



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2014-2015

# Dear Friends,

Thank you for such an amazing year!

When I walk into work at the Center for Creative Action each morning, I am reminded of a moment at a diner in Brooklyn. I was still in graduate school and a friend and I were talking about our life goals. On a coffee-stained placemat, I drew an odd triangular building nestled between some trees. In this space I imagined youth arts programs, camps, after school classes, and even a community garden. Looking back, I could not have conceived that I would one day walk into this beautiful community arts center built by the generous people in my hometown.

This past year, we expanded our reach simply by having a new home. From camps, classes, and programs for infants, teens, and elders to lively, free community events, the Center for Creative Action has become a hub for artistic expression. Color Squad, our visual arts program for teens, researched, designed and helped construct a meaningful mural about the history of the Chestnut neighborhood. We also started a new Teen Program, Youth Cinema Collective. This group of students, ages 14-19, produce original films and learn film history and theory with help from a partnership with Alamo Drafthouse.

Many of you know that Creative Action serves students across many school districts in the Austin area. One of the districts we have historically served is Del Valle Independent School District. Last year, the district lost funding for their after school programs. In an effort to continue these programs in a much needed area, Creative Action spearheaded the acquisition of a \$840,000, three-year grant with the City of Austin. By securing this grant, we are continuing programming for thousands of students in every school each day across the entire district.

Our success through the year continued with our program at Campbell Elementary. This AISD school is located near the Center for Creative Action and we knew we wanted to be a vital part of the neighborhood. Campbell has struggled with low enrollment and test scores, but has an extremely dedicated group of teachers and administrators. With their support, we created an intensive program of our In the Classroom performances, Artists in Residency for additional at-school instruction, and After School enrichment. We plan to expand our involvement with Campbell by offering thousands of programming hours each year.

We know that through creative youth development, our students develop the essential skills for academic, social and professional success. I encourage you to take a look at our program assessments from last year. None of this success would be possible without your continued support!

With love and gratitude,  
Karen LaShelle, Executive Director



# OUR IMPACT



## In the CLASSROOM

**85%** of students were more likely to **SPEAK UP** if they saw **BULLYING**

**89%** of teachers saw increased **EMPATHY** or **COMPASSION** toward victims of bullying

**100%** of teachers felt students were better equipped to **IDENTIFY BULLYING SITUATIONS**

**47% Decrease** in teachers seeing students confront problems in a violent or aggressive manner



**80% ↑**  
**ENTHUSIASM FOR READING**

**96%** of teachers saw an increased interest in issues of **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**92%** of teachers saw students viewing themselves as **AGENTS OF CHANGE**

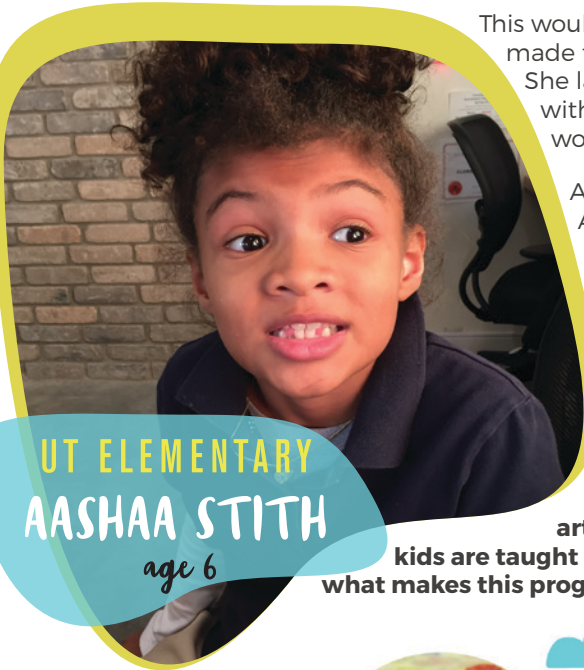
**86%** of **STUDENTS FELT MORE CONFIDENT** as activists after participating in the program



# OUR STUDENTS

## Aashaa

entered kindergarten and her mother, Deborah, was worried for her. Of course, any parent worries before their child embarks on the journey through K-12 and beyond, but this was different. When she was two years old, doctors diagnosed Aashaa with a life-threatening illness; as a condition of treatment, she had to be isolated for 18 months.



