supported high levels of engagement

with CYD programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. This engagement has, in turn, nurtured a sense of belonging. And belonging is an ingredient for optimism (Noam, 2021).

Everyone needs to have hope, particularly young people. The unthinkable has occurred over the past year and a half. And yet, anchored by relationships and belonging, CYD youth program participants are finding hope for themselves and for their communities. By prioritizing connection with young people, and listening to youth and engaging them in shaping their experiences, we create the conditions for hope and for moving in the direction of thriving.



## Denise Montgomery

Denise Montgomery is a qualitative researcher and strategist focused on arts-based youth development. Through her consulting practice, CultureThrive, she advises youth development funders as well as youth development organizations, including Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Girl Scouts USA, and Y-USA. Montgomery's research has been covered by National Public Radio, *The Washington Post*, and *Youth Today*. As lead author of *Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs From Urban Youth and Other Experts*, she helped codify the field of creative youth development. Montgomery wrote *Trends in Creative Youth Development* in *Afterschool Matters Journal* and contributed a chapter to *Youth Development Principles and Practices in Out-of-School Time Settings*, among other publications. Montgomery lives with her family in San Diego, CA.

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# Implications for the Future of Creative Youth Development

# Possible Strategies to Support Systems Change

Based on the findings from our field survey and the case studies we considered, we realize even more that the collective efforts toward systems change via music Creative Youth Development organizations is enduring and deeply responsive work. Consequently, The Lewis

Prize for Music has considered how we might integrate these findings into our work as a foundation. We have already begun the work of integrating this research and these recommendations into our application and rubric as well as trainings for readers and panelists.

We are only at the start of weaving these lessons into other efforts at The Lewis Prize. We invite other funders and policy makers interested in supporting systems change work via the field of music CYD to join us in considering the following series of recommendations.

## ① Amplify, support and fund BIPOC leaders

BIPOC leadership in CYD has the capacity, intentionality and responsiveness to set in place a suite of justice oriented practices and strategies toward systems change. This is not only evident in the fact that BIPOC leaders are more often working at the nexus of systems change as articulated earlier in this report, but

it is also evident in the application of the personal-lived experiences of BIPOC leadership in their work with young people. We believe that the work of midcasting, or the act of planning and imagining pathways between a present reality and a set of possible futures, requires young people seeing

themselves reflected in leadership even and especially as they step into their own leadership. Funding, amplifying and supporting BIPOC music CYD leaders is essential to the work of transforming our communities for the better.

## ② Amplify, support and fund multi-genre pedagogical spaces

Multi-genre pedagogical CYD spaces not only are more likely to engage tactics toward systems change in their communities but they also make space for imagination, depth of curiosity and a

range of artistic exposures, all of which are fundamental to the work of dreaming and manifesting more just communities. More just futures for our communities, and systems change itself, will require

multidisciplinary approaches and collaborations. Supporting and funding multi-genre pedagogical spaces will lift and amplify more multidisciplinary approaches to community transformation.

## ③ Build analysis with young people, as organizations and as a field, about the connections between direct service and movement building

Multi-genre pedagogical CYD spaces not only are more likely to engage tactics toward systems change in their communities but they also make space for imagination, depth of curiosity and a range of artistic exposures, all of which are fundamental to the work of dreaming and manifesting more just communities. More just futures for our communities, and systems change itself, will require multidisciplinary approaches and

collaborations. Supporting and funding multi-genre pedagogical spaces will lift and amplify more multidisciplinary approaches to community transformation.

Through our research we learned that connecting young people to movements and offering direct services often went hand-in-hand at music CYD organizations through the pandemic. We see the opportunity for organizations

to bridge and build analysis of each of these systems change activities with young people. Positioning young people in multi-generational research that mirrors CYD's multi-generational artistic practice and movement building, will make sure that the research and the policy outcomes are accountable to the futures young people are showing up for and crafting via our social movements.



Stax Music Academy (Memphis, TN)



# Emergent Questions and Calls to Action in Support of Music CYD

Music CYD organizations are collaborating with young people to assert that another world is possible: A world that centers justice and freedom for all people, especially people and communities that have been marginalized by oppressive systems. Our collective work is to support these organizations and their young people as they bring us into new futures. In the spirit of curiosity being a liberatory and, often, youthful practice, we are offering the following questions as a launchpad for further conversation and strategizing around the future of supporting CYD-led systems change. We ask that you sit with these questions in your own work, as a workshop tool and reflection practice.

## Deepening our collective commitment to freedom and justice:

Music CYD organizations are doing the deep work of centering the freedoms of the young people they serve. As funders, policy makers and other members of the communities of support for this work and young people, we also need to be accountable to centering the freedoms and futures of young people.

