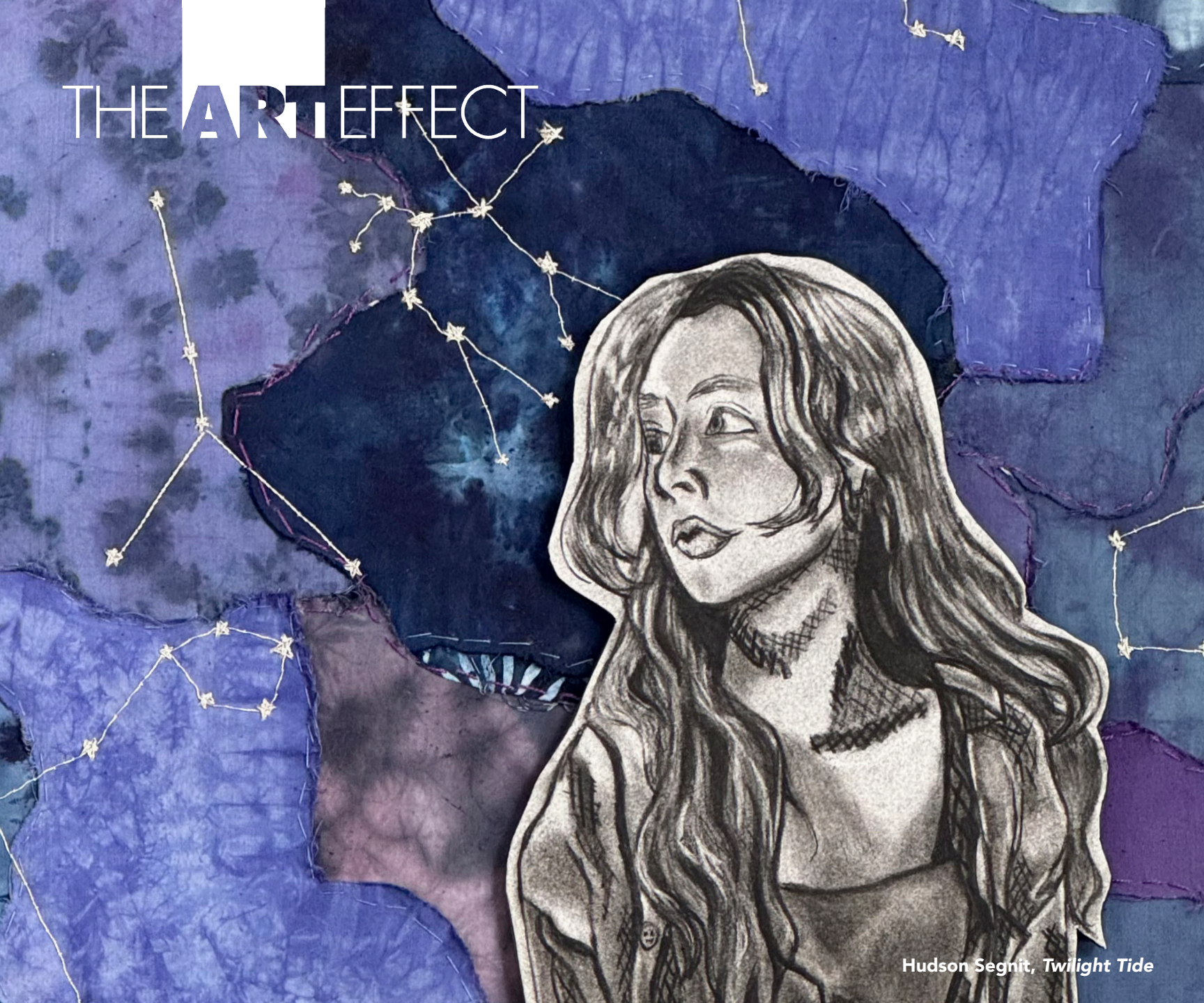


THE ART EFFECT



Hudson Segnit, *Twilight Tide*

2024 Annual Report

“The Art Effect started a passion in me that hasn’t changed since. It’s helped me everywhere I go. From YouTube to film school, and life in general,”
- Joe Garcia,
alumnus of The Art Effect

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THE ART EFFECT
empowers young people to develop their creative voice to shape their futures and bring about positive social change.



Ava Hubner, Outside the General Store

WE ARE THE ART EFFECT

As we reflect on another transformative year, we're filled with pride and gratitude for what we've accomplished together. The Art Effect's 2024 Annual Report isn't just a record of milestones, but a celebration of creativity, growth, and the incredible potential of the youth we serve.