UT ELEMENTARY  
**AASHAA STITH**  
age 6

This would be a long time for anyone to spend apart from peers, but to someone so young it made for a substantial gap in her social development that became evident in the classroom. She lagged behind other students socially and her daycare teachers described her as withdrawn. "When I first came to Creative Action, I wondered who I would meet there or if I would have friends," Aashaa recalls.

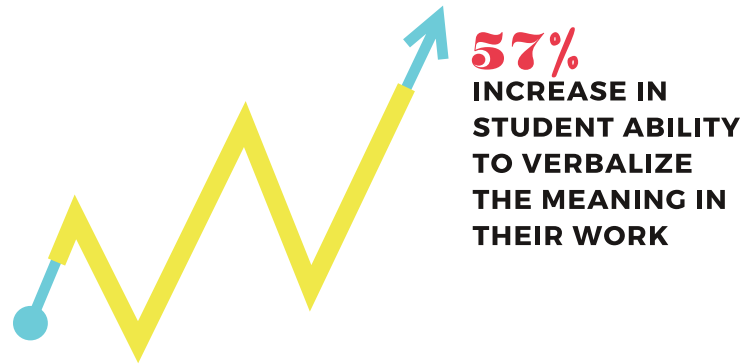
As she learned all about the 4C's and engaged in everything from dance to visual art, Aashaa started to bloom. Her mother was floored: **"By mid year, she was a different child. When I came to pick her up each day she'd proudly show me her new sculpture or the puppet she made. I can't really express the joy it brought me."**

"I learned how to not be shy when new people come in," Aashaa says, reflecting on her time with Creative Action After School. "I would tell people coming to after school to not be afraid to meet new friends. My favorite thing was when we made fruit out of paper maché and then painted it after we read a story about Cesar Chavez."

After both Aashaa and her sister attended the program, Deborah expressed, **"I love how Creative Action's After School program exposes my kids to a broad range of artistic outlets from theater to African drumming and dance. I love the fact that my kids are taught by working artists. But the emphasis on emotional development and community is what makes this program so special."**

## After School Students

- 89%** DEVELOPED CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS
- 78%** IMPROVED AS ARTISTS
- 67%** BETTER EXPRESSED IDEAS AND FEELINGS



## Mark

initially signed up for Creative Action's "Lights, Camera, Action!" After School program on little more than impulse. A musician, three-sport athlete, and big brother to three siblings, Mark was more comfortable in athletic shoes than a director's chair. "I didn't know that you didn't have to pick more than one afterschool class, so I tried to do everything. On Wednesdays I went to 'Lights, Camera, Action!', which was a whole new experience for me." Two years later, Mark is now 13 and nearing the end of 8th grade as the de facto leader of Creative Action's Del Valle Middle School film cohort. He leads by example—not only with versatile technical skills, but with an openness to help his peers and make connections outside of their collective comfort zone.



Del Valle MS  
**MARK BARBOSA**  
age 13

In 2015, the Del Valle LCA! team attended the Youth Arts Festival to premiere a film they'd labored on all year. "My first year I went, I didn't really talk to anybody except the people I knew," Mark recalls. "And this year...**I'm a different person now. I'm just trying to get everybody pumped up. And I knew that West Ridge [Middle School, Eanes Independent School District] was way different from Del Valle. A whole different type of place. And so I decided, 'I'm going to try to make friends with these people.'**" Bringing youth together from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds is at the heart of all of Creative Action's programs. Youth Arts Festival culminates the year and gives teens from all of our middle school and high school programs a chance to meet and discuss their work.

