

2023–2024 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



ARTS AT LARGE

making the arts accessible for all

artsatlargeinc.org

Message from our Executive Director

Dear Arts @ Large Friends and Supporters,

As I complete my first year as Executive Director, I am filled with both gratitude for all we've achieved together and excitement for what's to come. This past year has been a remarkable chapter of growth and transformation for Arts @ Large, made possible by our dedicated team and the generous support from donors like you. Our staff and board meetings often begin with "mission moments," and I'd like to share one that is particularly meaningful to me.

As a proud graduate of Washington High School, I remember a time when the school had a thriving arts program. Fast forward to 2024, and none of those original programs remain. During the 2023-24 school year, Arts @ Large brought four Artist Educators to Washington, providing visual art and music residencies. Visiting the school, I witnessed Artist Educator Lucky Diop leading students in a vibrant music, dance, and African drum performance in celebration of Black History Month. This performance, the first all-school assembly since COVID-19, was a powerful moment of community and connection, a reminder of the arts' transformative impact. Without Arts @ Large, these Washington High students would have had no access to these creative experiences. That full-circle moment affirmed why this work is so deeply personal to me.

This past year has been one of change, transition, learning, and innovation for Arts @ Large. We've been guided by questions like: How can we best serve the growing number of schools and youth in need of our services? How can we deepen our programs for greater impact? And how can we better support our Artist Educators? Over the past 23 years, Arts @ Large has grown to impact every part of Milwaukee's creative sector, yet our mission has remained steadfast: **to make the arts accessible to everyone in our community.**

It's also been a year of growth in fundraising, with nearly 50% of our donors being new supporters. This support is essential as we strive to keep our programs free of charge, ensuring that the arts remain a foundational part of education for all.

Looking forward, I am excited about all that we can accomplish together. With your continued support, we plan to deepen our core programs and expand our reach to even more aspiring artists in the coming year. One exciting initiative on the horizon is the launch of the Midwest's very first Mobile Media Lab, which will bring digital arts instruction to youth across our city.

I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to our staff, board members, Artist Educators, volunteers, and each of you who believe in the power of the arts. Together, let's continue building a vibrant and inclusive community where creativity knows no bounds, and everyone can embrace their artistic potential.

With deepest gratitude,



Joel Cencius, CFRE
Executive Director



Message from our Board Chair

Greetings Community Members and Partners,

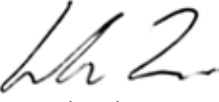
It's been an exciting year at Arts @ Large! As I reflect on 2024, I can truly say that I have been in awe of all that our staff, partners, and especially our youth, have done in the building over the last year. I've seen you all drum together, paint together, jam (house) together, and share stories and joy. I've always found it to be an honor to be a part of the Arts @ Large Board of Directors and this year is no different. I feel truly privileged to support such an amazing organization that has made such a difference for over 20 years.

We've welcomed new staff and Board members, enhanced our programs, and have committed to continuing to reach members of our community and children in our local schools. Our staff has stepped up to the plate to address every issue, challenge, and opportunity with the ultimate goal of making the arts accessible to all. In addition, with the support of the donors, we have and will continue to grow our reach and bring the arts to our communities.

As I look to next year, there is one word that sums up my hopes for Arts @ Large: **More.** I hope that more of our friends and community members attend more Arts @ Large activities and events. I hope our staff can reach more individuals, especially in our schools. Lastly, I look forward to strategizing what "more" Arts @ Large programming and services can look like so that we can continue to make the arts accessible to all.

Cheers to the New Year!

Sincerely,



Ursula Flores
Board Chair



Arts @ Large helped me organize my passion in a way that I could be of service to the students in my community.

- VAES Artist Educator

Arts @ Large Mission

Arts @ Large activates Milwaukee's communities to build environments that support arts-rich, lifelong learning.