At The Art Effect, art is more than creation, it's a journey of becoming. It's where young people find their voices, build confidence, and develop the skills to shape their futures and strengthen their communities.

Thanks to your support, over 4,000 youth participated in our arts education and workforce development programs, and more than 6,000 individuals engaged in exhibitions, events, and digital experiences.

And with your help, lives changed:

- Keima helped organize the PKX Festival, stepping into a leadership role and giving back to her community.
- Hannah was accepted on the spot to her dream school, UMass Dartmouth, at Hudson Valley Portfolio Day.
- Lamont found his voice and became a mentor while leading large-scale mural and sculpture projects in the MADLab program.

The Art Effect continued to expand access to high-quality arts programming throughout the region. We reached over 700 students in schools, distributed more than \$60,000 in Art Institute and camp scholarships, and provided 135 youth with paid work experience. Over 1,000 young artists from around the globe shared their work through our local exhibitions.

Your belief in our mission makes these moments possible. Thank you for helping young people dream big, grow boldly, and step into their futures with purpose.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to empowering the next generation of artists and change-makers.

Because at The Art Effect, art is just the beginning.

Nicole Fenichel-Hewitt
Executive Director

Shailee Johnson
Board Chair



MISSION AND IMPACT

The Art Effect helps youth explore, experience, and excel in the arts by introducing them to visual arts and media, giving them the opportunity to develop real skills in these fields, and guiding them towards achieving their academic and career goals.

– 6,603 –

Total individuals served

– 731 –

Individuals served through school partnerships, including professional development and in-school residencies

– 163 –

Portfolios created by students at The Art Effect

– 134 –

Youth employed in programming and events

– 163 –

Programs and events

– 21 –

Students placed in jobs outside of The Art Effect

– 100% –

of high school ArtsBridge seniors who applied were accepted to college

– \$60,776.75 –

in scholarships were awarded to 129 students participating in The Art Institute ensuring equal access for youth

"There's nothing that The Art Effect won't do to help you get what my child has gotten from here."

- Kenyatta Henson, Art Institute Parent



PROGRAMS

The Art Effect provides youth with a comprehensive program sequence in visual and media arts education. Programs range from introductory courses that provide immersive experiences, to intermediate programs that use art as a hands-on tool for self-discovery and life skills development, to advanced art programs that prepare youth for entrance into higher education or careers.

ARTS EDUCATION

The Art Effect's Arts Education programs empower individuals with the skills, confidence, and experiences to thrive creatively, fueling personal and professional growth, unlocking scholarship opportunities, and transforming how the arts are integrated into academic success.

- ArtsBridge
- After School Enrichment
- Art in Schools
- Hudson Valley Regional Portfolio Day
- In-School Residencies
- National Art Honor Society
- Professional Development
- Summer Art Camps
- The Art Institute

**\$1,261,776 in college scholarships
awarded to Art Institute students**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Art Effect ignites community connection through bold, youth-driven events and powerful partnerships that showcase the arts as a catalyst for change. **In 2024, these dynamic initiatives reached over 2,800 individuals,** amplifying creative voices across the region.

- Annual PKX Festival
- Arts for Justice
- Expressive Arts Workshops
- Process-based Therapeutic Art Partnerships
- Trolley Barn Gallery Exhibitions
- Youth Arts Empowerment Zone (YAEZ)



MADLab



Spark Studios

CREATIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Students gain essential skills in visual arts, curation, and media production at The Art Effect while also developing leadership, collaboration, communication, and financial literacy.

In 2024, 111 youth earned stipends or wages while receiving mentorship, building networks, and accessing real pathways to creative careers.

- Forge Media
- Media, Arts, and Design Lab (MADLab)
- Poughkeepsie Board of Artistic Youth (PK B.A.Y.)
- Spark Studios
- Youth Arts Empowerment Zone Curators

Creative Workforce programs provide local teens, 83% of whom live in the city of Poughkeepsie with paid jobs, real-world skills, and opportunities to lead through the arts.

