



Annual Report

2023-2024



Arts for
Learning
Connecticut

*Affiliated with the national
Young Audiences Arts for Learning network*



“

One thing I learned about myself was that there was an ARTIST in me that I never brought out. So now I make blind bags everyday after school.”

-Student, Church Street Elementary School, Hamden



Dear friends,

It's a special joy at the end of each year to review feedback from students who participated in Arts for Learning Connecticut programs—thousands of quotes that range from the ecstatic to the everyday, all of which offer a window into the unique experience of being a young person in a school in 2024.

And as we looked back on another year of impactful arts learning programs in hundreds of schools across the state, two in particular jumped out for capturing the essence—and the enormous impact—of this work.

"I learned that I can express myself, and I like how Ms. Peterson said this is a safe place."

"A lot of my classmates have been participating more ever since you guys came to teach us."

On the road to self-expression, can there be a more important feeling to engender than a sense of safety—that most important prerequisite to being able to learn? And can there be a more enlightening observation about a program's true impact than what happens *after* the Teaching Artist leaves the classroom?

While the 2023-24 saw its fair share of challenges—namely a sector-wide shift in how nonprofits are securing both earned and contributed revenue in this post-pandemic, funding-cliff era—it was full of glimmers of what's possible if we can continue to deepen and expand our impact. And having grown our core programs, onboarded new diverse Teaching Artists, and brought onto our team experienced senior leaders who've taken our operations and business development capacity to the next level, we couldn't be more excited for what's ahead.

We remain thankful to our contributors, partners, and clients for enabling hundreds of cultural performances, creative workshops, integrated residences, and teacher professional development in classrooms and community institutions throughout Connecticut. And we hope you're as inspired as we are by the impact brought to life in the following pages.

Thank you for being a part of our story, and for continuing to stand up for students across Connecticut.

John-Michael Parker, Executive Director
Tim Glasby, Board Chair



John-Michael Parker
Executive Director



Tim Glasby
Board Chair

Mission

The **mission** of Arts for Learning Connecticut is to inspire young people and expand their learning through the arts.



Vision

Our **vision** is of a future in which all young people in Connecticut engage in quality arts learning in their schools and communities that nurtures creativity, promotes cultural awareness, and cultivates critical thinking and learning skills. We envision a future in which Arts for Learning CT and our artists, partners, and supporters work in strategic partnerships to reach shared goals for young people and our state.



Values

At Arts for Learning Connecticut, we **value**:



The inherent power of creativity and authentic self-expression



The evolving tradition of teaching and learning



The strength of respectful partnership and creative collaboration



The capacity for all young people to learn and grow



The imperative for diversity, equity, and inclusion across race, gender, ethnicity, ability, and sexuality



