



COLLABORATION

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

COMMUNITY

MAKE ART ANYWAY



A NOTE FROM

THE DIRECTORS

Every day in Arts Corps classrooms, teaching artists encourage students to push their boundaries of creative self-expression. **Students take risks by trying new things. Many times they shine, sometimes they fail gloriously. Either outcome is celebrated equally.** Trust is built through artistic collaboration. We are witness to the powerful communities that develop when young people trust each other enough to create something together. It doesn't happen every day, but when it does it feels like magic.

Taking care of our team is what provides stability to the creative communities we help to build. On our own, we know that prioritizing self-care allows us to be healthy, happy, and productive in our lives. Arts Corps took the same approach to center “staff-care” as we evolved throughout the year, navigating both a pandemic and a leadership transition. We took the time to slow down, reflect on our values, learn from the past, and build intentional community — *together.*

That process begins with questions. How does a group of professionals agree on how we want to be as a community? How do we find common ground, desire, and unity on being an anti-racist organization grounded in equitable practices across our classrooms, meeting rooms, and board room?

We start by looking back. We assess who we are here in the present and look toward visioning a future of sustainable relationships built in T.R.U.S.T: truth, respect, uniqueness, sacred space, and transformation. **Together, we are building an environment that we are proud to work in, a place where we embrace our values beyond paper and into praxis.**

Building on the expertise within our community became a guiding leadership principle, recognizing that the skills we need exist right here. We hired from within at every opportunity and grew our staff strategically when needed. We defined and expanded our mentorship pathways for classroom assistants.

As we budgeted for the new fiscal year, we knew that addressing both workloads and pay equity was vital. Thanks to a multi-year capacity building grant, we expanded our team's bandwidth by increasing hours of existing positions and adding new roles. We collaborated with our board to develop a transparent, tiered pay structure for all levels of Arts Corps. **We explored compensation models across the country to ensure we are leaders in teaching artist pay.** Our compensation policy now guarantees each of us earns a salary that meets or exceeds the median salary for comparable positions in King County with additional pay for each year in the role.

This year, office staff and board members joined our teaching artists' ongoing professional development workshops, helping to develop a deeper organizational understanding of what it is we do in the classroom. We introduced the Arts Corps Book Club, a space where our community can sit with and discuss pedagogical questions in our work. The book club became a tool to build relationships and to connect, prompting each of us to look in the mirror and reflect, “How do these pedagogies permeate every facet of our work?”

Using our own **Arts Education Race and Social Justice Framework** we asked ourselves, are we “walking the walk” and “talking the talk?”

In the spirit of connection and reflection, on a beautifully overcast afternoon in September, we gathered in Burien on the shores of the Salish Sea. It was the first time that faculty, staff, and board had gathered in-person as a community since November 2019. We came together to make art, tell stories, share a delicious meal, laugh and sing and dance. We did all of the activities we ask of the youth in our classes. We tried new things, pushed our creative boundaries, and celebrated each other's art. There it was, after all the time apart and all that we'd been through, it was the magic of Arts Corps.

That magic only happens when we tend to it. ■

In togetherness,
Carrie, Heleya, Olisa, Rowan, and Sabrina



4408 DELRIDGE WAY SW, SUITE 110
SEATTLE, WA 98106



100%

OF PARTNERS RATED THE QUALITY OF THEIR PARTNERSHIPS AS EXCELLENT AND/OR GOOD.

122 CLASSES 22 SITES

BECOMING TOGETHER

300 popsicles given out at pop-up performances.

Arts Corps distributed

4,500

art kits in 2020 - 21.

8/10 families reported that because of their Arts Corps class, they are now better able to use their imagination when creating art.