Youth in the program report:

- **92%** reported increased confidence
- **100%** improved communication skills and felt ready to engage with employers
- **96%** made progress toward personal goals
- **96%** boosted technical skills; **52%** saw major improvement
- **96%** felt workforce-ready; **50%** now consider a creative career
- **40%** are exploring college paths in arts or media

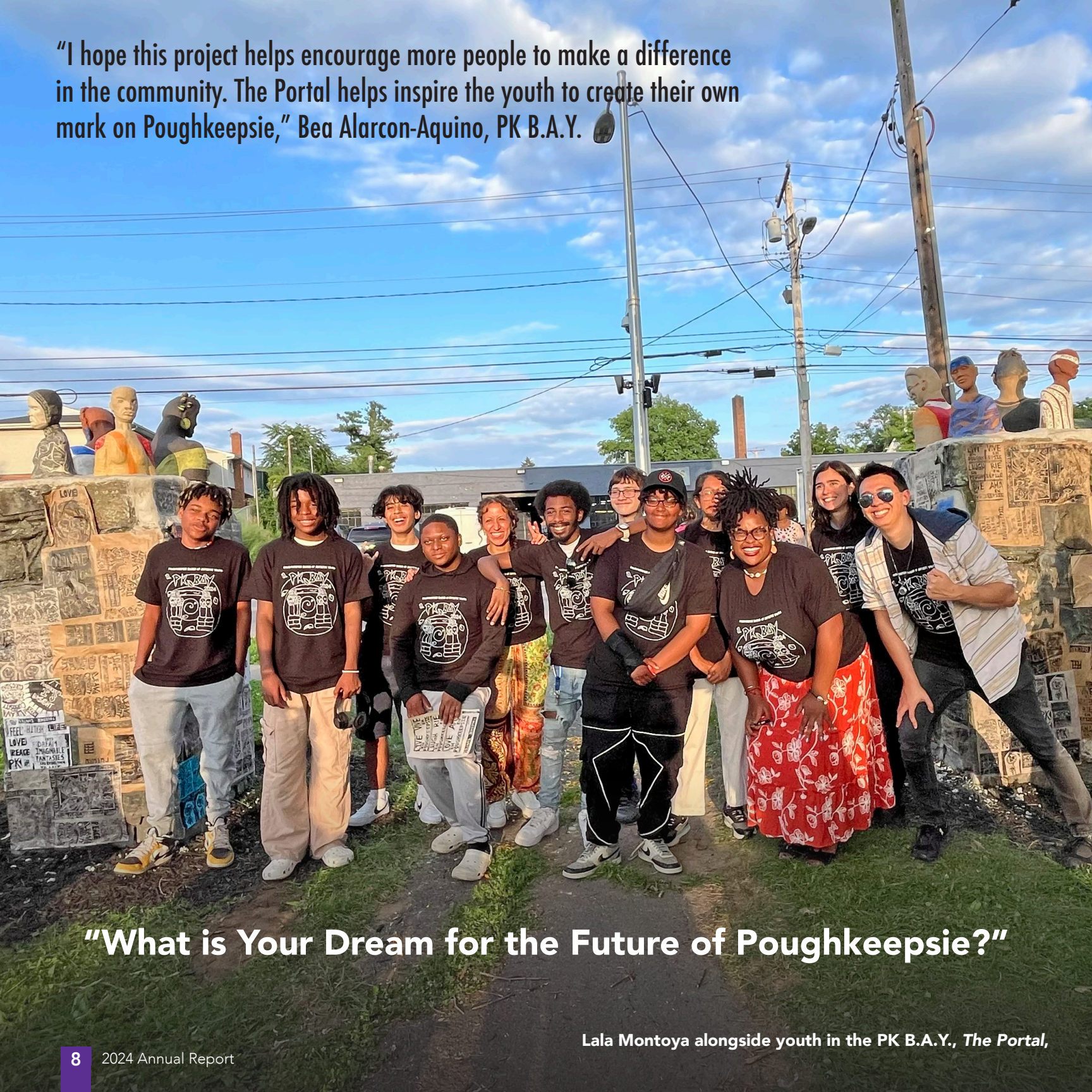


Dutchess Arts Camp



Art Institute

"I hope this project helps encourage more people to make a difference in the community. The Portal helps inspire the youth to create their own mark on Poughkeepsie," Bea Alarcon-Aquino, PK B.A.Y.



"What is Your Dream for the Future of Poughkeepsie?"

Lala Montoya alongside youth in the PK B.A.Y., *The Portal*,

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: POUGHKEEPSIE BOARD OF ARTISTIC YOUTH

The PK B.A.Y. is a bold youth-led initiative in Poughkeepsie driving civic engagement and leadership, created by a coalition of local organizations with support from the Poughkeepsie Children’s Cabinet and the Wallace Foundation. Twenty-one teens (ages 14–18) participated in the program from five out-of-school programs, including The Art Effect, Family Services, Community Matters 2, Boys & Girls Club, and Nubian Directions II.