The essential need for the arts, humanities, and the broad expression of culture



Wonder, imagination, and the magic of childhood



Integrity, respect, and professionalism



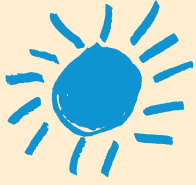
Leadership and accountability





Impact Highlights

By the Numbers



Programs
1,712



Families served
2,191



Educators served
4,288



Unique
students served
65,446



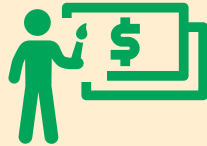
Student contact
hours provided
133,390



Partner institutions
184



Teaching Artists
94



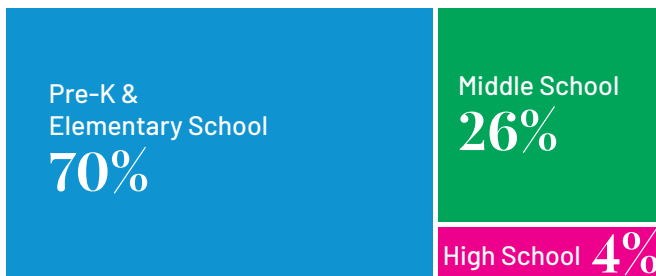
Collective artist
earnings
\$639,518



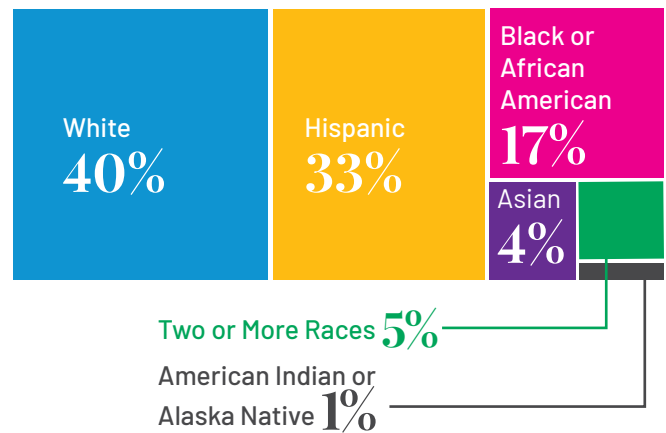
Dollars raised to
underwrite programs
for schools and
communities
\$634,130

Our Students

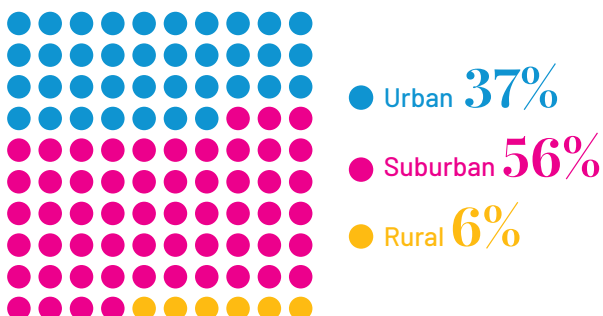
AGE



RACE/ETHNICITY



COMMUNITY



57% of students served were eligible
for Free or Reduced Price Lunch



12% of students served had a
Disability



What is arts in education?

2023-24 Programming by Art Form



27%
Dance & Movement



22%
Visual Art



18%
Theatre



16%
Music



15%
Literary Arts &
Storytelling



2%
Digital Media &
Technology

Arts in education, sometimes referred to as “arts learning”, is an approach to teaching and learning that utilizes creativity, imagination, and artistic exploration to support student outcomes.

At **Arts for Learning Connecticut**, we do this through talented individuals and ensembles with deep experience and professional training: Teaching Artists.

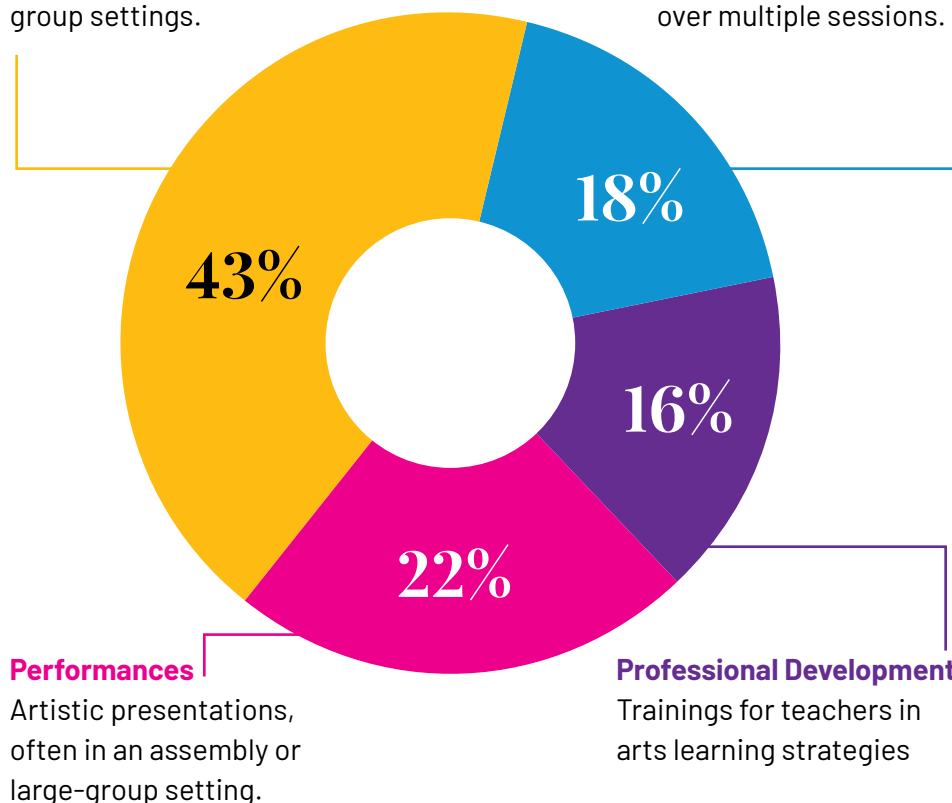
Our arts learning programs fall into four categories:

Arts Workshops

Individual creative classes or experiences with significant Teaching Artist – student interaction, often in smaller-group settings.