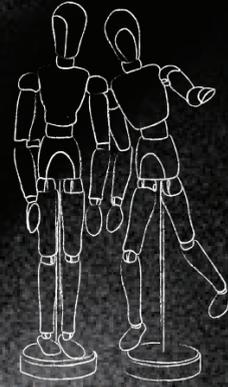
94% of Out-of-School-Time program partners rated the free student art kits as:



59%



35%

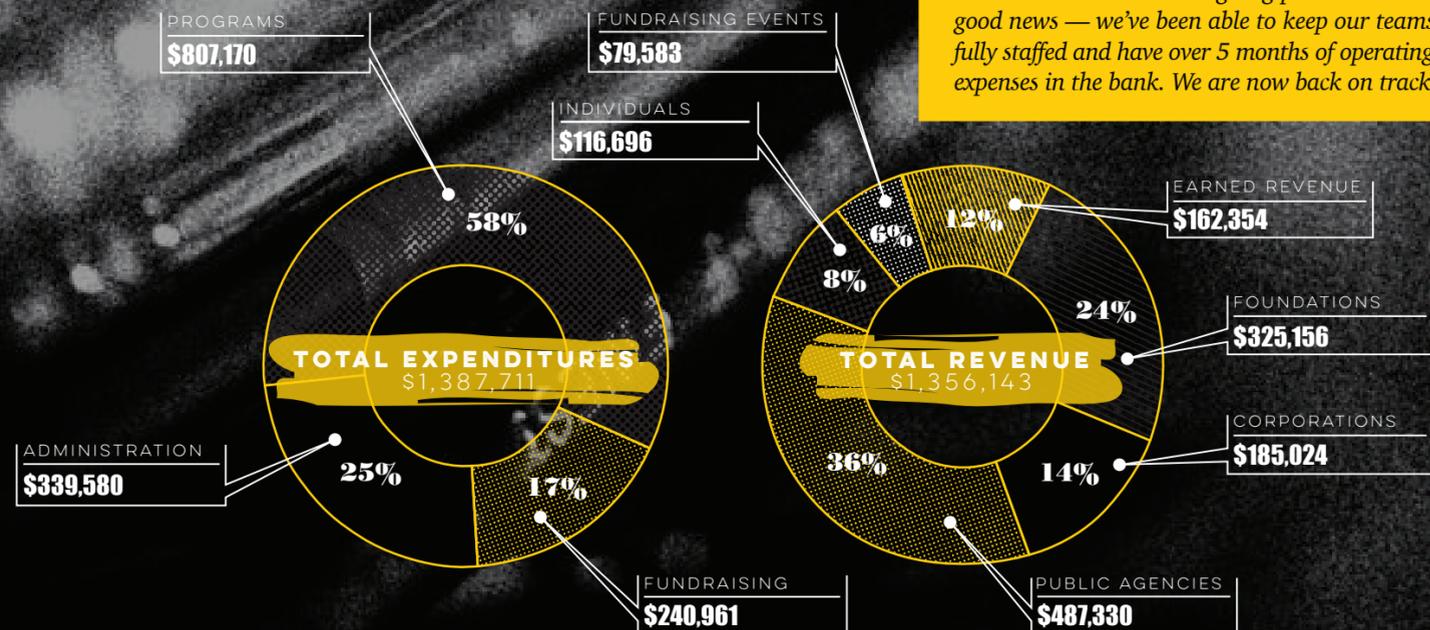


MORE THAN 9 OUT OF 10

participants from the Media Arts & Social Justice class strongly agree (45%) or agree (50%) that they **deepened their understanding** of systems of oppression and now feel **more connected** to the social justice movement as a whole.

Net Income (\$34,282)

*Net loss is due to the ongoing pandemic. The good news — we've been able to keep our teams fully staffed and have over 5 months of operating expenses in the bank. We are now back on track.



Sumayya E. Diop, teaching artist and Teaching Artist Coordinator, during this past summer's pop-up performances at our partner sites.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

TWO TEACHING ARTISTS COME TOGETHER TO MAKE ART ANYWAY

In 2021, Arts Corps experimented with team teaching and intentional mentorship of our classroom assistants. A team of four teaching artists, each with a wide span of experience, artistic disciplines, ideologies, and identities, collaborated to provide high quality arts education in South King County (SoCo). We sat down with two of them, a veteran and a newcomer, to reflect on the year.

Arts Corps: How would you describe your teaching style or approach in the classroom?

Sorel Nica: The main thing for me is creating a space for students to express themselves, giving them the artistic skills to do so in different ways. Anyone can express themselves, but having a specific space to do that, a brave space, is sometimes the whole point of having an after school program. If they feel free to explain what's behind their art, to

ask questions, if they're comfortable and showing that they're enjoying the class. I think that comes first and foremost for me.