- **How can the field of music-based creative youth development center freedom and justice for all young people and their communities?**

## Storytelling and Music-based CYD-led Systems Change:

The stories of music-based CYD-led systems change are profound testaments to the power of young people and the people that center them daily. The following questions might offer a starting point for considering how we can collectively leverage these stories to gain more support for the field.

- **What are the most effective practices for sharing stories about the impact of music-based CYD-led systems change?**
- **How do we center the stories and outreach strategies of young people as we share about the work of this field over the last year and beyond?**

## Emergency Preparedness:

The etymology of the word *emergency* comes from the latin word *emergere* meaning to arise or bring light to. The pandemics of 2020 have brought to light the depth of on-going disparities and oppressions that marginalized communities have to navigate daily. CYD organizations have been on the frontlines of responding to these emergencies for decades before the current pandemics occurred. This prepared those organizations to respond even more powerfully over the last 16 months. The following question might be a starting point for funders and policy makers to consider how to better support CYD organizations in their on-going emergency responsiveness in their communities.

- **In light of the depth of response to crisis from music CYD organizations in the pandemic, and before the pandemic, how can we re-evaluate and re-consider what communal emergency preparedness is?**
- **In parallel, how can we systematically define emergency circumstances so CYD organizations are recognized and supported in their work to fill systemic gaps in access to equitable social connection, education, mental health support, food access, housing security, income stability, etc. that exist daily for too many young people and families?**



Saint Louis Story Stitches Artists Collective (St. Louis, MO)

# Special Thanks

This report is only made possible by the willingness and generosity of creative youth development organizations as they have shared their stories with us. We want to thank each one of the organizations who shared data with us about their work over the last year.

We want to thank The David's Harp Foundation, Zumix, Hyde Square Taskforce and Neutral Zone for sharing their stories as a part of the case studies for this report.

We want to thank Raquel Jimenez, Denise Montgomery, Rachel Jackson and Jakayla Furr for their written contributions to this paper.

We want to thank all of the Lewis Prize for Music Team for their work contributing to this paper.

We want to thank all of our presenting partners for the space to share this research with the field.

We want to thank Cesali Morales and Milton Yi for their design work for this report.

# The Lewis Prize for Music

The mission of The Lewis Prize is to partner with leaders who create positive change by investing in young people through music. Our vision is for every young person, regardless of who they are or where they live, to have the opportunity to access music programs from a young age.

However, inequitable systems fail to prioritize music learning in all young people's lives. As a result, too many young people are not supported to express themselves creatively. This stifles their potential to thrive and become powerful citizens. Through high-quality music learning, performing and creating experiences with peers and caring mentors, young people can develop greater agency over their lives and contribute positively to their communities.

Our vision can only be achieved through equitable systems change. We recognize that systems change happens through a dynamic intersection of catalysts, including philanthropy. We invest in and partner with creative youth development leaders to fill gaps where systems fail and imagine new systems for young people to thrive and lead the way for future generations. We also understand that in order to be an effective partner in disrupting inequitable systems, we must do so from the inside out, as actors in systems ourselves. This is why the Lewis Prize strives to center racial equity in our internal practices as well as our funding and external relationship, so that we reflect the values and change that we seek.

## Daniel Lewis

FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN

Mr. Lewis has devoted the last 19 years to philanthropic activities, with his greatest focus being on social and musical arts investing. He initiated the Cleveland Orchestra's multi-week residency in Miami as founding chairman of Miami Music Association, the support organization created in 2006 to produce 3-4 weeks of Cleveland



Orchestra concerts and educational activities in Miami-Dade County each season. He was the board chair of the Festival of North American Orchestras, the sponsoring organization for *Spring for Music* at Carnegie Hall. *Spring for Music's* format is now part of the Kennedy Center, renamed the Shift Festival. He also served on the executive committee of The Cleveland Orchestra and the board of the League of American Orchestras. Mr. Lewis recently founded and chairs M:X (Miami Experimental), to pursue making music education accessible and affordable to all Miami-Dade County children. The Lewis Prize for Music, his most recent start-up, is another ambitious effort to drive social change through musical arts. Mr. Lewis is also chairman of The Management Center, which provides management training and consulting to socially and politically progressive organizations, and is on the board of Third Way, a centrist progressive think tank.

He graduated from Miami University with an accounting degree, taught three years at Cleveland's Glenville High School, was a real estate developer in Phoenix, and retired from Progressive Corporation having had general management, control, claims, product management, and board membership responsibilities.

# Our Team

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The Lewis Prize for Music is comprised of people who share a belief in music's power to strengthen individuals and communities for the benefit of all. We are committed to collaborating with others who share this belief and aspire to see it come to life across the United States.

