



BUFFALO STRING WORKS

2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

Dear Buffalo String Works family,

BSW celebrates a tremendous number of milestones as we come to the conclusion of our 9th year of operations. In this past year alone, we have nearly doubled the number of students served in our programs thanks to the success of our program partnerships at NativityMiguel Middle School and Charter School of Inquiry. These two new program sites brought BSW's magic into East Buffalo communities where we met and served a new student population and their families. We are eternally grateful to our school based partners who have welcomed us with open arms and are eager to continue growing our program partnership work, meeting the needs of communities throughout Buffalo where they are.

The start of 2023 also signified the beginning of our inaugural executive leadership transition. Co-founder and longtime Executive Director Yuki Numata Resnick stepped down from her position in March 2023. We welcomed Interim Executive Director Maria Ta to the team, who would continue to steer the ship as the board and staff began searching for the permanent Executive Director while maintaining our high-quality programming. The staff and faculty at BSW have upheld their fervent commitment to our students and families which culminated in our largest Spring Benefit Concert to date. On a beautiful June evening we got to celebrate our 160 BSW students on the same stage. We heard from our newest to our oldest students and witnessed not one but two world premiere pieces derived directly from our community! It was an incredibly proud moment that signifies where BSW is heading as we look ahead to our 10th anniversary year.

Gratitude cannot begin to encapsulate our depth of feelings about the moment our organization finds itself in. It is thanks to our students, our families, our faculty, our staff, our board members and you all, our BSW family, that we continue to thrive and grow. Our mission to **ignite personal and community leadership through accessible, youth-centered music education** remains the bedrock of our work and we are just beginning to see the true impact your investment and belief in BSW have brought. We hope you will continue the journey with us, as we enter a huge milestone year, looking on with pride while we see our vision of **neighborhoods united by empowered musicians** come to life.

With gratitude,
James Sampson, Board President and Maria Ta, Interim Executive Director



A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "James M. Sampson".



A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Maria Ta".

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

In the Fall of 2021, with the guidance of board members, staff, students, families and our community stakeholders, we concluded and approved a new strategic plan. Building on our culture we established a bold mission and compelling vision with concise strategies to inform our work. I am proud to report that the plan influenced us in anticipated and unanticipated ways this past program year.

At the beginning of 2023, Yuki Numata Resnick, our co-founder and Executive Director, let us know that she would be leaving to accept a position with the Community Foundation. She worked with us over the next three months as we searched for a transition to new leadership. **The Oishei Foundation, with the help of Esther Annan and Mark Scott, supported this work.** We will be forever grateful that Maria Ta agreed to assume the Interim Executive Director role. After in-depth work by Linda Ray and Zhi Ting Phua, our search committee, comprised of board members, staff and community members remains hard at work seeking a permanent Executive Director. Finding Yuki's replacement has not been easy, but the strategic plan has been a guiding light and firm foundation.

As anticipated, the plan influenced our programming this past year. We developed **new partnerships with NativityMiguel Middle School and the Charter School of Inquiry and welcome Primary Hall Preparatory Charter School** to join the BSW family this upcoming program year. This past year we impacted 160 students and their families.

We also witnessed BSW's **first program for adults.** In partnership with the Community Health Centers of Buffalo, we provided programming for seniors over age 55 living in East Buffalo. This program will continue to be built out as our **Lifelong Learners program** aimed at students and community members 18+ to build upon the access points for music we wish to see throughout our city.

In June, the board revisited the **Strategic Plan.** Andi Stevenson, Board Consultant, joined the board for a day retreat as we reviewed our work and fine-tuned our strategies to finish out the plan this upcoming year.

I would also like to **recognize Brian Moseley, a founding board member,** who left the board in June at the end of his two-term limit. We welcomed **new members, Jon Dandes, Katie Naughton, and Eva Hasset.** The board looks forward to the continued growth and success of BSW as we march fearlessly into the future.

Gratefully,
James Sampson, Board President

NEW COMMUNITIES, NEW FAMILIES

Brittney Burgess, Operations Director

Beginning in Fall 2022, BSW partnered with East Buffalo schools **NativityMiguel Middle School** and **Charter School of Inquiry**. Each school welcomed us with open arms as we took on the new opportunity to work outside our Niagara St. site. We visited the boys at NativityMiguel on Mondays and Thursdays, filled with energy and hesitancy as they took on their new instruments. Over time, they **grew and started to fall into a beautiful routine**.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we visited the younger students at Charter School of Inquiry, where **every day felt like a new adventure** with the students. They were always excited to explore something new, whether in bucket drumming with Mr. Jeremiah or Violin class with Ms. Amy. My favorite part was having both schools join us at our June concert and seeing the sense of fulfillment coming from the students and their families. Working on the East side of Buffalo has been fantastic, and engaging with our new families has been effortless.