Four Cornerstones of Arts @ Large



PEACEMAKING - The arts can be an incredible vehicle to model and promote Social Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL is the process of developing fundamental skills for life success within supportive, participatory learning environments. These skills include recognizing and managing emotions, setting and achieving goals, demonstrating empathy for others, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and making responsible decisions.



CIVIL RIGHTS - Arts @ Large programs challenge participants to see themselves as an integral part of our great community and be active in making Milwaukee the best place to play, learn, work, and live. The stories that makeup Milwaukee's history in the civil rights movement serve as a catalyst for students to join to build a better Milwaukee.



ECO-LITERACY - Arts @ Large programs promote eco-literacy by engaging students and their families in creative community development projects that encourage environmental stewardship. With the support of multiple partners, Arts @ Large transformed a .52-acre city-owned neighborhood park into an outdoor eco-arts learning center called Paliapito Eco-Arts Park.



TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION - Arts @ Large programs highlight the power of technology to create empathy, understanding of the complex world around us, and our individual and collaborative ability to create change.



Photo credit: Lily Shea Photography
Featured Artist: Lea Cutsforth



**Arts @ Large creates
that safe place for kids to be creative
throughout their days while learning.**

- VAES Artist Educator

Year in Review



Photo credit: Summer Career Development Interns
Featured Artist: Diana Pacheco

LEGACY LIBRARY

Over the past 18 months, we laid the foundation for the Arts @ Large Legacy Library—a dynamic collection that honors our history and shapes future projects and partnerships. Each of our core programs now integrates comprehensive documentation practices, capturing both final works and the creative processes behind them for our archive.

In July 2024, we premiered the Legacy Library with its first installation, showcasing works from our 2023–24 in-school residencies during Gallery Night. This evolving collection celebrates the artistic journey of Arts @ Large, preserving our impact for generations to come.

CONTRACTED SERVICES

Through our contracted services, we connect artists with meaningful opportunities across the city. Whether it's COA Youth and Family Centers seeking an after-school mural project, MPS schools needing to fill art teacher vacancies, or the Deer District looking looking to activate the space with artists, we leverage our extensive artist network to make these collaborations possible.

Once connections are established, we support Artist Educators with growth and development resources, empowering them to deliver impactful, high-quality engagements.

PARTNER COLLABORATIONS

SPOTLIGHT

Broadscope Disability Services offers vital programs, services, and resources to individuals and families living with disabilities. In partnership with Arts @ Large, Broadscope invited community members with disabilities to participate in engaging drum circles and enjoy a shared lunch provided by Green Baked Goods at the Arts @ Large Community Center.

In FY2023–24, Broadscope and Arts @ Large hosted three monthly drum circles, fostering connection, creativity, and a sense of community for all.

*This year alone,
our partnerships
have reached over
4,900 students,
enriching their
educational experiences
with the arts.*

PARTNERS

Anchor Press, Paper, and Print
Camp Minikani
Chabad
COA Youth and Family Centers
Cre8tive House
Milwaukee Bucks/Deer District
Mitchell Street Arts
MYAC
Repairing Together
Signature Dance Company
Tosa Rec Department
Vibez Creative Art Space
Villa Terrace

FOCUS ON COLLABORATION: CALM (Council of Arts Leaders Milwaukee)

In efforts to foster greater collaboration within Milwaukee's arts and culture sector, Arts @ Large was proud to partner with leaders from AWE (Artists Working in Education), Imagine MKE, and MARN (Milwaukee Artist Resource Network) to launch the CALM group. This collective brings together leaders from over 25 small-to-medium-sized arts organizations across the city. CALM meets quarterly to share resources, tackle shared challenges, and dive into pressing topics affecting the arts sector. The group has fostered great synergy amongst the members and prompted efforts to create a sector-wide resource guide.