In 2024, PK B.A.Y. launched two major projects: **a city-wide youth access survey** and ***The Portal***, a public art installation that restored unused light posts at Pulaski park creating a portal to the bright future of Poughkeepsie imagined by the youth and local artist Lala Montoya.

The youth assessment presented to the Poughkeepsie Public Arts Commission and the City School District’s Board of Education surveyed over 80 peers on the motivations and barriers on after-school program participation. Youth leaders successfully shared their findings and proposed actionable recommendations to boost engagement.

As a result of their survey, the PK B.A.Y. recommended youth- serving organizations:

- Pay participants
- Provide food
- Offer transportation
- Invest in marketing
- Diversify Programs



Scan the QR Code to Learn More about the PK B.A.Y.



Public Arts Commission Presentation

"When I was in program, I went to school more and my grades were better. Now I am not motivated"
—Youth Survey Respondant



STUDENT STORIES

KEIMA WORME

YAEZ Curator 2023, 2024
MADLab 2024

Keima has made a lasting impact through her role as a YAEZ Liaison with The Art Effect. She contributed to the branding and design of the PKX: Droppin' Jewels festival this year, including the official logo and event layout. Keima also co-wrote and voiced a PKX commercial with iHeartMedia, showcasing her skills in media production.

A confident public speaker, she represented The Art Effect at the annual State of The Art Effect event and regularly advocates for youth empowerment. During the PKX Festival, she identified a language barrier in event surveys and helped implement a solution, demonstrating her empathy and leadership.

Keima's creativity, initiative, and dedication to inclusive community engagement embody the values of The Art Effect and make her an impactful youth leader.



SAVANNAH CHAMBERS

Spark Studios 2024

When Savannah joined Spark Studios in the spring of 2024, she had no formal experience in photography or production. What she did have was a powerful creative instinct, a strong work ethic, and an eagerness to learn. In just a short time, Savannah has transformed into a standout artist and emerging professional, embodying the growth that Spark Studios is all about.

With a natural eye for composition and a deep curiosity for storytelling, Savannah quickly found her voice behind the camera. From capturing vibrant portraits of community members to documenting city life through street photography, her work reflects both artistic intention and personal vision. Her rapid development and professionalism led to her being hired as a youth photographer at The Art Effect's events and landing a role with AR Clips Productions, contributing to production and social media.

Savannah continues to build her portfolio, seek mentorship, and inspire others, proving that with passion and persistence, anything is possible.



LAMONT SMITH

MadLab 2022, 2023, 2024
ArtsBridge 2024
Art Institute 2024

Lamont Smith joined MADLab in the summer of 2022 as a shy sophomore with a deep love for art. Encouraged by a friend, he stepped into the program uncertain but quickly found his voice through creativity. His unique style, dedication, and quiet determination stood out from the start.

As Lamont's confidence grew, so did his role. He became a mentor to younger students, including his brother, and took the lead on major projects like large-scale murals and sculptures for Scenic Hudson and at the Trolley Barn Gallery during the PKX Festival. His artwork was featured in *Teen Visions*, a powerful testament to his growth. Lamont's passion reaches beyond the studio. He's enrolled in night classes to expand his skills in digital media and plans to pursue the Dutchess BOCES Design Track. His journey shows the transformative power of MADLab, where a young artist discovered not just his talent but his ability to lead and inspire.



HANNAH STRANO

Art Institute 2023, 2024
Senior Project 2024

Hannah Strano joined The Art Effect's Art Institute in 2023 with a love for digital art and a dream of becoming a comic book artist. Encouraged by her teachers to strengthen her foundation, she dove into fine art classes and quickly rose to the challenge. She went on to complete Portfolio Development, then further refined her skills in The Art Effect's rigorous Summer Art Institute and Senior Project intensive programs.

Hannah's dedication paid off at Hudson Valley Portfolio Day when her portfolio was accepted on the spot by her dream school, UMass Dartmouth, where she plans to attend in the fall of 2025. Hannah also serves as president of The Art Effect's National Art Honor Society chapter and is a two-time *Teen Visions* exhibiting artist. Hannah's success is a testament to her dedication and the support of The Art Effect's nurturing, college-prep environment. She is heading into the next chapter of her creative journey with confidence, ready to make her mark on the world.



FORGE MEDIA

Real Experience. Real Impact.

- **29 youth producers hired**
- **35 original videos created**
- **15 local clients served**

In 2024, Forge Media gave young filmmakers the opportunity to work on real-world projects, capturing community impact, telling powerful stories, and building professional portfolios. From documenting Dutchess Outreach's services to producing educational content and honoring local leaders, these youth turned creative passion into career-building experience.