Another great aspect of partnering with these new sites is learning how we can support the families. BSW had the opportunity to collaborate with a parent-owned paint n' sip company for our annual Benefit and Spring Concert, which was an incredible experience for both staff and donors. We are thrilled to continue BSW's mission and look forward to expanding into more Buffalo communities.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: WILLIAM SEN



William Sen, an Assistant Site Manager, is a recent graduate of Buffalo String Works. He played the cello for seven years, and was a member of the BSW Student Council since its inception. As a Student Council member, William learned about task management and personal responsibility. He was also an avid participant in BSW's Music Production classes, which were offered during Summer Camp in 2022 and 2023.

William hopes to become a music producer in the future!



Click on the image above or go to <https://bit.ly/william-23> to watch William's interview with Ms. Julia!

"BUFFALO STRING WORKS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF MY LIFE, LIKE A SECOND FAMILY ALMOST. I WANNA DO EVERYTHING I CAN AND SUPPORT THAT."

DOUBLE WORLD PREMIERES: BORN FREE AND THE GREAT SHARING

Andrew Borkowski, Education Director

"The Great Sharing" and **"Born Free"** are two pieces written and arranged exclusively for our BSW community.

Over the course of the 2022-23 academic year, our Teaching Artists, staff, and faculty interviewed our families to source music that is personally and culturally relevant to them. Teaching Artist Tyler Adamthwaite then took those pieces and arranged them into **"The Great Sharing,"** a **new composition that was taught to our students at all levels.**



"Born Free" is a song written by Jerome Suah, the father of two BSW students, for his band YounKonDe. We then arranged the song for every student at BSW to play alongside the band. It was a **wonderful opportunity for our families and students to collaborate in performance,** and we hope it will be the first of many.



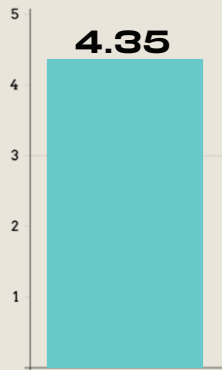
"THE GREAT SHARING WAS AN INVIGORATING PIECE TO WORK ON BECAUSE OF THE COMMUNITY FOCUS INVOLVED. WORKING DIRECTLY WITH THE FAMILIES LED TO A SOUND THAT WAS TRULY UNIQUE TO OUR COMMUNITY AT BSW."

- Tyler Adamthwaite, BSW Teaching Artist and "The Great Sharing" Composer

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

The Buffalo String Works program engages students in comprehensive music education that develops not only their music skills but also skills that are essential to their personal development. Below are the results from Spring 2023 programming that outline students' skill development, strengths and needs. Students were ranked on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) on each question below.

RESILIENCE & PERSONAL MASTERY



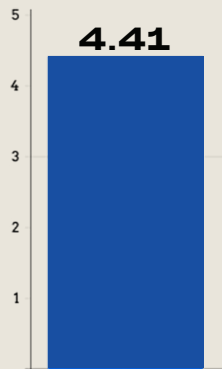
Students strive towards continuous personal growth with respect to their musical development

