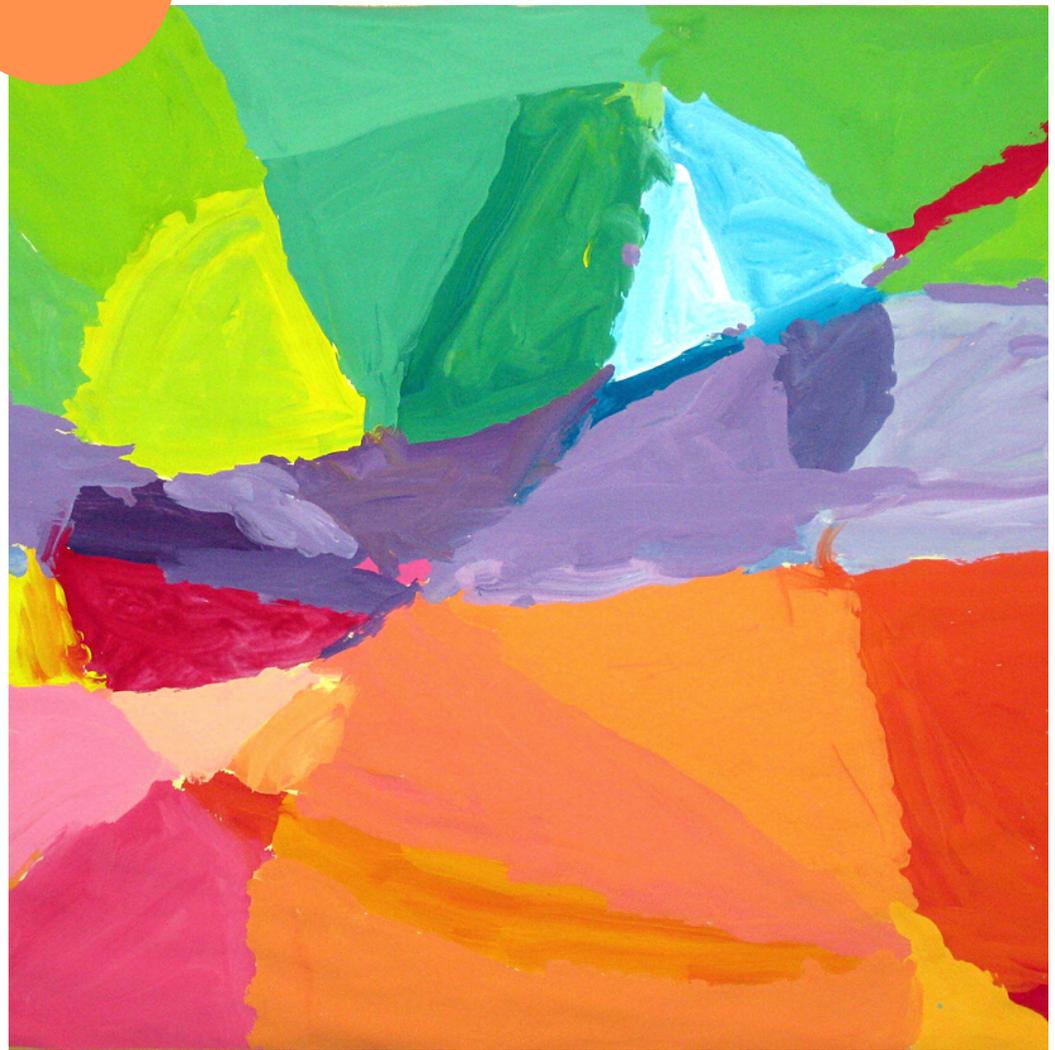


21-22

HIGHLIGHTS REPORT



PRIDE ACCESS CONNECTION EXPRESSION

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Funders and Team

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,

At the core of our work in the schools is the PACE Framework, which centers creative experiences that promote Pride, Access, Connection, and Expression for our students. In reflecting about our work this past year, I can't help but see all the ways that PACE was woven into every aspect of our work as an organization.

We felt so much Pride in the resilience, creativity, and collaborative spirit shown by our team and community. We continued to ground every aspect of our work in Access and equity, and shared those practices with the field. We found creative ways to Connect our community to arts resources and opportunities despite ongoing restrictions. And most importantly, we promoted Expression as a fundamental part of our human experience.

We're grateful to have you as an important part of our community of creatives, supporters, and thought partners, and thank you for the role you play advancing our work. With profound gratitude, I invite you to read this Highlights Report, which shares stories of Pride, Access, Connection, and Expression from our work this past year.



MANAGING DIRECTOR

Nicole Agois

Numbers at a glance



EDUCATION

1113 students with and without disabilities in 88 classrooms at 10 Boston Public Schools received 2,371 hours of accessible and engaging arts education in visual arts, drama, and music.