Over 50% of Forge Media youth apprentices have already landed outside jobs or freelance work!



Forge Media film shoots from (L-R): The Art Effect's PKX Festival in Poughkeepsie, Legal Services of The Hudson Valley in White Plains, Hyde Park Visual environment committee, and The Hudson Valley Current in New Paltz



FORGE APPRENTICE HIGHLIGHT

QUINN DIPALO

After-school Media Program 2015
Spark Studios 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019
Forge Media 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

Quinn began his journey with The Art Effect in 2015 through Poughkeepsie Middle School's after-school media program. Fueled by a love for filmmaking, he spent all four high school years in Spark Studios, taking on roles like director, producer, actor, and editor. His award-winning projects, including a short film with Poughkeepsie High School have screened at festivals nationwide.

After graduating from SUNY New Paltz in 2024, Quinn launched a thriving freelance career, working with Forge Media and collaborating with creatives like James Ransome, EC Media LLC, Choice Films, and LensScape Media. Today, he continues to embody The Art Effect's mission: Explore. Experience. Excel.

"Working with Forge Media has given me advanced technical skills in video production equipment and software, as well as effective communication skills to work collaboratively within a group to make compelling videos people love."



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: HEZUES R.



Hezues R., Nicole Fenichel-Hewitt, and Paul Thompson at S.I.C. Film School

In 2024, media entrepreneur, activist, and The Art Effect alumnus Hezues R. returned to Poughkeepsie as the featured guest artist and film juror at the PKX Festival, celebrating his lasting bond with the organization that sparked his creative journey. A Poughkeepsie native, Hezues got his start at the Children's Media Project (now The Art Effect). From a young age, he had a vision, not just to succeed, but to use creativity to make meaningful change. That spark has fueled a dynamic career that blends artistry, activism, and entrepreneurship.

Today, Hezues is a celebrated Creative Director and the mind behind the award-winning fragrance brand *Boadicea the Victorious*. He has collaborated with artists such as Jay Z and Russell Simmons. He's been honored as a "Champion of Change" by President Barack Obama for his anti-violence work and has represented the U.S. in over 30 countries as a United Nations youth ambassador.

Despite global success, Hezues remains rooted in youth advocacy. He founded S.I.C. (Social Impact Content) Film School to empower young storytellers, with students from Spark Studios attending field trips and workshops. At the 2024 PKX Festival, Hezues collaborated with students to create *The Last String*, a short film addressing the issue of substance abuse, showcasing film as a tool for social impact.

He's also mentoring The Art Effect alumni like Lamar Wint, who worked as a production assistant on Hezues' short film, *Shots Fired*. His leadership continues as chair of the Hip Hop Education Center and the Westchester County Gun Violence Prevention Task Force.

Through storytelling, mentorship, and advocacy, Hezues R. exemplifies the powerful, full-circle impact of The Art Effect, proving that creativity, when nurtured, can change lives and communities.

ALUMNI BY THE NUMBERS

– 26 –

Alumni employed as teachers, counselors, and full time staff

– 6 –

Alumni came back to The Art Effect as speakers and guest artists



Saoirse Blue Woods, Inspired by the Still Life Paintings of Dutch Masters: Hearty Bounty



Flyest Johnson, Photos

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: ETHAN HOFMAYER

Ethan Hofmayer first encountered The Art Effect (then Spark Media Project), in 2015 as a Vassar College student intern. With a deep love for both film and education, The Art Effect felt like the perfect intersection of his passions. Over several years, Ethan worked with students in summer camps and after-school programs, leading stop-motion animation, short filmmaking, and media literacy workshops as a teacher and later as a communications assistant.



Ethan Hofmayer at Spark Studios, 2016

Still actively making movies today, Ethan describes his time at The Art Effect as a dream job that blended creativity with impact. It became a foundational chapter in his career, giving him formative experience in classroom management and youth engagement that helped shape his future as an educator. Stop motion became one of Ethan's favorite mediums to teach, so much so that he now shares it at Fly on the Wall, an art school he co-leads in Half Moon Bay, California. There, he provides young artists with the same creative energy and hands-on techniques he fostered at The Art Effect.

"Giving back to your community is one of the most valuable things you can do. In a world where inequality grows, true impact comes from organizations that support and uplift people. Their value is immeasurable and we have to keep them going."

