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Arts Corps @ 10 Years  
A LOCAL MODEL  
LEADING  
NATIONAL CHANGE

A N N U A L   R E P O R T   2 0 0 8 - 2 0 0 9

# DEAR EVERYBODY:

Thank you. Your commitment to powerful learning for all young people is going to change the world.

Nearly 10 years ago, a small group of passionate teaching artists gathered in the living room of an equally passionate and tenacious woman, Lisa Fitzhugh. They brought years of experience in youth development and arts learning, as well as a desire to reach a broader community. Together, they envisioned an organization that would bring together these artists with schools and after-school centers so that their collective efforts could create the conditions for all children to have the freedom to imagine and the courage to be their full selves.

Arts Corps was born, and that vision has remained the guiding force in all of our achievements. And in our 10th year, they are many: despite harsh economic conditions that have impacted schools, families, businesses and community organizations alike this past year, we served nearly 2,500 students throughout King County with arts learning opportunities that increase student practices of creative habits including imagination, critical thinking, persistence and courage.

Over these 10 years, we have transformed the lives of artists who have deepened their own creative practice through teaching. We have transformed

institutions, filling classrooms with better learners; afterschool programs with excited youth deeply engaged in fun, project based learning; low-income housing sites with a deeper sense of community.

And we have fostered the innate creativity in thousands of young people, helping them find and express their individual voices and building a foundation for lifelong learning. Some of our students have gone on to become accomplished

artists. For others, their experience with Arts Corps has become foundational in their way of thinking and being in the world.

Thousands of students have passed through Arts Corps' doors in the past decade. These young people and their numerous achievements are the true testament to the power of this work. In this annual report, three of them – two Arts Corps alumni and one current student – reflect on the impact of their experience.

With your investment, we have taken and grown this powerful vision and reached nearly 15,000 Seattle area youth, enabling them to build their confidence through their own voice and creativity. And thanks to your support, we are now bringing this model to another arena – a national one.

This past year, Arts Corps became a leader in a new national effort to create a federally funded artist service corps, as called for by President Obama and the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act. Music National Service, our collaborator, created a program called MusicianCorps as a prototype for this national 'Artist Corps.' In fall 2009, MusicianCorps pilot

programs were launched in four cities – Seattle, Chicago, New Orleans and San Francisco. Arts Corps is running the Seattle pilot, and we've hired four experienced and gifted teaching musicians to work in low-income schools and community sites to expand access to music education while fostering civic engagement. It is exciting to see arts learning begin to get some traction on a national scale, and to be able to share what we've learned with like-minded people across the country.

As we look back on a decade of leadership in arts education, it's inspiring and humbling to think of all the people who have contributed to Arts Corps' success. In the next decade, we will build on the strength and proven results of our program, maintaining our deep presence in Seattle communities while providing a model for the growing national movement to bring arts learning back into the lives of every child.

All because a group of passionate people decided to change the world.

Thank you for joining us in this life-changing work,



Elizabeth Whitford  
Executive Director



Vivian Phillips  
Board President

## ARTS CORPS' IMPACT

**2,471** youth enrolled in Arts Corps residencies and after-school classes and another 553 participated in one-time workshops and special projects.

**188** classes, workshops and special projects were offered at 36 Seattle area schools and after-school programs in myriad art forms, including dance, music, visual arts, poetry/spoken word and theatre.

**57%** of our classes were offered to middle and high school students and 43% offered to elementary students.

**33%** of program partners reported that Arts Corps provides the only access to arts classes for the majority of their students.

**3 out of 4** partner sites served a population in which the majority of students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

**95%** of partners agreed that their Arts Corps teaching artist is a strong role model for students, uses teamwork and cooperation, and challenges students to learn.

**80%** of students said their Arts Corps class was a safe place to try new things.

## Creative Habits

Program partners, teaching artists and students all cite an increase in students' practices of key creative habits: courage & risk-taking, imagining possibilities, and persistence & discipline.

## MORE ONLINE

See our Corps members – teaching artists, program partners, board, staff and more – at [WWW.ARTSCORPS.ORG/ROSTER](http://WWW.ARTSCORPS.ORG/ROSTER)

Check out our new evaluation report at [WWW.ARTSCORPS.ORG/EVALUATION](http://WWW.ARTSCORPS.ORG/EVALUATION)



# 3 ALUMNI STORIES



Savimbi “Sammy” Tekle had never really thought much about dance of any sort before witnessing an Arts Corps break-dancing class as a 7th grader at Denny Middle School. Fascinated, he began to talk to teaching artist Jerome Aparis, who invited him to join the class. Sammy was hooked immediately and has never looked back. Now a senior in high school, he has been studying break dancing with Jerome for six years, first at Denny and later at Youngstown Cultural Arts Center.