GALLERIES

61 adults with disabilities received virtual and in-person art classes through our partnership with the Worcester Art Museum, and 9 artists with disabilities were featured in virtual “Artist Spotlights” on our website and social media.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

More than 75 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.

so much

Pride



As we entered the 2021-2022 school year we were excited to return to in-person instruction and assumed that the greatest impact of COVID on our students and schools was behind us. While we carefully prepared to resume programming in our schools, we did not anticipate the extent of the toll that social isolation, remote learning, and interruptions in services had on our students.

They had missed out on critical developmental, academic, artistic, and social experiences and had become used to life and learning with their “camera off.” As they continued to adjust to in-person school, students showed tremendous strength, courage, and trust while participating in our programs and opened themselves up to sharing and connecting with each other.

We are so proud of their resilience, vulnerability, and the ways they harnessed their experiences, ideas, and emotions into creative forms of expression. It was equally wonderful to witness their own pride in themselves, what they created, and how they contributed.



Similarly, we are proud of and grateful to our Teaching Artists, who demonstrated tremendous creativity, inventiveness, and compassion as they showed up for each other and their students and found ways to adapt and readapt to meet the challenges the year presented. Last year showed us that we are still at the beginning of a long road to recovery. As always, the arts continue to be our greatest assets, teachers, and tools moving forward in support of our students and schools.

centering Access



As the arts and culture sector continues to reimagine diversity, equity, and inclusion in their internal and external work, our team has been supporting organizations and arts educators to ensure that access, disability culture, and intersectionality are equally understood and prioritized as part of that work. Leading these efforts with our team is Maureen “Moe” Finnerty. Moe is an actress, dancer, choreographer, teaching artist, and disability consultant. She has been a student and Teaching Artist in our school programs and has taken on a new role as a primary professional development consultant and trainer. Moe brings her unique perspectives as a person, patron, and artist with disabilities, and wealth of professional experiences as an educator and performer to help individuals and organizations to grow their access practices.

“I really enjoy the fact that my life experience can help other people understand what it means to have a disability and also what it means to make things accessible.”

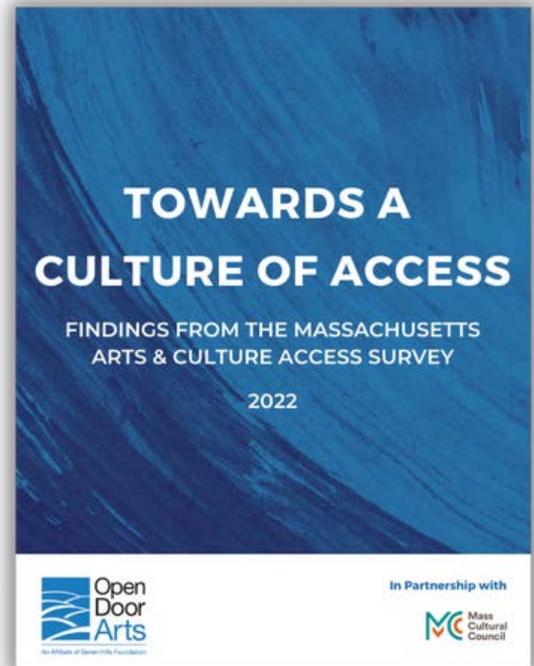
Moe firmly believes disability must be included in DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) conversations and wants to use her expertise to help organizations understand that “you don't need to separate out society in a way that puts disabled people over here and other people over there.” Moe hopes that through her work at ODA, organizations will expand their approach from primarily focusing on providing access accommodations for patrons and visitors with disabilities to actively engaging disabled people as creators, decision makers, and leaders in all aspects of the organization's work and culture.

creating Connection

Last year, with support from the Mass Cultural Council, we embarked on the first phase of an ambitious collaborative project to connect arts and culture organizations in Massachusetts to a comprehensive Hub of resources and support to increase their accessibility. As a first step, Open Door Arts designed and distributed the **"MA Arts and Culture Access Survey"** to learn more about how organizations throughout the state are thinking about access, and how that work is being actualized through policies, practices, programs, relationships, and culture; as well as to identify what's getting in the way of moving this work forward, and what resources and supports the sector might benefit from in order to do so.

To ensure we considered a wide range of perspectives while reviewing the survey data, we hired five Arts Access Advisors, including **Heather Watkins, Saki Iwamoto, Christopher Robinson, Jenna Gabriel, and Gary Alpert**, to review survey findings, provide insights and recommendations, and identify key takeaways and action steps.

We're excited to share **"Towards a Culture of Access: Findings from the Massachusetts Arts & Culture Access Survey"** report with the field in the hopes that the data shared here helps our sector continue to move accessibility and inclusion forward in collaboration and collective action.