LEADERSHIP & HELPFULNESS



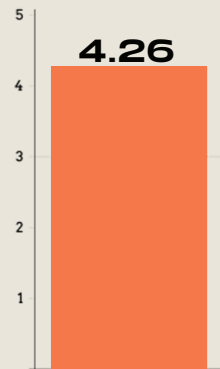
Students are helpful to others at BSW

ENGAGEMENT & CREATIVITY

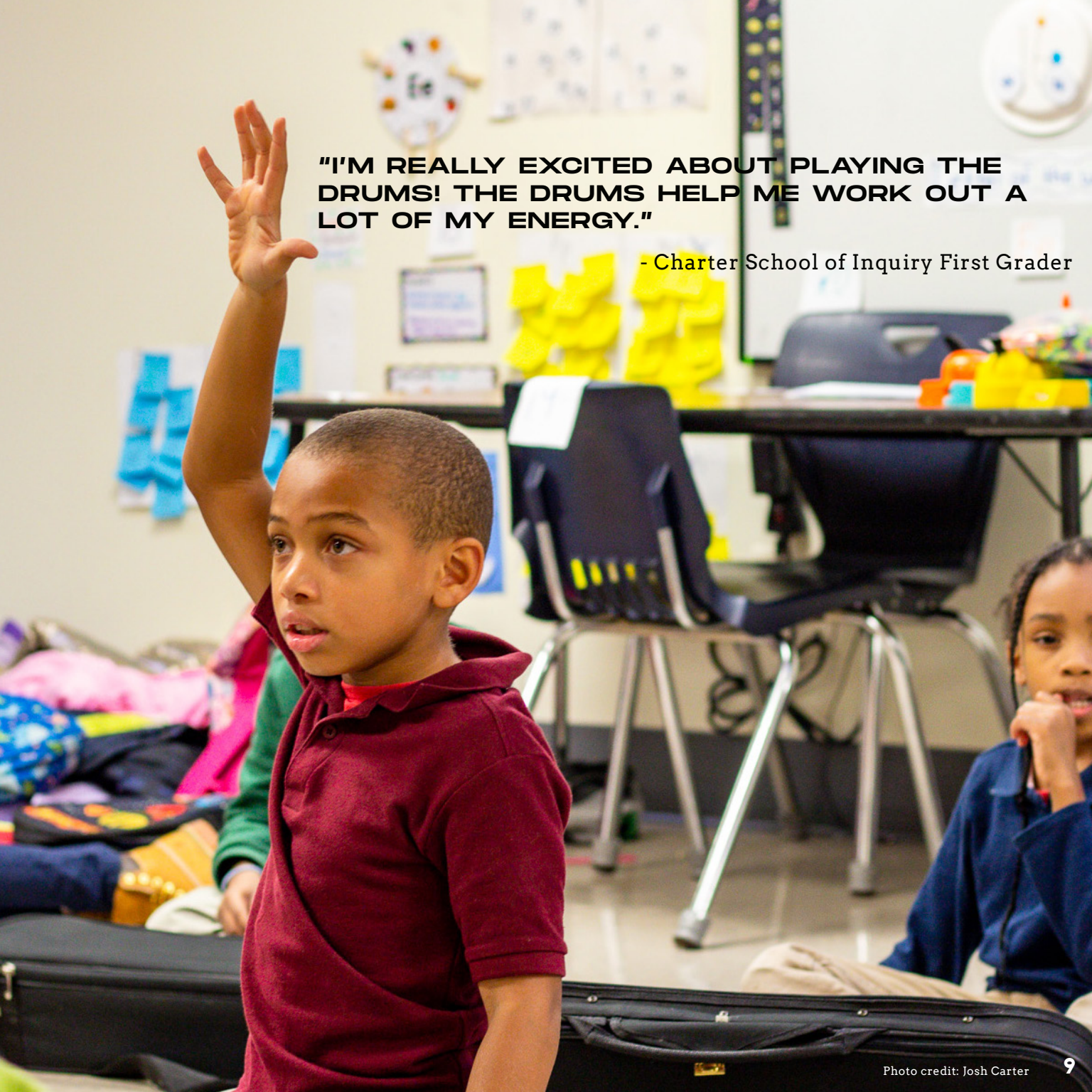


Students demonstrate active engagement during group activities

COMMUNICATION



Students demonstrate understanding through verbal and/or non-verbal cues



"I'M REALLY EXCITED ABOUT PLAYING THE DRUMS! THE DRUMS HELP ME WORK OUT A LOT OF MY ENERGY."

- Charter School of Inquiry First Grader

SOUNDS OF SUMMER CAMP

Sarah Cole, Program Manager

Summer Camp at Buffalo String Works this past summer was so much fun!

55 BSW students from all three of our program sites came together at Niagara St. for **two weeks of musical learning and fun**. Our camp began with morning classes that consisted of instrument-specific classes, large ensemble rehearsals, and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and practicing.



Each Friday, all of our students collaborated on an **in-house showcase** to demonstrate their week's work, including the sound production class, who shared the two hip-hop songs they wrote!

