

# HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

FY 23



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Thank you for your support! The work you will read about was made possible by you and our community of teachers, artists, funders, partners, and advisors.

# Dear friends,

In the past few years, we have been engaging in a conscious and constant exercise of identifying what role our organization plays in our field - both on our own, but more importantly, in collaboration with many others. We know our students, schools, artists, organizations, and communities are facing many challenges that require creative, thoughtful, and collaborative approaches. So that's what we've been all about - **moving forward in collective action.**

We've been poring over research to better understand the evolving needs of our community. When that research didn't exist, we collected it ourselves. That data has informed and clarified our understanding of persisting needs and gaps in our field, solidified our strategy, helped us form new partnerships, and work collaboratively toward systemic and sector change.

We're grateful to the many people - including you! - who make our organization strong and who, with us, made a huge impact in our communities this past year. We invite you to read this report so you can hear some stories of the impact our work had on students, artists, and our cultural community.



MANAGING DIRECTOR  
**Nicole Agois**



# Numbers

*at a glance*



## EDUCATION

787 students with and without disabilities in 58 classrooms at 8 Boston Public Schools received 2,054 hours of accessible and engaging arts education in visual arts, drama, and music.

## GALLERIES

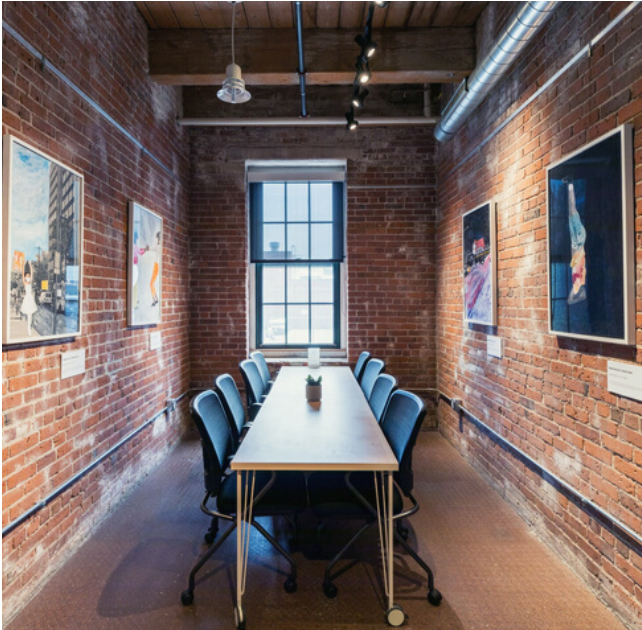
139 adults with disabilities received in-person and virtual art classes through our partnership with the Worcester Art Museum (WAM) and 15 artists with disabilities were featured in the reopening year of the Open Door Gallery.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

100 educators and staff members from schools and cultural organizations across Massachusetts received training and consultancy services to implement inclusive, anti-ableist and anti-racist practices, policies, and programs.

# Moving



Last summer we said goodbye to our home at the NonProfit Center in Boston, which hosted our office and Open Door Gallery for 13 years. We **became a space partner at the Cultural Equity Incubator (CEI)**, a collective action shared workspace designed by and for arts and culture leaders committed to intersectional racial equity and creative justice.

Located in the Fort Point area in Boston, the CEI is a paradigm shift in creative collaboration, space making, resource sharing, and community care shared by 10 organizations. One of the exciting aspects of this space is its **collaborative gallery space**, in which we are excited to co-curate exhibits with our partner organizations and artists.

We're thrilled to have started this new chapter alongside organizations that we deeply admire and with whom we look forward to working collaboratively toward a more inclusive and just arts and culture community. And we look forward to welcoming you into our new home!



**The Cultural Equity Incubator is located in the Midway Art Studios at:**

15 Channel Center Street, Suite 103  
Boston, MA 02210



# Artists on the MOVE

This year, our students and artists in our studio programs at the Worcester Art Museum (WAM) contributed their creativity, ideas and perspectives to create artwork that was shared with their communities.