Residencies

Extended arts learning series in which the same students work with the same Teaching Artist(s) over multiple sessions.



Performances

Artistic presentations, often in an assembly or large-group setting.

Professional Development

Trainings for teachers in arts learning strategies



“

Emerge made impressive strides in its second year! We increased in-person training time, had mentors more actively involved in sessions, and added a third student teaching opportunity. These changes led to even better results during student teaching. With stronger relationships and more chances to practice lessons, feedback was given and applied immediately, leading to significant improvements.”

—Alex Novak Foster, Education Manager

“

My experience in the program has been unique. Having worked with youth for a long time, I'd never encountered a program that gave someone like me the chance to showcase my talents on a larger scale. From attending the in-person training sessions to being a TA for a day and meeting new people, the experiences have been eye-opening. They've provided a fresh perspective on my life and career path, and I'm left feeling hopeful and inspired. It's been an amazing experience!”

—Cody Norris, Emerge participant

Emerge

Having a team of highly-skilled, diverse, and culturally responsive Teaching Artists is critical to our ability to serve Connecticut's students. In 2023, in order to pursue this goal, AFLCT developed **“Emerge”**, a training and mentorship program to support emerging Teaching Artists from underrepresented communities in developing the skills and experiences to work as professional TAs in educational settings. With a successful pilot cohort behind us, we were thrilled this past year to expand the program!

Continuing our partnership with Conte West Hills Middle School in New Haven and “The Hub”, a program of the nonprofit Oddfellows Playhouse that supports CT's Teaching Artist community, Emerge trained and graduated 10 Teaching Artists this past year who can now use their unique voices and stories to serve young people across the state.

This second year of Emerge was made possible with the support of the City of New Haven's Creative Arts Advancement grant, as well as the International Association of New Haven and the Young Audiences' Affiliate Development Fund.

Higher Order Thinking Schools

HOT Schools is a whole-school, deep impact, teaching and learning program grounded in Social and Emotional Learning, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Multiple Intelligences Theory that utilizes Teaching Artists to provide professional development, arts-integrated residencies, workshops, and performances in K-12 schools across the state.

This past year saw the expansion of our program yet again with two new partner schools: ACES Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School in Hamden and Wolfpit Integrated Arts School in Norwalk. It also saw the completion of the second annual HOT Schools Annual Impact Report; led by our research partner, Elizabeth Osche of PERG Learning, it underscores AFLCT's rigorous approach to educational impact through the arts.

According to the report: "The review of extensive formative and summative data confirms that the three main goals of HOT Schools—to improve student engagement, enrich school culture, and expand teacher practice—have been met in the 2024 academic year across the ten HOT Schools partner schools. Moreover, it is clear that the core programmatic elements have been implemented with fidelity and creative vigor, and that HOT Schools effectively supported Social and Emotional Learning and Culturally Responsive Teaching for the students, Teaching Artists, and educators who participated in the program."



This year, Higher Order Thinking Schools celebrates 30 years of Arts Integrated Teaching & Learning! Established in 1994, HOT Schools continues to embrace joy and creative collaboration to raise the bar for student engagement and educational practice throughout Connecticut. Every student is our most important teacher. Every teacher is our most important student. Every Teaching Artist offers a way!"

—Christopher Eaves, Director, HOT Schools

2023-24 Impact

During the 2023-24 school year we made continued progress toward the three HOT Schools outcomes, as evidenced by our expansive Research & Evaluation protocol, which includes: formative evaluation research throughout the year; end-of-year surveys of students, teachers and school leaders; and focus group interviews.