Impact Numbers



8,000+

Total People Served



4,900

Total Students Served



4,723

People served
through contracted services



3,272

Community Center Attendees
(adults and youth)

Contracted with more than

80 artists

(50% of the 80 artists we worked with are BIPOC)

Collaborated with over

100 artists

2,000+

Paid internship hours for high school
and first-year college students

21

Total number of Career
Development Interns

31

Number of artists that
applied for Artist in
Residence program

33

Number of artists that
applied for VAES (Visual
Arts Expansion Support)

11

Total number of MPS
schools served via VAES

We recognize the value of artists leveraging their networks to enrich and deepen our programs. For example, La Familia de Arte, our FY2023–24 Q4 Artist in Residence, brought together over 25 collaborating artists, creating a truly dynamic and expansive program.





Photo credit: Career Development Interns

Signature Program Areas

In FY2023–24, Arts @ Large used the Macmillan Matrix to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs, identifying those that are thriving, those requiring improvement, and those that should be concluded. These difficult decisions allowed us to refocus on our core programs, enhancing their impact and alignment with our mission.

Key shifts included sunsetting our afterschool program, reimagining Music Under the Stars into Jam House, and transforming Art4All into the A.I.R. Academy. After one year of these adjustments, our core programs are now more mission-driven, distinctly unique to Arts @ Large, and delivering a greater impact on the community.

Geography Served



Being in
the Arts @ Large
space fueled his
passion for art.

- A.I.R. Academy Parent

FY2023–24 Events

Hosted more than 60 on-site events

11

JAM HOUSE
events

1

DOORS OPEN MILWAUKEE
event

19

SUMMER CAMP
sessions

10

A.I.R. ACADEMY
sessions

Reached a record number of students
through our on-site programs



9

A.I.R.
MASTERCLASSES
sessions

3

A.I.R. COMMUNITY
CONVERSATIONS
sessions

3

A.I.R. OPENINGS
events

3

A.I.R. CLOSINGS
events



Photo credit: Mark Soriano

Program Highlights

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Our 2023–24 Artist in Residence cohort included three residents: Flutes at Dawn (Kiran Vedula and Karlies Kelley), Paula Lovo, and La Familia de Arte, as well as dozens of collaborators. Each immersive three-month residency provided the artists with a budget and instructional designer staff-support to transform our Community Center gallery space to exhibit their work and grow their artistic practice. The artists also shared their work with the community via field trips, masterclasses, and community workshops. In total six masterclass workshops and three community conversations for the public took place, as well as six field trips for local students and a nine-week dance program for youth. Over 750 people engaged with the programming, including 250 closing event attendees and 120 students.

A.I.R. SPOTLIGHT

Flutes at Dawn’s residency, “Good News,” demonstrated the program’s positive impact by engaging over 430 participants through music, dance, and cultural education. Founded by Kiran Vedula and Karlies Kelley, the nonprofit elevates underrepresented cultures and art forms with performances, workshops, and educational programs.

Karlies Kelley’s “Panamanian Rhythms” masterclass, in collaboration with Andy Miller, connected the audience through Panamanian and Colombian music and dance. Kiran Vedula hosted a community conversation on mental health in the post-COVID world and the impact of social media algorithms. He also created a space for those interested in learning music production techniques.

The residency fostered creativity and collaboration, and took audience members on a sensory journey, exploring the intersection of artistry, culture, and music. The residency culminated in a “Good News” gallery exhibition and a lively closing event featuring youth hip-hop, drum, and dance performances, along with a show by The Good News Band.



This residency has given me the opportunity to engage with my youth and adult students, and fellow artists, in a new way by further representing and diving into my Panamanian roots through dance and music.

- Karlies Kelley, former Artist in Residence



Photo credit: Melissa Miller Photography



Photo credit: Jovanny Hernandez

Success Story

JOVANNY HERNANDEZ CABALLERO

Past Artist in Residence, Jovanny Hernandez Caballero, was selected from a competitive pool of 147 applicants as one of the recipients of the 2024 Mary L. Nohl Fund Fellowship for Individual Artists. The Nohl Fellows are chosen each year by an independent panel of three respected visual arts professionals from outside the four-county area.