For Sammy, break dancing is about more than performing complex movements; he relishes the combination of teamwork and leadership necessary to pull off a brilliant routine. “Break dancing is not a solo thing, it’s about who you’re going to do it with and how you’re going to get there,” he says. This delight in collaboration led him and fellow students to form a break-dancing crew called the Vicious Puppies, which now performs at events all over Seattle.

It helps that Sammy has had a strong example in Jerome, who, as he puts it, “is the best teacher I’ve ever had.” As he moves through his last year in high school, he’s looking forward not just to continuing to dance, but to following Jerome’s example, “teaching other people as Jerome taught me.” ■

## Lauren Russell’s story with Arts Corps begins

with her, a white girl from a suburban family, walking apprehensively into an Arts Corps class and being awed by the talent of her fellow students; it continues with her on the other side of the country working to break down barriers for students of color at Yale University. For her, spoken word poetry has become a medium not only for her own self-expression but also for forging links across different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Lauren credits the class she took with Arts Corps teaching artists Aaron Straight and Ezekiel Rothman with the transformation. She recalls the initial awkwardness as students – white, black, homeless, suburban, urban – tried to figure out how to communicate. It fell away quickly, however, as students shared their verbal talents and rhymes began to flow. Her teaching artists facilitated this easy interaction and, as she puts it, encouraged each student to “probe into one’s innermost ideas, conceptions and pre-conceived notions about themselves, others and society and challenge them to examine, explore and re-think those ideas.” When she left the Seattle area to study at Yale, she brought this drive to question superficial differences to bear as a member of the African American Cultural Center. She also became president of the university’s spoken word group, WORD, and poetry remains her touchstone. “Spoken word,” says Lauren, “gave me my voice.” ■

## According to teaching artist Lucien Pellegrin,

“I didn’t choose teaching – it chose me.” For him, teaching is not a process of imparting knowledge but of “reminding the students of their innate potential” to create and learn.

Lucien experienced this approach firsthand as one of the first students to take an Arts Corps class at the program’s inception in 2000. He took visual arts classes with Lauren Atkinson and, later, video production with Brian Quist at Garfield Teen Life Center. He credits both teaching artists with “creating an experimental space that allowed me to have more confidence with my own creative process.” Now a talented photographer and poet in his own right, Lucien seeks to portray an organic vision of the life of the city while deconstructing the “contrived stereotypes of race and gender” that are so prevalent in mass media. He has brought his artistic talents and his critical eye to Arts Corps students, first as a classroom assistant and more recently as a teaching artist, bringing his passion and talents full circle. ■



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Please accept our apologies for any omissions, misspellings or other inaccuracies. Contact our office with corrections at (206) 722-5440.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## JULY 2008-JUNE 2009

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Current assets (cash)                     | 163,510          |
| Accounts receivable                       | 15,065           |
| Fixed assets (equipment)                  | 38,311           |
| Depreciation                              | -31,871          |
| <b>Total assets</b>                       | <b>\$185,015</b> |
| Liabilities                               | 3,267            |
| <b>Net assets end of year</b>             | <b>181,748</b>   |
| <b>Total liabilities &amp; net assets</b> | <b>\$185,015</b> |
| Net assets as of beginning of the year    | \$175,882        |
| Net assets as of end of the year          | \$181,748        |
| Change in net assets                      | \$5,866          |

### INCOME & EXPENSES BY PERCENTAGE

|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Income</b>          | <b>\$804,078</b> |
| Program partner fees   | 20%              |
| Corporations           | 5%               |
| Foundations            | 42%              |
| Public agencies        | 2%               |
| Individuals            | 28%              |
| In-kind                | 3%               |
| <b>Expenditures</b>    | <b>\$798,212</b> |
| Fundraising            | 22%              |
| General administration | 7%               |
| In-kind                | 3%               |
| Programming            | 68%              |





Arts Corps student from Bailey Gatzert  
Elementary School recites his poem

Photos © Susie Fitzhugh

If I were a piece of art  
I would be a picture  
drawing of a dragon  
because I'm filled  
with a fire  
of love.

I am simple but  
powerful  
and energized to fly  
through the world  
to my goals.

When people  
look at me  
they think I'm  
really creative,  
but they don't know  
how valuable I am.

I'm as important  
as silver,  
as special as a  
dark blue racing car  
with sparkles.

They may never know  
how good I am,  
but I do,  
just myself.

ARTS CORPS @ 10 YEARS, 2009 A LOCAL MODEL LEADING NATIONAL CHANGE

BY ALEX, ARTS CORPS STUDENT IN VICKY  
EDMONDS WRITES OF PASSAGE POETRY CLASS