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Aisha Fukushima**

Aisha Fukushima is a justice strategist, performance lecturer, singer/songwriter, and 'RAPtivist' (rap activist). Fukushima founded RAPtivism (Rap Activism), a hip hop project spanning twenty countries and four continents, amplifying universal efforts for freedom and

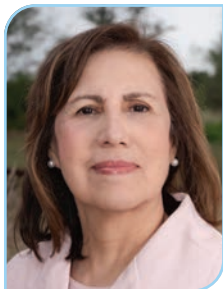
justice. Fukushima's 'RAPtivism' work has been featured on Oprah Magazine, TEDx, KQED Public Television, and more. Tour highlights include performing for audiences of over twenty thousand people in Nepal, speaking with the President of Estonia about the power of music to create change, and sharing stages with the likes of Bernie Sanders, Emory Douglas (Black Panthers), Boots Riley, KRS-One, the Flobots, Herbie Hancock, Christian McBride, The Isley Brothers, M1 (Dead Prez), and many others.



**Omari Rush**

Omari Rush has engaged the arts as both a passion and profession, and in each mode, he continues to enjoy discovery and deepening impacts. As executive director of CultureSource in Detroit and as the governor-appointed chairman of the Michigan Council for Arts and

Cultural Affairs, he advances efforts to have creative and cultural expression thrive in diverse communities. Complementing that work, Omari is a board member of Arts Midwest in Minneapolis and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in Washington, D.C. Degrees in music Omari earned from Florida State University and the University of Michigan created a foundation for all of these activities.



**María López De León**

María López De León is the President, CEO and board member of the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC). Ms. De León has been involved in all aspects of development and implementation of the NALAC programs and strategic initiatives.

Under her leadership, NALAC developed and launched multiple grant programs including the NALAC Fund for the Arts, the Catalyst for Change; and the Transnational Cultural Remittances. Ms. De León serves on the National Council on the Arts and on the boards of the First People's Fund, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, the Performing Arts Alliance, and the United States Department of Arts and Culture. She is an advisory council member of Women of Color in the Arts.



**Stefon Harris**

Stefon Harris' passionate artistry has propelled him to the forefront of the jazz scene. In 2020 on National Public Radio (NPR), Harris' feature highlighted his contributions as a musician but also as an educator and thought leader who teaches empathy from the bandstand. In 2019, Hot

House and Jazz Mobile awarded Harris best vibes as part of the best and brightest for the New York Readers Jazz awards. Heralded as "one of the most important artists in jazz" (Los Angeles Times), he is a recipient of the prestigious 2018 Doris Duke Artist Award, the Martin E. Segal Award from Lincoln Center, has earned four GRAMMY nominations, and has been named Best Mallet player eight times by the Jazz Journalist Association.



### **Rebecca Fishman Lipsey**

Rebecca Fishman Lipsey is President and CEO of The Miami Foundation, the \$400 million philanthropic, civic, and leadership backbone for Greater Miami. At The Miami Foundation, she led the institution to run the region's largest nonprofit recovery effort in its history, initiated the region's Racial

Equity Fund, and co-launched Miami Connected to bring internet access to every single child and family in the County. Previously, Rebecca founded Radical Partners, a social-impact accelerator that incubates ventures solving civic and community challenges. During her tenure, Radical Partners helped scale over 100 social impact ventures focused on issues ranging from sea level rise to equitable music education access. Rebecca served a four-year term on the Florida Board of Education, was Executive Director of Teach for America in Miami, and began her career as a teacher.



### **Valerie Dillon**

Board Director Emerita

Valerie came to the United States in 1983 from Zimbabwe to study and graduate in piano performance at the American University. She established Dillon Gallery in 1994 where she ultimately focused on multimedia disciplines not usually

associated with a traditional art gallery. In 2006 the gallery presented "Painted Music," a series combining technology with painting and music. This shift led to the eventual formation of the current partnership Dillon+Lee. Valerie's early interest in the performing arts continued with many parallel presentations of art, music, and interactive exhibitions. She now works with THE OFFICE to produce special projects and serves on the Interlochen Center for the Arts board of directors. She previously served as a founding board member of The Lewis Prize for Music and at National Sawdust in New York City.

## OUR STAFF



### Arielle Julia Brown

Arielle Julia Brown is a creative producer, cultural strategist, social practice artist and dramaturg. She is the founder of The Love Balm Project (2010-2014). She is also the founder and director of Black Spatial Relics, a new performance residency about slavery, justice and freedom. Arielle is

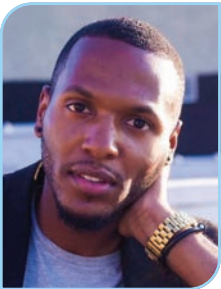
a co-creative producer on Remember2019, a performance and residency project based in Phillips County, Arkansas. She received her B.A. from Pomona College and was the 2015-2017 graduate fellow with the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University where she received an M.A. in Public Humanities.