After lunch, students participated in a variety of activities designed to expand their knowledge of music beyond their individual instruments. These included an African drumming class for our youngest students taught by Eric Borkety, a music composition class led by Teaching Artist Tyler Adamthwaite, a sound production class for our oldest students taught by Reginald Johnson and Ahshon Haykal, and a voice class taught by Samantha Yetter.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: WHITNEY DANN, DEVELOPMENT MANAGER



BSW's Development Manager, Whitney Dann, joined the team in 2022 and wasted no time diving into the world of donor engagement and fundraising as she orchestrated the guest ticketing and VIP events for the end of year spring concert. As BSW moved into its biggest year yet in 2022-23, Whitney successfully led the organization to surpass its fundraising goal of \$984,729. She looks forward to her continued growth as a development leader and supporting the growing number of programs BSW offers.



"BUFFALO STRING WORKS HAS GROWN EXPONENTIALLY OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, AND WITH THAT COMES INCREASED FUNDRAISING GOALS. THE DEDICATION OF EVERYONE AT BSW IS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND OUR SUCCESS!"

LAUNCHING THE LIFELONG LEARNERS PROGRAM

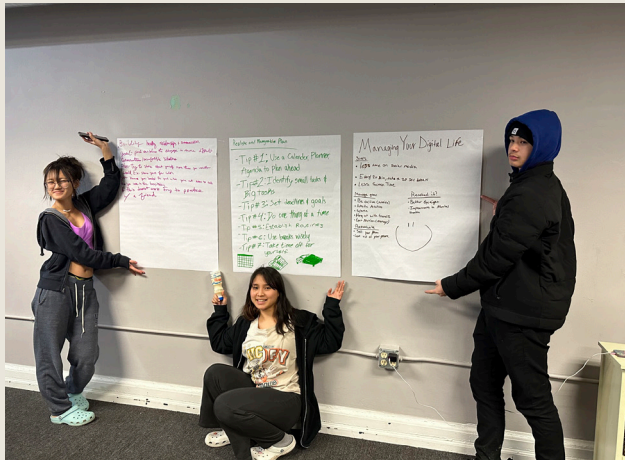
Andrew Borkowski, Education Director

Buffalo String Works' **Lifelong Learners program** was launched in April 2023 and is an exciting new entry point into the music education programs that we have to offer! In an effort to broaden the paths community members have to access music classes, the Lifelong Learners Program prioritizes students ages 18 and up, with an emphasis placed on those who have graduated from our BSW student program. We hope to expand these classes to the families of our students who have an interest in learning a musical instrument.

This year we held an 8-week summer program at the Community Health Centers of Buffalo, which provided group violin instruction to seniors aged 55+ from Buffalo's east side neighborhoods. The Lifelong Learners program is still growing and we are actively **looking for more ways to engage with our communities!**



STUDENT LEADERSHIP MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOPS



Julia Port, Student Leadership Manager

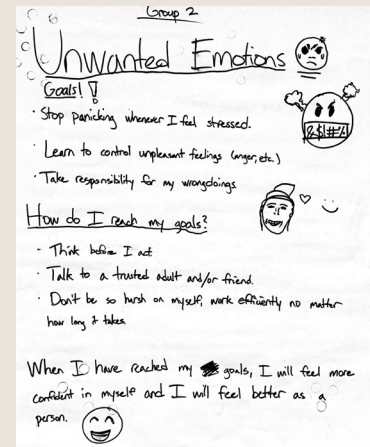
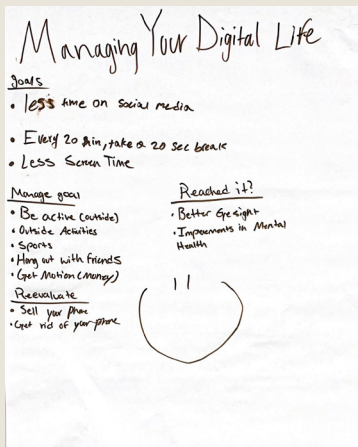
This year, BSW aimed to explore and address the mental health of our youth. Our goal is to find more opportunities to address mental health in a culturally responsive and trauma-informed way.

Last March we found an opportunity with the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) who provided curriculum for a series called the **Healing-Centered Youth Workshops**. CACF also provided funding for

stipends to students who participated in the series. The workshops **promoted racial healing and supported the mental health of AAPI youth**.

Throughout the workshops we discussed the students' family journeys from their country of origin to Buffalo, how food influences culture, managing stress, protest movements and racial equity, agency, and future goal setting (posters shown below).

Speaking about these topics with our students brought us closer to the goal of empowering our youth to be agents of social change, by understanding themselves and others.