Jovanny, a community artist and photographer based in Milwaukee, was part of our FY2022–23 A.I.R. cohort. A first-generation American and descendant of the Mixtec people, an Indigenous group from present-day Mexico, his work explores themes of cultural heritage and identity. Through his photography, Jovanny captures the vibrant beauty of Milwaukee's South Side and his family's ancestral land in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Incubator Program

GREEN BAKED GOODS

This past year, Arts @ Large was thrilled to welcome Green Baked Goods as the new operator of our café space. Established in 2020 by husband-and-wife team Kevin and Angela, Green Baked Goods combines their 20+ years of experience in the service industry. With a natural flair for flavor and presentation, they offer a wide selection of baked goods prepared fresh onsite daily using local produce. New menu items are frequently introduced, ensuring there's always something exciting to try. Their offerings cater to every taste, from signature quiches and scones to cakes and panini sandwiches. The café is open Tuesday–Saturday from 9 a.m. –2 p.m. You can also order directly from Green Baked Goods via their catering business: greenbakedgoods414@gmail.com

The café is now a part of our **Creative Business Incubator program**. Through this initiative, our Community Center provides a studio, office, and workspace for creative entrepreneurs and nonprofit organizations at below-market rates, fostering innovation and sustainability in our community. Green Baked Goods joins an inspiring lineup of partner tenants, including **Flutes at Dawn, Joy Engine, Milwaukee Preservation Alliance,** and **Wisconsin Reading Corps.**



Arts @ Large for me holds a place where I was nurtured but also pushed to see my art expand in different spaces.

- Former Artist in Residence

Career Development

INTERN SUCCESS STORY

Alicia came into Career Development as a senior at Golda Meir High School with an interest in graphic design. Alicia’s curiosity about a new artistic practice quickly grew into career pursuit, as she is now in her freshman year studying graphic design at MATC. During the program spanning the 2023–24 school year, Alicia was able to share space with four artist mentors and 20 art-driven peers from around the city of Milwaukee, presenting a customized digital typeface at the completion of the program. In the summer, Alicia joined our Summer Art Internship program and took on an important role of designing the poster for our Gallery Night MKE exhibit. Before moving on to college Alicia expressed that her biggest fear coming into the program was, “that I wasn’t going to get to know anybody. As I got into it more, I was able to learn about people.” With the mentorship of Whitney Salgado, an Artist Educator in our Career Development program, Arts @ Large was able to provide access to opportunities in the arts for 20+ MPS high school students, alongside Alicia.

Jam House

PAST HOSTS

Sam Kacala:
August 2022–August 2023
FUNK

Elly Bird and Hanna Simone:
November 2023–January 2024
ACOUSTIC, SONGWRITING

Jeanne Marie Farinelli:
February 2024–June 2024
JAZZ

Your Move MKE Inc:
August 2024–October 2024
HIP-HOP

Each host brings their style/genre of jam. Elly and Hanna focused on songwriting while Your Move MKE improvised beats and rapping. Hosting multiple sessions allows artists to grow and elaborate on their initial ideas. It provides an opportunity to become a better facilitator of space, band leader, and collaborator.



Photo credit: Summer Career Development Interns



Photo credit: Mark Soriano



Photo credit: Letasha Smith

11

Schools

16

Artist Educators

VAES

Arts @ Large has been a proud partner of MPS since the launch of their Fill the Gaps/**Visual Arts Expansion Support** program. Through this collaboration, our Artist Educators provide arts instruction to thousands of MPS students in schools without a dedicated art teacher. In FY2023–24, our educators reached students from third to twelfth grades, offering a wide range of engaging and diverse arts experiences.



A.I.R. Academy

Arts @ Large's Artist in Residence (A.I.R.) Academy inspires young creators in grades three to eight to explore diverse art forms under the mentorship of professional artists. This past year, over 50 students delved into mediums like theater, upcycled fashion, rap/poetry, makeup artistry, filmmaking, and character acting. They had the opportunity to learn from Milwaukee-based talents such as **Manny Vibe, Emjay Productions, Darylanne Stadler, the Milwaukee Repertory Theater,** and **Kyle Henderson.**

By providing this free program, A.I.R. Academy not only challenges traditional notions of what it means to be an Artist in Residence but also expands participants' perceptions of creativity, fostering a deeper appreciation for the arts in all its forms.