Adam Collet: When I go into the classroom, I am really hoping the students will learn a little bit about self-expression, taking the creativity that they tap into in our class outside to other subjects. Creative thinking isn't something that we use just for art. We use it in all facets of our life, all subjects in school and beyond, so I hope they can take that curiosity and keep running with it.

Arts Corps: Did your teaching philosophy shift when classes went virtual last year?

AC: You know, I'm used to being in the classroom and in person with students. You get immediate feedback from them with the subconscious things they do — with the eye-rolling or the “ughs.” Also, in spending one-on-one time with students. Virtually, you don't really get those social cues too much. They're a little harder to pick up on and it's

a little more difficult to get one-on-one time with a student away from the group. All that sort of stuff took time getting used to. It wasn't like there was a handbook. Everyone was scrambling.

Arts Corps: Trial by fire?

AC: Kinda, yeah. We had a really great team with SoCo last year. That worked out really well.

Arts Corps: Right. Virtual classes allowed you to teach with one another as a team as opposed to teaching on your own. How was that experience for you both?

SN: The first word that comes to mind is “enriching,” which isn't a word I use often. There were so many ideas, different plans, and ways of teaching that I never would've thought of if I hadn't been working with Adam. Working alone is not the same. There is a lot more troubleshooting on your own or not being able to come up with ideas that a different perspective would provide. Adam's one of the best coworkers I've ever had.

AC: That's very nice. Yeah, we had multiple email threads, text messages going back and forth all the time. Having a classroom assistant was really great. Sorel taught part of the time, too, creating lesson plans. It was fun to see what ideas they came up with. I was like, “Oh, this is great. I can riff on that and come back with something the next time.” Sorel did such an awesome job and kept the whole virtual operation running super smooth. It made it really easy to be the TA. I appreciate it, Sorel. You're going to do awesome this year.

Arts Corps: Sorel, do you have your own classes this year?

SN: Yes, I'm a teaching artist with SoCo. Adam is the other and we each have our own classroom

assistants now.

Arts Corps: What did you learn from the other this past year?

SN: The biggest thing I learned from Adam is how to make sure the kids are able to express themselves and be creative in class. Learning technical skills is important, but it's a secondary thing. The priority is really making sure these kids are able to be themselves. That was super valuable because sometimes I'd get caught up in, “Oh, we've got to do this specific thing and we're going to teach this in a specific linear way.” Adam was like, “You need to be more flexible and open-minded about it.” He

learn more about something here.”

Arts Corps: Given the limitations of a virtual class setting, how did you know your educational objectives were being met?

SN: There was one student who was so excited because it was her first time using paints. Two classes after that, we used paints again. And in this class, she was like, “Look what I did!” She had painted the whole thing in a flat wash in one color and then flaked little speckles of other color paint onto the page. The other students saw it and then wanted to learn her technique so she ended up leading a little lesson where she taught

middle of the class, I started noticing that one student was putting up all of her artwork on the wall behind her. She had a whole art gallery of projects she had done in our class. She was just super proud of them. It was really sweet to me. I just love thinking about that. This kid was just super into art and was really loving what we were doing.

Arts Corps: Is there anything about teaching together, or as a team, that surprised you?

AC: Before we started, nobody wanted to teach online. There wasn't one person I knew who was looking forward to it and I was right there, too. But meeting the SoCo team: Sorel, ZAG, Sumayya... we put together an awesome team. We had meetings before and after class, on the weekends, or online. It wasn't just helpful; it was reassuring. They were in it with me. We were on a team. I wasn't just a ‘loner teacher.’

Arts Corps: Thank you both. Do either of you have anything to add before we hop off?

SN: I feel really lucky that I managed to go from a program participant to classroom assistant and now teaching artist. I don't think a lot of organizations do that kind of a thing, of letting younger folks work on this and really just supporting us. We develop and grow to be better teaching artists. I think I might be the youngest person on staff, which is exciting and kind of daunting. That's really special and makes me proud to be part of Arts Corps. I also love the Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SELPQA) and social justice frameworks we use. They're such interesting perspectives to bring into class and for teaching online, too. Thank you, Arts Corps. ■



was completely right. He made me think differently about how I was structuring the classes I taught.