OUTCOME 1: Improve student engagement

89% of students surveyed (n = 943) agreed they participated often in school this year, and 87% agreed their participation mattered.

97% of teachers surveyed (n = 188) agreed their students' creative expression was supported, and 88% agreed their student's Social and Emotional Learning (self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills) was supported.

100% of school administrators surveyed (n = 16) agreed their students were actively engaged in their learning.



OUTCOME 2: Enrich school culture

94% of school leaders surveyed agreed there was an increase in a sense of connection and/or belonging among their school community.

82% of students surveyed agreed they had the opportunity to express themselves creatively, and 91% agreed they better understand their classmates after participating in the program.

School leaders shared:
"I learned that we could stick together in the face of adversity. I also learned how integral engagement in the arts is to this connectedness," and "The Teaching Artists always bring in the light when it seems sometimes, so dark."



OUTCOME 3: Expand teacher practice

85% of teachers surveyed agreed they learned new strategies, skills, and/or ideas that they used in their teaching.

97% of teachers surveyed after Professional Development sessions (n = 670) agreed the PD encouraged creativity in teaching and learning.

A Teaching Artist shared:
"I truly leave these Professional Development sessions completely jazzed as I can uplift my Teaching Artistry again and again. It is fantastic to be able to bounce ideas off of colleagues and hear what they are doing as well, reinforcing what I am already doing in the classroom. I just could not be more grateful as I leave feeling like a superhero."



The value of arts in the classroom cannot be underestimated. Nurturing students' talents in all areas not only rounds out the individual; moreover, it builds community and promotes Social Emotional well-being. With each well thought out activity and performance we develop a truer respect and appreciation."

- Teacher, Concord Magnet School, Norwalk



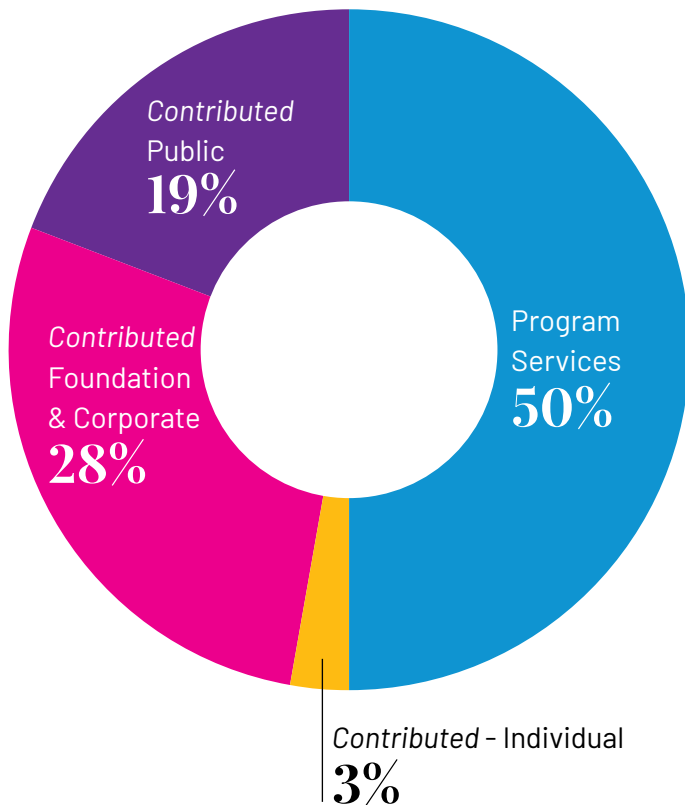
"These students are capable of amazing writing when addressing topics that truly interest them. They were fascinated with the superhero genre and went above and beyond with their efforts. I also learned that many students were able to overcome shyness and present in a group setting."