"BSW HELPS MY KIDS TO BECOME MORE CONFIDENT IN ANYTHING THAT THEY DO AT HOME AND SCHOOL."

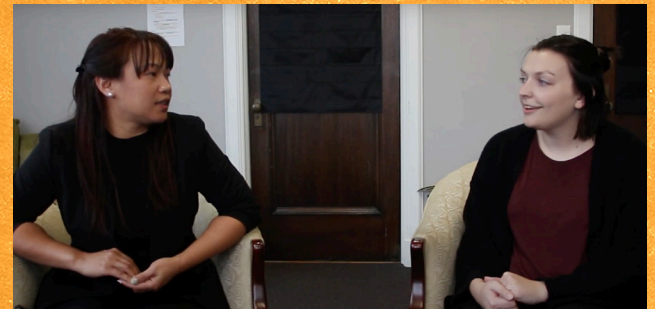
- BSW Parent



PARENT SPOTLIGHT: THUYAN CAO

Thuyan Cao is the parent of BSW violist Danial Tran. She and Danial have been part of the Buffalo String Works family since 2021.

"I LOVE HOW [DIVERSE] BUFFALO STRING WORKS [IS]. THAT MY SON GETS TO INTERACT WITH KIDS FROM ALL DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND ALL CULTURES."

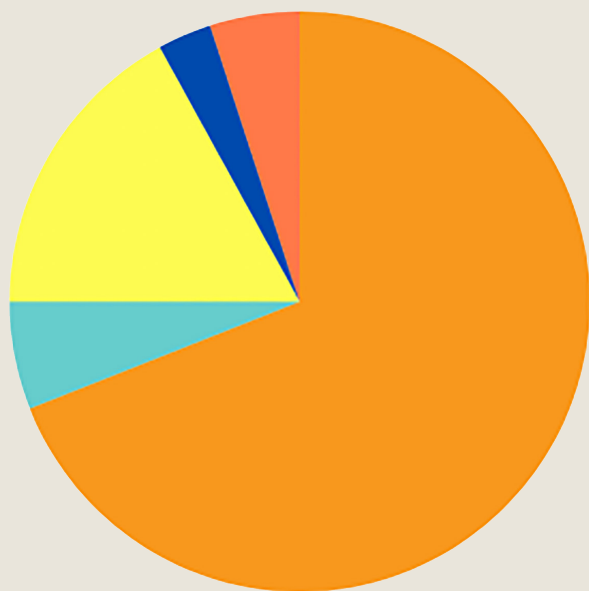


Click on the image above or go to <https://bit.ly/thuyan-23> to watch Thuyan's interview with Whitney!

"I WAS IN TEARS THE FIRST TIME I SAW MY SON PLAY THE INSTRUMENT AT THE FIRST CONCERT THAT I WENT TO. [OUR FAMILY] WAS SO PROUD OF HIM."

DATA SPOTLIGHT: 2022-23 FINANCIALS

Buffalo String Works' budget for the 2022-23 Fiscal Year was **\$969,389**—its highest yet!



WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM

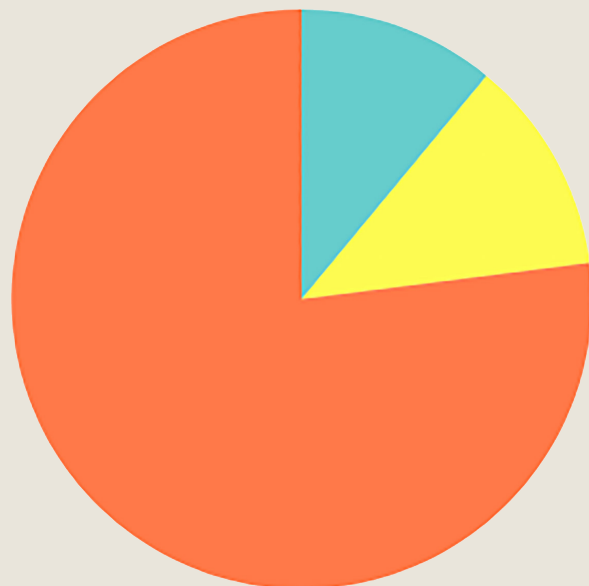
(left)

- Foundation Grants: 69%
- Government Grants: 6%
- Individual Contributions: 17%
- Community Sponsorships: 3%
- Earned Revenue: 5%