AC: I'm aware that as a teaching artist, I do not know everything. So I always try to be open-minded toward what somebody's going to bring, whether it's my classroom assistant that's going to lay some cool ideas on me or someone else that I'm collaborating with. Like, “Wow, that's something I never thought of. I really need to seriously

them how to do it as well. That was really special to see: one student teaching the others, showing that she understood a skill well enough to share it and the fact that they wanted to learn together with peers. So much fun.

AC: The class was pretty diligent about doing their work, and we'd ask them toward the end to hold their work up to show what they'd been working on. We'd see that every week. But then toward the

Photos by Adam Collet & Sorel Nica



STAFF

Meredith Arena
Sabrina Chacon-Barajas
Adam Collet
Heleya de Barros
Cecelia DeLeon
Carina A. del Rosario
Sumayya E. Diop
Courtney Elston
Olisa Enrico
Maria Guillen-Valdovinos
Jasmine Iona-Brown
Saeko Keller
Rowan Lenihan
Christa Mazzone Palmberg
Erica Merritt
Hillary Moore
Carrie Siahpush
Alexa Strabuk
Greg Thornton
Justin Yau-Luu

Staff Teaching Artist
Associate Director of Arts Education
Staff Teaching Artist
Co-Director of Arts Education
Program Manager
Staff Teaching Artist
Teaching Artist Coordinator
Database Coordinator
Co-Director of Arts Education
Staff Teaching Artist
Program Manager
Finance Manager
Director of Finance and Operations
Development Manager
Staff Teaching Artist
Grants Manager
Acting Executive Director
Communications Manager
Staff Teaching Artist
Program Operations Manager



TEACHING FACULTY

Beverly Aarons
Diane Ahern
Meredith Arena
ZAG Awwad
Shana Bestock
Veronica Bowen
Kevin Campos
Adam Collet
Samuel Corales
Will Darling
Brian Dang
Carina A. del Rosario
Silvio Dos Reis
Eris Eaton
Adam Ende
Maria Guillen-Valdovinos
Fabian Hernandez-Angel
Katrina Herzog
Adam Jabari Jefferson
Aishé Keita
Jiéyì Ludden
Jesus McCloskey
Erica Merritt
Colton Miller
Sorel Nica
Divya Rajan
Monty Rozema
Stephanie Segura
Sharlyn Santiago
Hayley Shannon
Sirichanh Sisavatty
Greg Thornton
Taylor Tinsley
Aaron Walker-Loud
Jeff Young

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tanisha Brandon-Felder **Board President**
Kris Evans Bien
Donte Felder
Stone Gossard
Mylen Huggins **Secretary**
Sally Ketcham
Erika Nesholm
elizabeth ortega
Keenan Peery
Kelly Rondou
Aurelio Valdez
Annie Von Essen **Treasurer**



Students spray-painting on the last day at UDYC - Interagency Academy in June 2021.

Photos by Maria Guillen-Valdovinos

I've been reflecting on how far Arts Corps has come in the past few years and how fortunate we've been to have a supportive board to help us get through it all. Our board members have stuck by us and helped us to work through conflict. They've troubleshooted and partnered with us to build a stronger organization. Volunteering to steward an organization isn't simple work.

As their board terms come to an end, I would like to thank Annie Von Essen and Erika Nesholm for spending many years sharing their expertise, time, resources, and love with the Arts Corps Community. They are greatly appreciated, and their leadership will be missed.

I'm thrilled to introduce you to our newest board members: Kris Evans Bien, Stone Gossard, and Keenan Peery. Kris, Stone, and Keenan each bring unique perspectives and strengths. They've all been long-time supporters who bring passion for art, creative youth expression, and collaboration. We look forward to building strong partnerships with the new additions to our leadership team.

Throughout the year, our board will continue to grow. Next steps? We're adding two board positions reserved for Arts Corps teaching artists. As we head into our next season, I'm excited to see how we can deepen the collaboration with our board, specifically in decolonizing the board space in alignment with our values.



With gratitude,

CARRIE SIAHPUSH
 ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“And that is one of the biggest things I love about Arts Corps. Arts Corps is about building community, support, and encouragement to say — sing, dance, draw — from perspectives that feel right to you, find your voice, tribe, find folks that you can make mistakes in front of... that might love your mistakes.”