Mark sought out the West Ridge filmmakers and introduced himself to a girl named Isabelle. From then on, an unbreakable bond formed and spread. "I brought in my whole group of Del Valle students, and Isabelle had her whole group of West Ridge kids, and we all just combined and made one huge filmmaking group, and we all got along really well. And I thought, 'Man, I just introduced a whole bunch of people to a whole new variety of people.' And before we left we decided, 'Now we're 'West Valle!'"

This moment didn't surprise Mark's instructor, Marcelo Téson. "He has the confidence and self-image that lets him be who he is instead of who others want him to be. He was the first person off the bus looking to make friends with the West Ridge students, and these are two groups who would otherwise have nothing to do with each other. Mark made that happen."

Now on the cusp of moving on to high school, Mark reflects on how he's grown up in a short time alongside Creative Action. **"If it wasn't for Creative Action, I definitely wouldn't be here. I wouldn't be the same person I am today. I'm more social than I was back in 6th grade; I think I've turned into a completely different person."**

## Teen PROGRAMS

**96%** INCREASED ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

**95%** LEARNED NEW SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

**86%** BETTER COMMUNICATION OF IDEAS



**2400+**  
STUDENTS REACHED THROUGH  
PEER THEATRE

# OUR FINANCIALS

At Creative Action, we work diligently to make certain your donation goes far to ensure all children have access to creative youth development in our community. In addition to a strong base of support, our programs operate on a highly sustainable funding model that utilizes earned revenue from school district contracts and a small number of fee-based programs to provide no-cost programming to youth in low-income communities throughout Central Texas. For example, 80% of our After School students attend for free or at a reduced cost.



## REVENUES

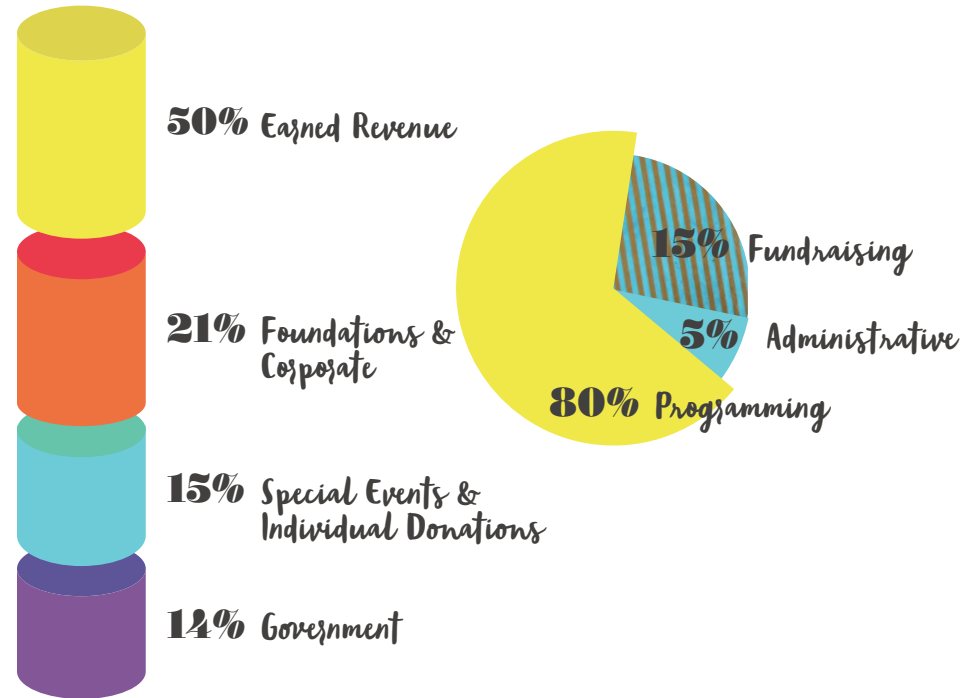
Programs	\$1,294,168
Grants	\$665,728
Capital Campaign	\$285,501
Donations	\$116,567
Special Events	\$238,585
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$2,600,549</b>