— Ethan Hofmayer

Ethan, a special education science teacher raised with a deep commitment to social justice, supports grassroots organizations that drive meaningful change, including The Art Effect, For the Many, Camp Phoenix, and independent artists on Patreon. For him, monthly giving is a powerful, intentional way to uplift the causes he cares about. Becoming a monthly donor to The Art Effect is more than an act of generosity, it's a tribute to the place that helped shape his values, creativity, and sense of purpose.

2024 SPECIAL EVENTS

The Art Effect hosted or participated in **34 events** including program showcases, exhibitions, community events, festivals, and galas!

Anime Exhibition Opening Reception

Curated by the Trolley Barn Youth Team, the Anime Exhibition showcased bold anime, manga, and comic art. With **128 visitors**, a costume contest, and a workshop with Megabrain Comics, the event celebrated anime as a powerful form of identity and brought the community together through youth-driven creativity.



PKX Art and Film Festival

The 2024 PKX Festival celebrated Poughkeepsie's creativity, community, and local heroes. Over **300 people** joined the free, three-day event packed with teen art, short films, food, vendors, and family-friendly fun, showcasing the city's intergenerational energy and youth-driven talent.



Earth's Reflection

The Trolley Barn Gallery Youth Curatorial Team united artists, organizations, and professionals focused on pollution prevention through a powerful exhibition of 2D, 3D, upcycled, sound, video, and performance art. **Six dynamic events drew 250 youth and community members**, sparking dialogue and action through creative expression.



Teen Visions

The Teen Visions 2024 Exhibition featured **over 65 standout works** by young artists from The Art Effect's summer programs including The Art Institute, MADLab, and Spark Studios, chosen for their creativity and skill. The exhibition celebrated their growth, talent, and artistic achievement.



Hudson Valley Regional Portfolio Day

Hudson Valley Regional Portfolio Day welcomed **30 colleges from across the country, offering over 200 high school students** the chance to have their portfolios professionally reviewed. This unique opportunity gave aspiring young artists a competitive edge in the pursuit of merit-based scholarships and future careers in the arts.



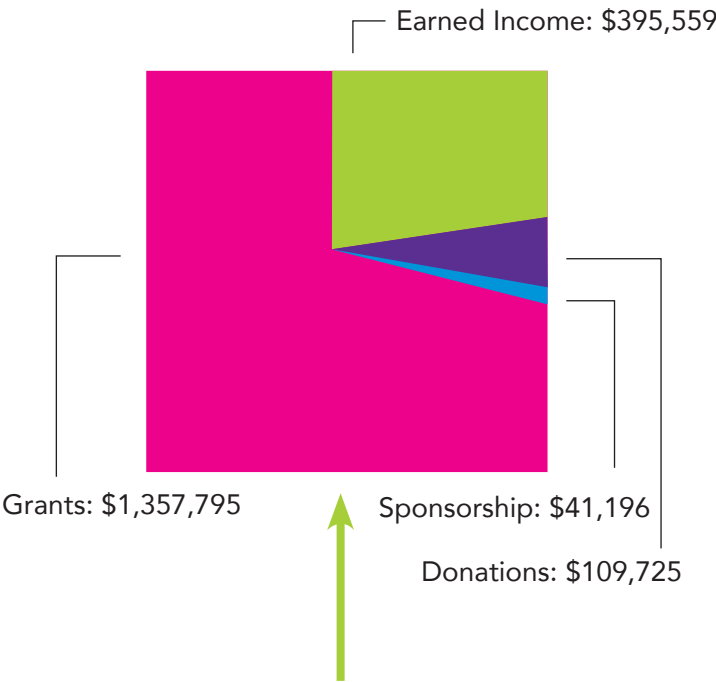
Art After Dark

The 6th Annual Art After Dark Gala brought creativity and community together at the Trolley Barn Gallery, **raising \$31,000** to support The Art Effect's youth programs. Guests enjoyed immersive art, creative cocktails, and celebrated local changemakers dedicated to empowering young people through the arts.