Photo credit: Phillip Salat

“I loved the environment Arts @ Large gave students whether that was the classrooms or the café when you enter. It was very cozy and felt welcoming... Overall, an awesome program for creatives to grow and create.”

- Career Development Intern



Photo credit: Jeff Zimpel

Our inaugural event raised record funds of **\$55,000**

Art vs. Food

On May 30, 2024, Arts @ Large hosted its inaugural Art Vs. Food fundraiser — a fusion of creativity and cuisine that paired Milwaukee's talented artists with local chefs to create a feast for all five senses. Designed to immerse guests in the heart of Arts @ Large's mission, this one-of-a-kind fundraiser invited participants to create and engage with art while enjoying exceptional food and cocktails.

The night began with the Creative Spirits VIP Cocktail Hour, where the visionary works of Jeff Zimpel and Nick Schilz of Create Space MKE set a vibrant tone of collaboration and artistic exploration.

As the dinner unfolded, Chef Nicolas of Antigua Latin Inspired Kitchen and Milwaukee artist Letasha Smith redefined the boundaries of art and food. With each course, Smith's artistic techniques came to life, reflected in the intricate presentation and flavors of the dishes. Guests were not just spectators — they became creators, adding their personal touch to the interactive art-infused courses.

A sold-out crowd filled the space with energy, collectively raising over \$55,000 to support Arts @ Large's vision of making the arts accessible to all. A special thank you to The Brewers Community Foundation for serving as our Presenting Sponsor.

Building on this success, Arts @ Large is excited to expand Art vs. Food in 2025.

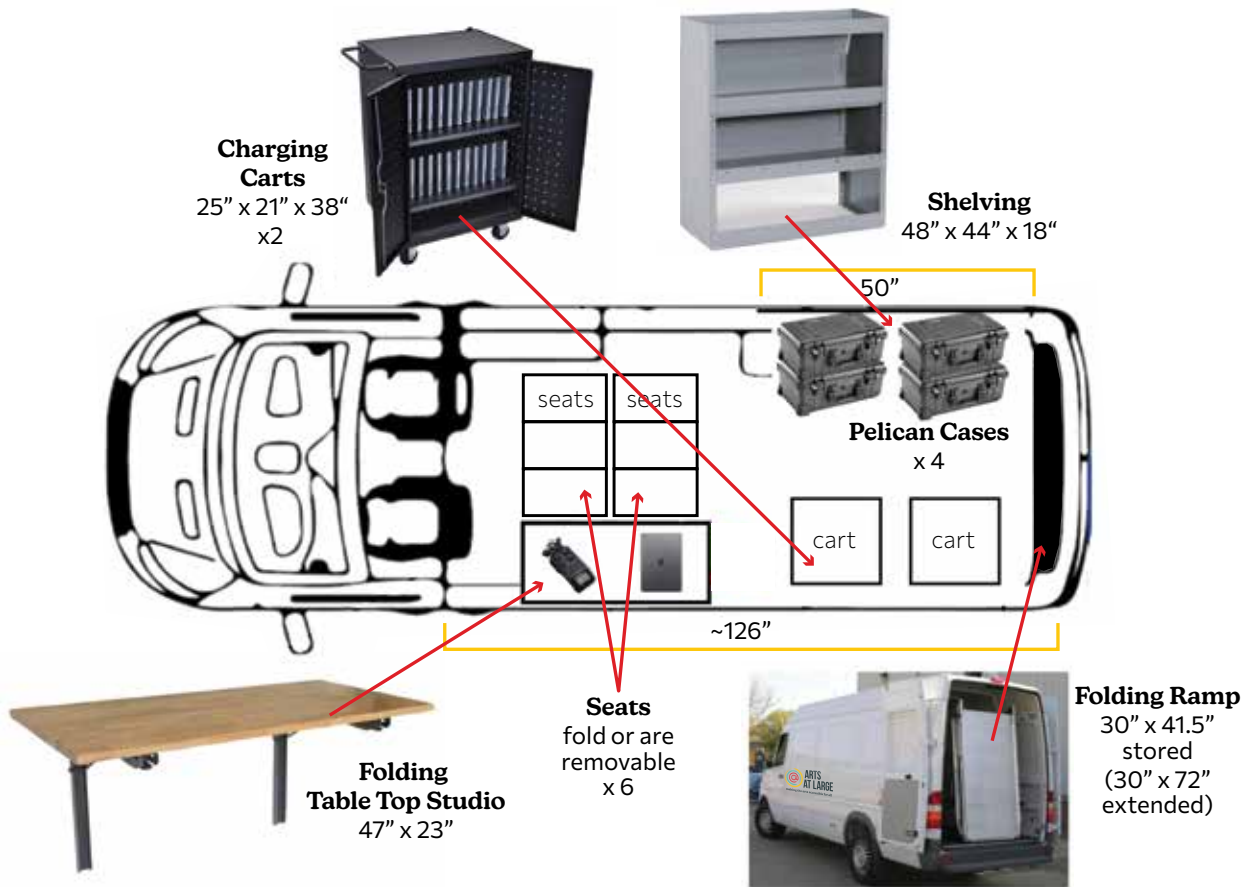
Save the Date: June 12, 2025 — more details to come!