## EXPENSES

Programming	\$1,851,361
Fundraising	\$359,392
Management and General	\$122,038
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,332,791</b>

## NET ASSETS

Beginning of Year	\$2,473,072
End of Year	\$2,740,830



# OUR DONORS

## Creators (\$500-\$999)

Linda Averett  
 Baptist Community Ministries  
 Paul & Maryann Bell  
 Scott & Desiree Brutocao  
 Kate Burns  
 Grant & Khaki Christopher  
 Corazon Urban MF-East, L.P.  
 Lynne Dobson  
 Paul & Jessica D'Arcy  
 Stan & Rhonda Erwin  
 Hallie Eubanks  
 Quen Garza  
 Pamela LaShelle  
 Suzie Matzorkis  
 Marcus William May  
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 Duff & Liz Stewart  
 Ashley Stiegler  
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 Thread Fair Fashion Show  
 Teal & Karly Tuckness  
 The Vintage Round Top  
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## Sparklers (\$1,000-\$4,999)

Devin Armstrong  
 Audrey Kelly  
 Austin Foundation for Architecture  
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 Jonathan Buten  
 Brandon Cason  
 Warren Chirhart  
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 Seton Healthcare Family  
 David Smith  
 Tammy Stanley  
 Skyler Stewart  
 Robert & Mary Lynn Swayze  
 SXSW Community Fund  
 Justin Yarborough

## Heroes (\$5,000-\$9,999)

3M  
 Alamo Drafthouse Cinemas  
 Aviles Family Charitable Fund  
 Kevin & Paula Burns  
 Carl C. and Mary Jo Anderson Foundation  
 Hotel Ella  
 Richard & Susan Marcus  
 Matthew & Catherine O'Hayer  
 Pacey Family Foundation  
 Rich & Anne Smalling  
 The Tecumseh Foundation  
 Texas Capital Bank  
 Urbanspace  
 Webber Family Foundation  
 Wright Family Foundation

## Builders (\$10,000-\$24,999)

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 Anonymous  
 Applied Materials Foundation  
 Austin Community Foundation  
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 Campbell Foundation  
 Catto Charitable Foundation  
 James McDermott  
 John McHale & Chris Mattson  
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 Texas Commission on the Arts  
 United Way for Greater Austin  
 Mitchell & Johanna Vernick  
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 Howard & Mary Yancy

## Leaders (\$25,000-\$49,999)

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 Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
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 Dirk & Laurie Gosda  
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 Topfer Family Foundation

## Sustainers (\$50,000-\$99,999)

Brown Foundation  
 I.A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation  
 Meinig Family Foundation  
 Still Water Foundation

## Dream Makers (\$100,000+)

Buena Vista Foundation  
 City of Austin Cultural Arts Division  
 City of Austin, Department of Health & Human Services

\*Donors \$500+ included in Creative Action's last fiscal year



*The mission of Creative Action is to spark and support the academic, social and emotional development of young people.*

Through interactive classroom performances, after school arts residencies and community-based programs, Creative Action's team of professional Teaching Artists inspire youth to be Creative Artists, Courageous Allies, Critical Thinkers, and Confident Leaders in their community.

By discovering their own voice, gaining confidence in sharing their perspective, wrestling with big ideas, and deeply engaging in the world around them, youth become better prepared to work through social, emotional and academic challenges to become the next great thinkers, doers and makers.

We envision a more just, caring, joyful and compassionate world. When youth build meaningful connections with peers and positive adult role models and holistically develop their creativity, compassion, confidence and critical thinking skills, they are better equipped for success as adults who contribute to making the world a better place.



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