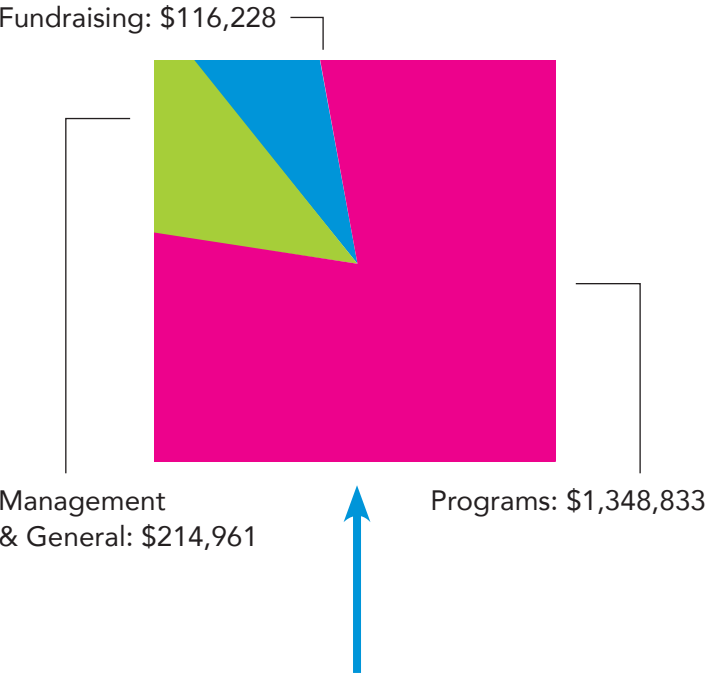


FINANCIALS*

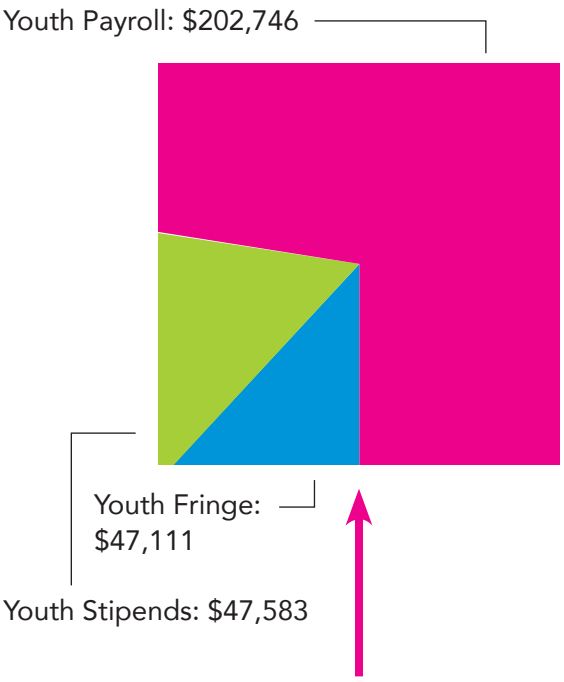
■ Total Expenses: **\$1,977,463**



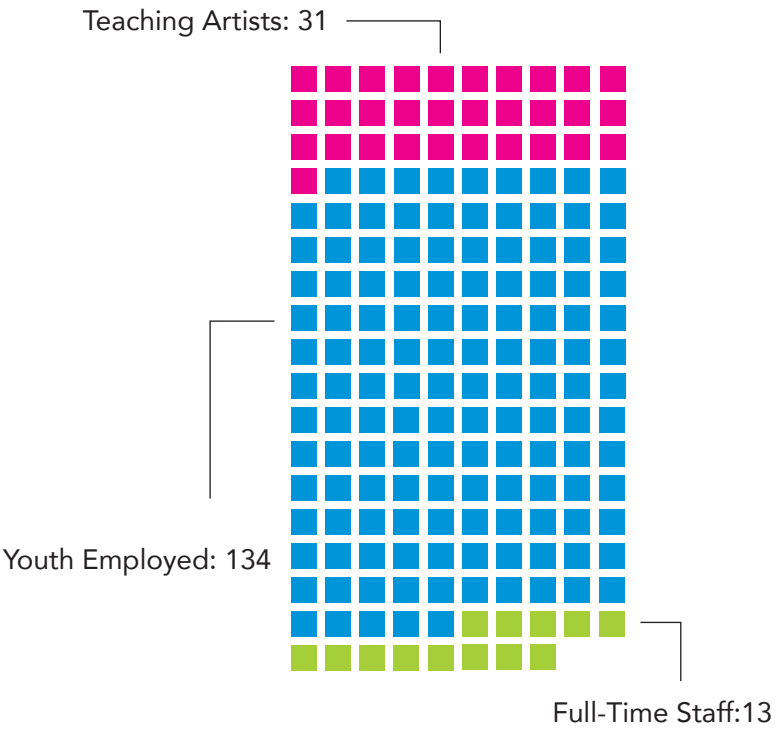
Income:
\$1,904,276



83% of
expenses go
straight to
programs



\$297,440
directly
to youth
employment



*unaudited financials as of December 31, 2024

TEAM

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- Shailee Johnson**, *Board Chair*
Director of Development Research, Marist College
- Richard DuVall, Esq.**, *Treasurer*
Attorney, Mackey Butts & Whalen LLP
- Lorenzo L. Angelino, Esq.**, *Secretary*
Attorney, Law Offices of Lorenzo L. Angelino
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- Michael DeCiutiis**
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- Sybil DelGaudio**
Profesor Emerita of Radio, Television, Film, Hofstra University
- Dwayne Douglas**
Marist College Liberty Partnership Program (LPP)
- Judy Elkin, LMSW**
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- Aleria Gonzalez**
Youth Board Member