Mobile Media Lab Coming 2025

Arts @ Large is excited to announce the Midwest’s first Mobile Media Lab, coming in 2025! The Mobile Media Lab will allow Arts @ Large to bring digital arts resources and programming directly to youth (ages 16–20) in our Career Development program and at our Milwaukee Public School sites (third to twelfth grades).

Equipped with digital art technology, including iPad Pros, portable Handheld Recorders, Mirrorless Cameras, and more, the Mobile Media Lab will take arts accessibility to the next level.

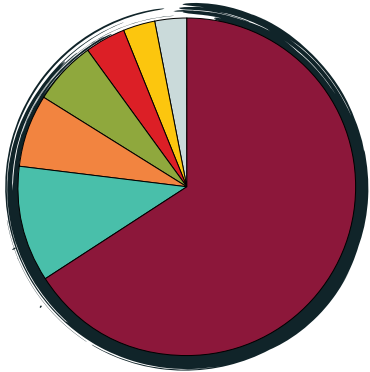
Arts @ Large is grateful for the tremendous support from lead funder Impact100 Greater Milwaukee, and additional support from Kohl’s Cares, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Robert and Toni Bader Foundation for the investments to purchase the van and equipment necessary to launch the first phase of the project next year!



Financial Overview

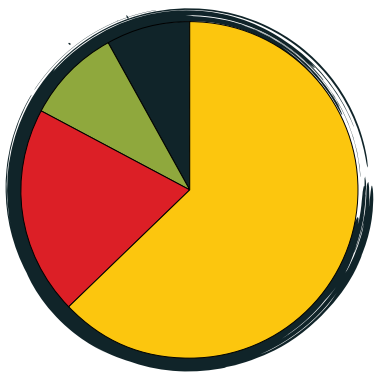
FY2023–24 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Represents all activity from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Financials reported are unaudited totals.



TOTAL INCOME: \$1,412,341

- Contracted Services – 66%
- Foundation Support – 11%
- Corporate Support – 7%
- Investment Income – 6%
- Special Events – 4%
- Individual Support – 3%
- Government Support – 3%



*TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,620,632

- Programming Expenses – 63%
- Administration Expenses – 20%
- Building Expenses – 9%
- Fundraising Expenses – 8%

*Board approved using surplus funds from the prior fiscal year for capacity-building needs this fiscal year.



I am an artist because I really enjoy sharing things and understanding others’ perspectives.