WHERE OUR MONEY GOES

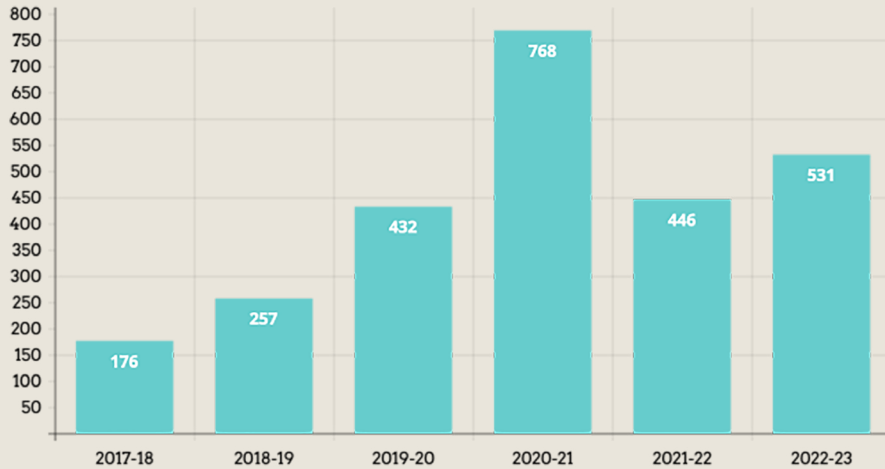
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- Admin: 11%
- Fundraising: 12%
- Program: 77%

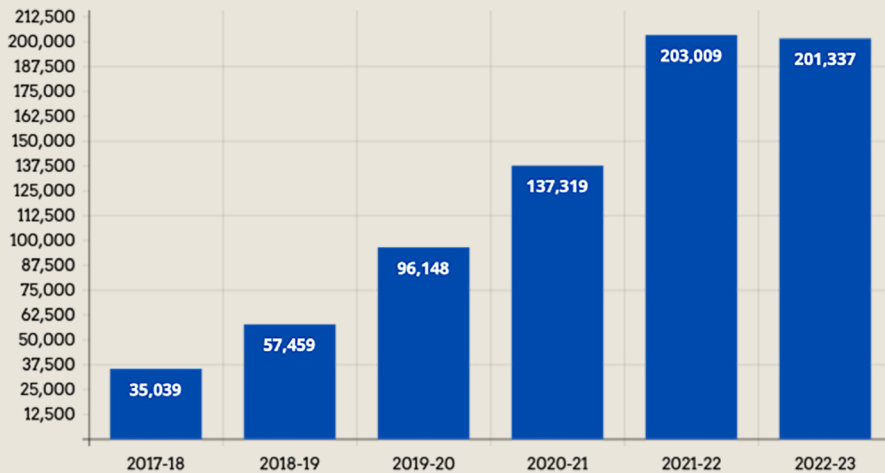


DATA SPOTLIGHT: INDIVIDUAL GIVING THROUGH THE YEARS

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL DONORS



INDIVIDUAL GIVING (\$) OVER THE YEARS



TEACHING ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: EVAN COURTIN



Evan Courtin has been teaching at Buffalo String Works since its inception in 2014.

What's it like teaching at our different sites? How are they similar/different?

Having worked at NativityMiguel, it reminds me a little of what BSW looked like at the beginning—with a notable exception being that this time, our teachers were plenty experienced going in. We worked closely with the school administrators to ensure that we were meeting the needs of the students as best we can. Personally, I have really enjoyed working at NativityMiguel because it's giving us more opportunities to serve the community.

What do you want BSW supporters to know?

I cannot recommend enough taking a site tour of BSW's Niagara St. location when the opportunity arises! While of course you will get to see the students in action (which, in my opinion, is reason enough to come), but you also get to see how the students interact with their teachers and vice versa, which really shines a light on the experience the students are getting when they walk through the door. Plus, you'll get to meet me!

FOUNDATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Due in large part to the generous contributions of our Foundation & Government grantors, Buffalo String Works continues to thrive.



RALPH C. WILSON, JR.
FOUNDATION



RICH FAMILY
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The Education Trust—New York



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Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation
Children's Foundation of Erie County
Find Your Light Foundation

Office of Councilmember David Rivera
Office of NY State Senator Sean Ryan

**OUR MISSION:
TO IGNITE PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY
LEADERSHIP THOURGH ACCESSIBLE,
YOUTH-CENTERED MUSIC EDUCATION.**



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