- Teacher, Harding High School, Bridgeport

Financials

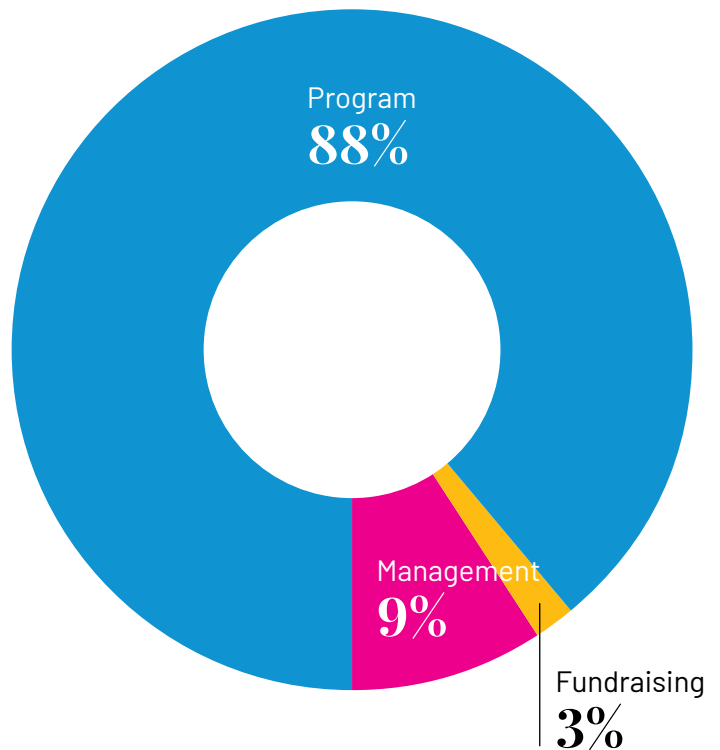
Income

Total Income = \$1,333,097



Expenses

Total Expenses = \$1,383,941



Funders

Thank you to our generous funders!

Individuals

Andrea Aron
Anne Witkavitch
Antonia Baroga
Brett Thompson
Bruce and Lori Skyer
Carol Bailey and Laurie Desmet
Chris LoPresti
Christine Owens Morgan
Christine Whitten
Clara Parker
Craig Norton
Daniel Fitzmaurice
Edie Reichard
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Monica Peterson
Nancy Leckerling
Nicole Gamache
Pamela Matocha
Paul Kessinger
Peggy and David Lyons
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Ruth Johnson
Sal Anastasio
Samantha Taylor
Sean Hutchinson
Shari Abelson
Simone and Clay Howe
Sumit Mondaiyka
Susan Cayer and Robert Stout
Susan Glantz
Susan Goodell
Tekowa Omara-Ottunu
Tiffany Caouette
Tim Glasby

Foundations, Public, & Corporate

Ahearn Family Foundation
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Community Foundation for Greater New Haven

Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut
Community Foundation of Middlesex County
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New Alliance Foundation
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Bank of Manchester Charitable Foundation
Ridgeway Foundation
Scripps Family Fund for Education and the Arts
The Albert Wadsworth and Helen Clark Meserve Memorial Fund
Town Fair Tire Foundation
Travelers
William T. Sloper Trust for Andrew J. Sloper Musical Fund
Webster Bank

Volunteers

We are thankful for the many individuals who donated their time and professional expertise this past year in the pursuit of our mission to inspire young people and expand their learning through the arts.

We would also like to thank the members of our Teaching Artist Council, an advisory group of volunteers who offer support to our organization and to our entire Teaching Artist roster, including: Masem Enyong (Chair), Alicia Cobb, Andrea Aron, Anthony DePoto, Craig Norton, Doe Boyle, Kimberly Van Aelst, L'Ana Burton, Nate Barnes, Rachna Agrawal, and Susan Striker.

Board & Staff

Arts for Learning Connecticut's **staff** includes:

- Loraine Brown, Program Manager
- Christopher Eaves, Higher Order Thinking Schools Director
- Alex Novak Foster, Education Manager
- Jed Kornbluh, Director of Business Development
- Josephine Kuever, Director of Operations
- John-Michael Parker, Executive Director
- Kim Renee Thibodeau, Higher Order Thinking Schools Program Manager