Students in Open Door Arts School Programs at Community Academy of Science and Health (CASH) and Boston Green Academy (BGA) took their artwork outside of their school walls and into the community by participating alongside their teaching artist, Silvina Mizrahi in “Studios Without Walls” - a public art exhibition of site responsive sculpture in Riverway Park. Their mosaic tile pieces, “Under the Same Sun,” celebrated Native cultures from the Americas and explored universal patterns that symbolize natural elements. Students were so proud to share their artwork publicly and to be able to visit the installation at the end of the school year. It was a powerful opportunity for community connection and for our high-school-aged youth to experience their place in the cultural community.



Artists with disabilities from Seven Hills ASPIRE! day programs had the option to participate in weekly intensive in-person and virtual art classes as well as drop-in programs at our Open Door Gallery@WAM throughout the year. The artists explored a variety of media and visited the WAM collection. At the end of the year, those who participated in the intensive art classes exhibited their paintings, sculptures, collages, and multimedia works in an exhibit at ODG@WAM, and welcomed the community to celebrate their work and creativity during an opening reception.



# Moving *Together*

We know that we are most successful when we work collaboratively with other experts and organizations to leverage each other's resources, talent, and networks strategically toward collective impact and systemic change. Last year, Open Door Arts continued to conduct research, evaluate needs, and create sector-wide solutions to move accessibility work forward throughout the arts and culture sector.

Open Door Arts was one of two organizations (along with Art-Reach in Philadelphia) awarded a contract from Mass Cultural Council to develop a comprehensive multiple-year Disability Access and Inclusion Plan to increase the Agency's capacity to provide equitable services and opportunities to people with disabilities. We engaged in a robust process of collaboration with the arts and culture sector, Mass Cultural Council, the disability community, and a group of 13 paid advisors to collect and analyze data, and make recommendations to Mass Cultural Council regarding internal and external actions that should be taken to increase accessibility in the sector.

Open Door Arts also moved into the next phase of an ambitious project to create a digital "Arts Access Hub" that connects arts and culture organizations in Massachusetts to comprehensive resources, information, and support to increase their accessibility. In conjunction with The Hub, we began building a multi-part organizational self-assessment tool to help arts and culture organizations evaluate their own accessibility and create a work plan for improvement. This tool and guide will directly link to The Hub and connect organizations to resources and experts aligned with their areas of growth. We're thrilled to have welcomed Hannah Goodwin to our team as a part-time Cultural Access and Inclusion Specialist, who along with many consultants and advisors, are helping us build these important tools. We are excited to begin building and piloting our Hub and self-assessment tool in FY24.



# Our Team

**We're grateful to all the dedicated, creative, and talented people on our team. Thank you!**

**Staff:** Nicole Agois, Portia Brown, Mehdi Raoufi, Hannah Goodwin

**Teaching Artists:** Stephanie Charlton, Alex Conley, Melanie Donnelly, Dominic Glaude, Mone't Ledbetter-Glaude, Silvina Mizrahi, Dunja Pechstein, Jodi Schmidt, and Jennifer Duval White

**Advisory Board:** Jeremy Alliger, Charles Baldwin, Elaine Fallon, Maureen Finnerty, Robin Foley, Tom Keane, Martha McKenna, Ruth Mercado-Zizzo, Carl Richardson, and Heather Watkins