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- Velianna Catalano**, *Marketing & Communications Assistant*
- Shinyere Davis**, *Creative Manager of Youth Arts Empowerment Zone*
- Hanna Rose DeMarco**, *Director of Artistic Advancement*
- Ana Fiore**, *Director of Programs*
- Cy Hinojosa**, *Programs Assistant*
- Mary Ellen Iatropoulos**, *Director of Special Projects*
- Abby Lessick**, *Studio Manager & Teaching Artist*
- Pamela O’Brien**, *Director of Marketing & Communications*

The Art Effect employs more than 30 incredible teaching artists, teaching assistants, counselors, and camp directors and CITs throughout the year.
Thank you to all of our talented teachers and staff!

- Christopher Kroner**
Principal, MASS Design Group
- Kit Laybourne**
Media Educator and Advocate
- Sharley Mclver, MSW**
Social Worker, The Institute for Family Health
- Karen Michel**
Independent Producer, NPR
- Teresa Quinn**
Retired Associate Dean of Campus Activities, Vassar College
- Tahleeyah Raphael**
Youth Board Member
- Loretta Spence**
Director of Development, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley
- Dean Temple**
Creative Director, Drake Creative Collaborative LLC
- Robert C. Watson Jr.**
EdRedesign Executive Director, Harvard Graduate School of Education

- Jaime Ransome**, *Trolley Barn Gallery Manager*
- Adam Reid**, *Media Programs Manager*
- Molly Scott**, *Development Associate*
- Cory Spraker**, *Operations Manager*
- Elle Stas**, *Marketing and Communications Manager*
- Sarah Timberlake Taylor**, *Systems Administrator*
- Paul Thompson**, *Director of Forge Media*
- Daniela Velez**, *Director of Institutional Giving*
- Mirabai Trent**, *Marketing Design Assistant*
- David Wong**, *Community Art & Design Program Manager*

* As of December 31, 2024

Interns

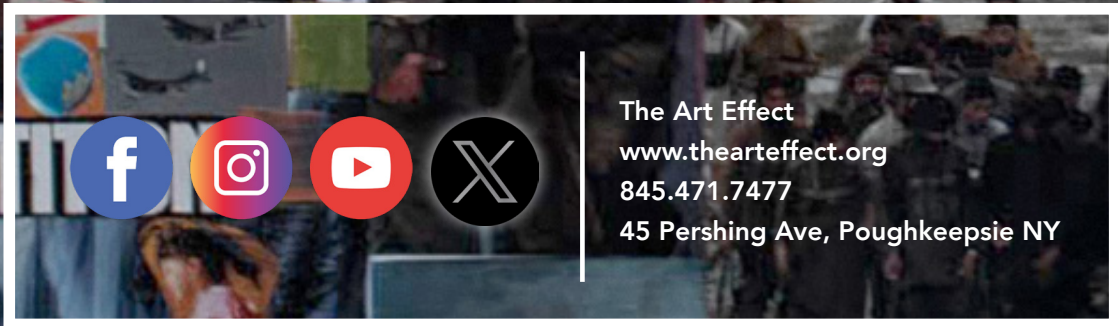
- Derian Alverado**, *SUNY New Paltz*
- Campbell Brown**, *SUNY New Paltz*
- Aiden Collins**, *SUNY New Paltz*
- Isabella Cruz**, *SUNY New Paltz*
- Brianna Davis**, *Dutchess Community College*
- Abbie Kohomban**, *Vassar College*
- Char Lipia**, *Marist College*
- Bella McCray**, *Vassar College*
- Makenna Monaghan**, *Vassar College*
- Lauren O’Hara**, *SUNY New Paltz*
- Noah Salata**, *SUNY New Paltz*
- Dori Skelton**, *Hunter College*
- Hannah Smith**, *Sienna College*
- Jacob Willwerth**, *Sage University*
- Jada Wimberly**, *Youth One Stop*



Dahlia Haselton, Self Portrait

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Kelly Jaigua, *Chaos and Order, Collage*