- A.I.R. Academy student





**Art room mantra:
have the courage
to be creative.**

- Artist Educator Letasha Smith



Donor Recognition

Thank you to the corporations, individuals, foundations, and generous community partners who gave gifts or made in-kind contributions to Arts @ Large from July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

\$250,000 – \$500,000

Anonymous Donor
Ruth Foundation for the Arts*

\$100,000 – \$249,999

Bader Philanthropies*
Herzfeld Foundation*

\$50,000 – \$99,999

Ascendium Cares

\$20,000 – \$49,999

Greater Milwaukee Foundation

Komatsu Mining Corp. Foundation

\$10,000 – \$19,999

Brewers Community Foundation
Charles D. Jacobus Family Foundation
Rick Hammer
Harmonic Harvest
Joy Engine
National Endowment for the Arts
Ros Foundation
U.S. Bank Foundation
Wisconsin Arts Board
Wisconsin Humanities Council

\$1,000 – \$9,999

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\$1 – \$999

3rd Street Market Hall
Tyler Abderholden
Kim and Tim Abler
Nick Abresch
Adventure Rock
Anchor Press
Marti Anderson
Anodyne Coffee Roasting Co
Cynthia Apfelbach
Vanessa Armstrong
Estela Avila
Bars and Recreation
The Bartolotta Restaurants
Reggie Baylor
Bayview Printing
Sue Berce
Betty Brinn Children's Museum
Cory Bhend
Felicia Bogdanski
Boone & Crockett
Nancy and Will Broesch
Broken Bat Brewery
Marie Therese Campos
Sue and Allan Carneol
Joel Cencius
Central Standard Craft Distillery
Cermak Fresh Market
Cynthia L Ciardo
Christin Cleaver
Lynn Cohen
Faithe Colas
Collective Flow
Scott Cook
Lee Cross
Tammy Belton Davis
Jada Davis
Paula Dehart
Terimarie Degree
David HB Drake

Ellen Drought
Stewart Edwards and Joanne Danforth
Leif Elsmo
Forward Madison FC
Nadine Galloway
Goodkind
Janet Fincher Grau
Green Bay Packers Foundation
Leslie Hauser
Kaitlin Henze
Historic Milwaukee
Gail Hodkiewicz
Barbara Holt
Hupy and Abraham, S.C.
Judy Hurley
James L. Huston
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Nancy Kasun
Randy Kiel
Marilyn King
Vivian King
Joseph Kmoch
Kelly Korek
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Brett Michaels
Milwaukee Admirals
Milwaukee Art Museum
Milwaukee City Hall
Milwaukee Food & City Tours
Milwaukee Public Museum
Mitchell Park Domes
Jeff Monk
Keyuana Moore
Cathy Nemerovski
Niche Hair Salon
Patricia Oblatz
Odd Duck
SeanJoo So Oh
Debra and Steve Ortiz
Michele Oxman
Ila Patlogan
Penny & Ivy
June Perry-Stevens
Phyllis J. Piano and Roy E. Jones
Sarah and Steven Platt
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Audrey Strnad
Brooke Sweeney
Sally Swetnam
Evelyn Patricia Terry
Thelma Carol Wine Merchants
Corina Torres
Vibez Creative Arts Space
Cadrina Williams
Rebecca Zastany Wilson
WMSE Radio
Vesile Yilmaz
Zeffy
Jeff and Kathryn Zimpel
Julie Zimpel

**denotes sum of multi-year gifts*

All efforts were made to ensure accuracy. We apologize to any individual or organization who was inadvertently omitted from this list or is incorrectly listed.



Photo credit: Jeff Zimpel
Featured Artist: Jovanny Hernandez

Board of Directors

BOARD OFFICERS

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Centers for Independence (CFI)

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Mark Soriano - *Program Manager*

Jeff Zimpel - *Artist in Residence Curator*

Front cover photo credit: Phillip Salat
Featured Artist: Marina Lee