**Research Consultant:** Elisabeth Staal

**WAM Educators:** Elizabeth Buck, Katy Grutchfield, Marybeth Lensel, and Luca Nova Webb

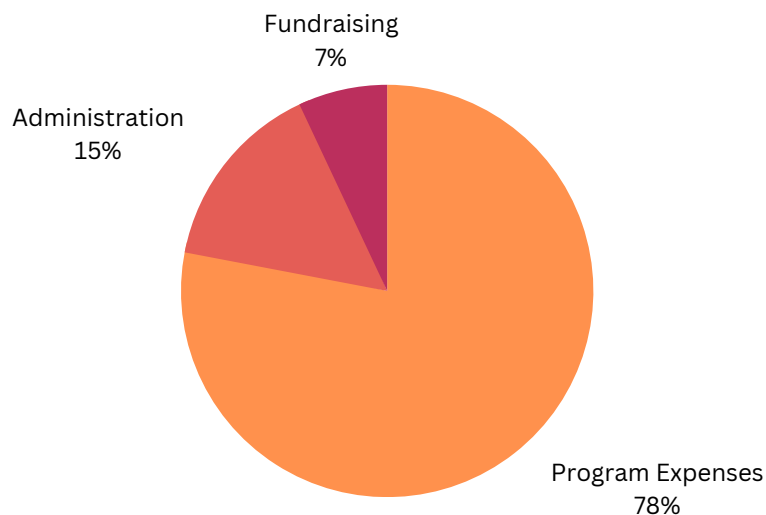
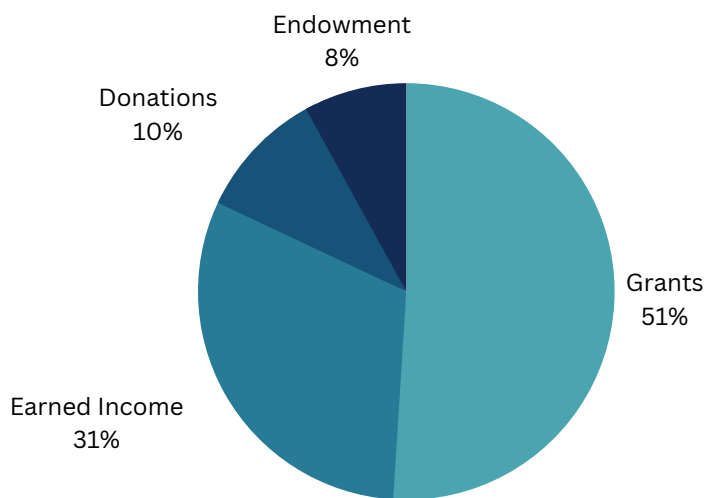
**Project Advisors** who contributed their professional expertise and lived experience to support Open Door Arts' research efforts: Marcela Bastida, Leslie Condon, Katherine Gilliland, Alicia Greene, Rhianon Gutierrez, Stewart Ikeda, Karen Krolak, Nora Nagle, Amber Percy, Ali Rheume, Christopher Robinson, Laura Sanchez Garcia, and Gordon Sasaki



In July of 2022, we welcomed Mehdi Raoufi to our team as **Director of School Programs**. Mehdi joined Open Door Arts after serving as the Community Outreach Manager and various other roles for over 4 years at Partners for Youth with Disabilities. Mehdi has worked for close to a decade as a teaching artist and was a director of inclusive theater companies with Artstream, a non-profit theater organization that supports individuals of varying abilities in social skill-building using the arts. Mehdi holds a Master's of Arts in Mental Health Counseling with a concentration in Expressive Arts Therapy as well as a B.A in Theater with a concentration in Directing/Dramatic Literature from Christopher Newport University.



# Financials



## Thank you!

We're so grateful to all the funders and donors who sustained our work this year\*!

### Funders

The Beker Foundation  
Boston Cultural Council  
BPS Arts Expansion Fund at EdVestors  
Deborah Munroe Noonan Memorial Fund,  
Bank of America, N.A., Trustee  
Greater Worcester Community Foundation  
Liberty Mutual Foundation  
Mass Cultural Council  
National Endowment for the Arts: Grants for  
Arts Projects Grant  
UniBank  
Webster Five Foundation  
Wellington Management Foundation

### Donors

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\*Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)