— STONE GOSSARD



Dr. Tanisha Brandon-Felder
Arts Corps Board President:

Whew, can we all just pause for a second and breathe? This is not a light task and no light ask. This past year has been a true whirlwind and it takes all the strength we have to not be blown away by the events of the year. But here's the thing. When you have others around you that allow you to stay grounded and centered, it is amazing what you can accomplish. Take Arts Corps for example; through an ED departure, an Acting ED assignment, a racial reckoning and a global pandemic, Arts Corps was still able to offer quality arts programming for youth and a supportive community for staff and teaching artists. The community witnessed pop-up music and dance performances, specially designed art kits with engaging instruction, and an amazing interactive annual event that raised money so we could keep doing what we do best: make art. We are taking deep breaths along the way as we continue to serve the community the best we know how. Speaking of serving, we would love to add your talents and gifts to our dynamic board. You won't have to just read about the magic. You can be a part of it. Think about joining our board. It's true, we really are stronger together. ■



THE DIFFERENCE

AN ART KIT CAN MAKE

written by **Christa Mazzone Palmberg, Development Manager**

Over the past two years, COVID-19 presented countless challenges for Arts Corps and the communities we work with. **But one silver lining through it all has been the joy and connection that can come from working together** to assemble and share art kits with students and their families across King County.

When the pandemic first hit, physical distancing and isolation threatened to unravel our ties with our youth and communities. Arts Corps, along with other youth-serving organizations, wasted little time to ensure we stayed connected and engaged with each other, moving lessons and resources online for youth and their families to access easily.

But what good are online lessons if you don't have the supplies at home to participate? Enter Arts Corps' COVID-19 art kit program. During the 2020-21 school year, with an army of community support, Arts Corps put together and delivered 4,500 free art kits. This cultivated creativity, connection, and collaboration during a time when many of us felt uninspired and isolated, especially young people.

Arts Corps' art kits removed an important access barrier for youth, providing students with the supplies they would need to **Make Art Anyway** with others in a safe, virtual setting. Responding to a survey about our Out-of-School time programs, **67% of families reported that they never or only sometimes have art supplies in their homes.** We know, however, that when students and families receive art kits, they put them to good use for classes and other creative activities.

In the words of one program partner, **"The supplies are probably one of the most successful things about Zoom-call programming.** They all play with it, maybe not on a call, but on their own and they'll show us stuff that they've made. It's been really, really nice to have."

Art kits also strengthened the collaboration between Arts Corps and our partners. Program coordinators at partner sites are often busy pulling together supplies for youth, particularly during remote learning. Art kits alleviated some of this pressure. As one partner shared, "I put a lot of labor and effort into getting [the students] supplies, so to have someone else just take on that labor a little bit is really, really impactful to me because I don't have to source it or budget it."

It takes a lot of time and effort to assemble over 4,500 art kits, especially when there's a limit on how many individuals can safely gather in the office at once. **Art kits provided a unique opportunity for Arts Corps staff, teaching artists, and volunteers to [be]come together on a deeper level** while working in shifts to get hundreds of kits ready in time for new classes each quarter.

We've always known that brand new art supplies inspire a unique sense of joy and possibility among our students. What the pandemic has shown us is that stuffing pencils, paints, and watercolor paper into Arts Corps bags can also be a transformative experience. ■

“ The art materials that were shipped to clients’ homes made this class so accessible because we were able to invite participants from multiple counties! ”