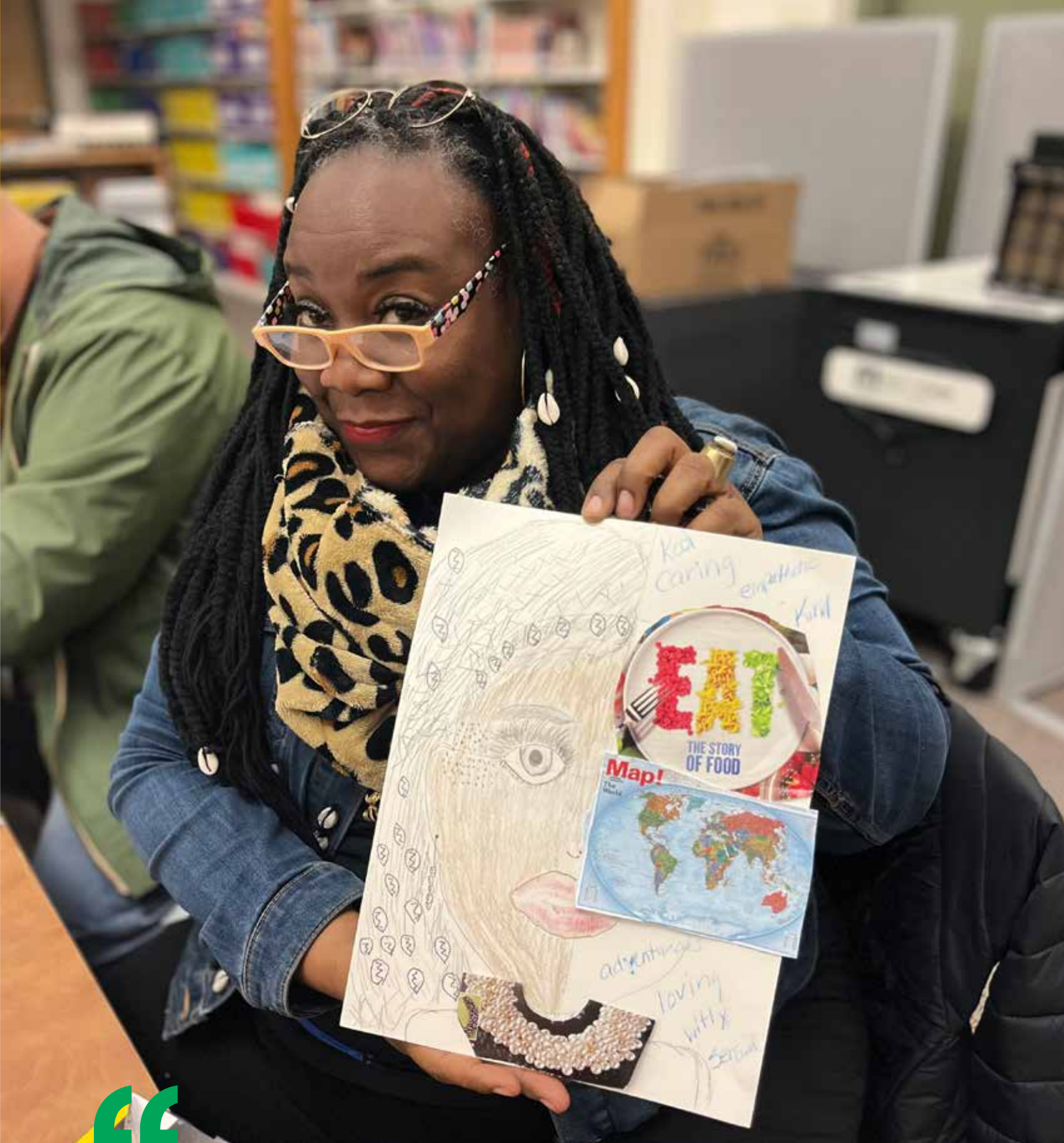
Our bookkeeper is Antonia Baroga.

Arts for Learning Connecticut's **board** includes:

- Tim Glasby, Chair
- Megan Dawson Topliff, Vice Chair
- Eric Yee, Treasurer
- Christine Morgan, Secretary
- Tiffany Caouette
- Stephanye Clarke
- Robert Duffus
- Nicole Gamache
- Jesse Imse
- Jerry Lambrinos
- Sumit Mondaiyka
- Heather Renwick
- Samantha Taylor

Arts for Learning Connecticut is an affiliate of the National Young Audiences Arts for Learning Network.





I leave this residency with the sense of strong connection from building something as a team and how much I adore working with colleagues and appreciate the work of the teachers to guide these students."

-Teaching Artist



**Arts for Learning
Connecticut**

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