### Annette Fritzsche

Annette Fritzsche loves working and thinking strategically when it comes to education, community, family, and organizational partnerships. She has worked in public schools teaching music and as an instructional coach, and worked at the San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory, the

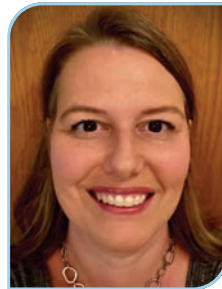
LA Phil, and El Sistema USA with the vision of music education being accessible and affordable for all. Along with working at the Lewis Prize, she is on staff at a church in East Village, San Diego. Annette volunteers as a CASA for foster youth, loves hiking up or skiing down mountains, and is crazy about her young nieces.



### Kenneth Courtney

Drawn to the world of arts and entertainment, Kenneth started his career in communications early, interning in the PR departments of MTV and Country Music Television. Working large-scale events such as the MTV VMAs, Country Music Awards, and CMT Artists

of the Year Awards led him to New York City where he quickly began working at various PR agencies before launching Courtney Creative PR – a non-traditional and forward thinking public relations, branding and events consultancy, focused on elevating the brand profiles of LGBTQ+ clients through social impact across lifestyle, fashion, and entertainment.



### Ann Gregg

Ann values creativity, equity, learning, community, and well-being. For over a decade, Ann worked with young people, nonprofit and government agency partners, artists, and community stakeholders to create the entire suite of Social Impact programs at Carnegie Hall. She also

launched national youth leadership programs as Director of Education with the NPR and PBS phenomenon From the Top. Ann has taught in public schools across the country and toured internationally as a violist. Ann is a proud alum of the University of Wisconsin and Indiana University, and lives in Brooklyn, NY with her husband and two boys.



### Karen Cueva

Karen Cueva is a violinist, educator, and arts administrator, who believes in the power of creative youth development organizations as a vital part of social infrastructure and cultural production. In addition to her work on The Lewis Prize, Karen is the Assistant Director for Learning

and Engagement Programs at Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute. There, she oversees professional development for music educators working with youth across the country, both in schools and community music programs. Karen has earned degrees from The Juilliard School and Harvard University.



### Alexis Jackson

Alexis is passionate about elevating youth voices alongside social impact movements. A product of holistic performing arts training, Alexis has spent over a decade working as dancer and dance educator at various youth programs across the southern United States. Transitioning

into arts leadership, she served as the Director of Creative Youth Development for New Ballet Ensemble and School in Memphis, Tennessee where she worked with local and national partners to develop leadership and community impact programming for hundreds of participants in the area. Alexis holds a B.A. in Political Science and Classical Studies from Rhodes College and serves on the Social Services team at Cafe Reconcile in New Orleans, Louisiana.



### **Shenika John-Jordan**

Shenika is passionate about using the arts to transform communities and amplify positive change. She has served in higher education and nonprofit organizations with a focus on community engagement and audience development. As an active vocalist, Shenika also

enjoys performing across the United States and abroad. Highlights include the world premiere of Azerbaijani solo works in celebration of the literary figure, İmadeddin Nesimi, and The American Spiritual Ensemble National Tour. Her commitment to the arts and community building has led her to work with organizations including Midori & Friends and The Sphinx Organization. She received her Master of Music from Florida State University and her Bachelor of Music with Performing Arts Management from the University of Michigan.



### **Traci Slater-Rigaud**

At the core of every endeavor, Traci works to empower marginalized communities through the arts and philanthropy. She is currently Director of Member Engagement & Partnerships at the United Philanthropy Forum. Prior to the Forum, she served as Director of

the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Her extensive background in arts education and creative youth development includes positions with the National PTA, Miami Art Museum, and Baltimore Museum of Art. Traci holds a B.S. in Social Science and a M.A. in Art Education, from University of Cincinnati.



### **Dalouge Smith, CEO**

Dalouge is a champion for bringing people together and strengthening communities through music. He joined The Lewis Prize for Music as its first CEO in August 2018. Prior to his role at The Lewis Prize, he led San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory for 13 years and

transformed it into a community instigator for restoring and strengthening music education in schools. SDYS' partner, the Chula Vista Elementary School District (California's largest K-6 district) restored music and arts education to all 30,000 of its students as a result. Dalouge grew up singing folk songs with family and performing in professional theatre productions. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in World Arts and Cultures from UCLA and studied Gandhi's non-violent movement for a year in India. Dalouge serves as Vice-Chair of El Sistema USA and is on the boards of California Arts Advocates and Californians for the Arts. He is married to Sue Ann and the father of Wright.

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