PROGRAM PARTNER

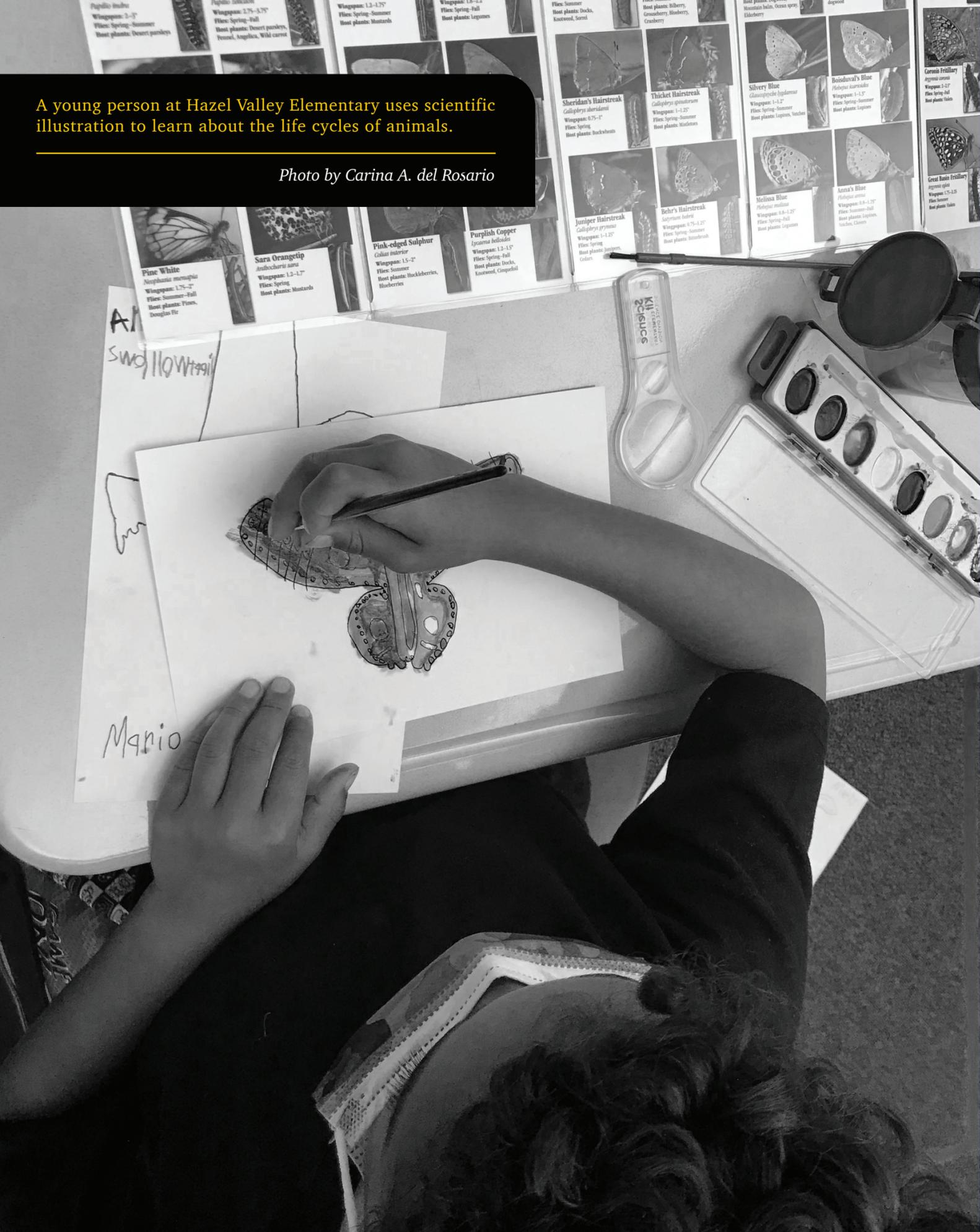


Scenes from both this summer's pop-up performances and from the youth health fair at Rainier Beach Plaza.

Photos by Adam Collet & Heleya de Barros

A young person at Hazel Valley Elementary uses scientific illustration to learn about the life cycles of animals.

Photo by Carina A. del Rosario



SAVE THE DATE

FESTA 2022: MARCH 25 @ 7PM

Just a few of our many talented teaching artists at this fall's organization retreat.

Photo by Adam Collet



Arts Corps has long had individuals and families who give monthly in support of our mission and work. In alignment with our value of community, we realized our sustaining donors should not only be connected with Arts Corps but with each other, too. We launched Culture Club in the spring to celebrate the commitment shared by our monthly donors. Culture Club members receive newsletters and invitations to join select Arts Corps programming and special events. If you are not yet a Culture Club member, we invite you to join our growing community. No monthly gift is too small.

Learn more at <https://artscorps.org/donate-culture-club/> ■