Read the report at:
www.OpenDoorArtsMA.org/TCAReport22

celebrating

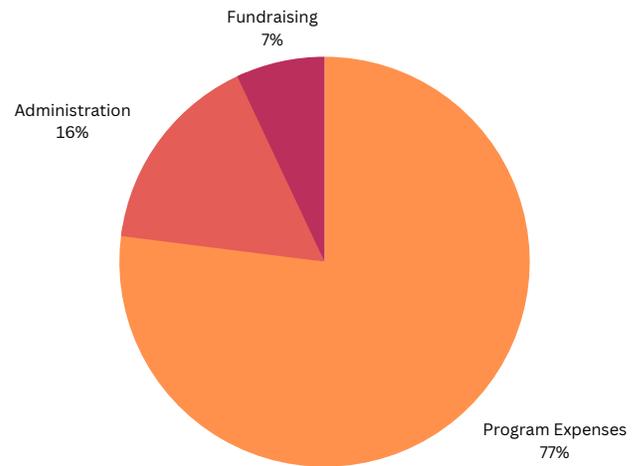
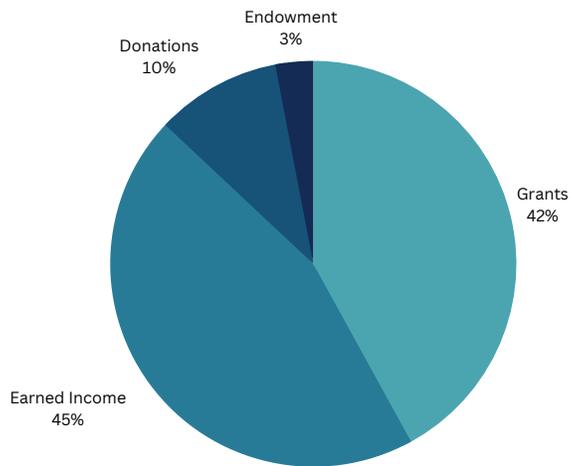
Expression



Our Open Door Gallery at the Worcester Art Museum (ODG@WAM) was filled with art once again as ASPIRE! Artists shared the work they created this year with their family and friends in a culminating exhibit in June— our first since 2020. Through our programs, adult artists with disabilities supported through Seven Hills ASPIRE! day programs had weekly opportunities to create, connect, and express themselves through the arts. In addition to continuing to provide virtual classes, we were thrilled to reopen in-person programming in partnership with the amazing team at the Worcester Art Museum (WAM) this year after long closures due to COVID and museum renovations.

Through these programs, aspiring artists were able to visit WAM once again, explore the work of artists with disabilities and artists featured in the WAM collection, learn artistic skills and techniques, and create their own work using a variety of artistic media. It was wonderful to see how much creativity was evident in their work and artistic process, and the unique ways in which they expressed themselves through their artwork.

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
Greater Worcester Community Foundation
J. Irving England and Jane L. England Charitable Trust
Liberty Mutual Foundation
Mass Cultural Council
National Endowment for the Arts: ARPA
Ramsey McCluskey Family Foundation
Samantha's Harvest
UniBank
Webster Five Foundation
Wellington Management Foundation
Worcester Arts Council

Donors

Anonymous (2), Enrique Agois, Jeremy Alliger, Christine A. Anderson (Artist Guild of Shrewsbury), Frances Anthes and Charles Washburn, Sydney Bryn Austin, Charles Baldwin, Stein Berre, Archie Calise, Dr. Charles Conroy, Ellen and Darrel Donaldson, Katherine Drexel, Elaine Fallon, Allen Fletcher, Robin and John Foley, Katherine Gilliland, Roberta and Arthur Levin, Vince Lombardi, Martha and Kevin McKenna, Nancy and Jeffrey Melzack, Nancy Millstein, Patricia and Lawrence Morrison, Kate and Thomas Myshrall, Susan and Richard Neckes, Debbie and Mark Needleman, Richard Paulhus, Nanci Phillips, Megan Sullivan and Carl Richardson, Mona and Malcolm Roberts, Adria Steinberg Seidel and Steven Seidel, Ellen and Reed Sturtevant, Heather Watkins, and Daniel Wiener and Judy Jacobson Wiener

Special thanks to members of the Lexington HS ODA club



Our Team

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



Staff: Nicole Agois, Mia Branco, Portia Brown

Teaching Artists: Han Brewster, Stephanie Charlton, Alex Conley, Maureen Finnerty, Erin Huiett, Gwyndolyn Jones, Zoe Kamil, Mone't Ledbetter-Glaude, Jen Morin, Eva Murray, Zoe Nadal, Dunja Pechstein, Sarah Plotkin, Dani Schechner-Kanofsky, Jodi Schmidt, and Kevin Williams.

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

Research Fellow: Elisabeth Staal

WAM Educators: Elizabeth Buck, Susan Slepetz, and Katy Grutchfield

Thank you, Mia!



At the end of the 2021-2022 school year, our wonderful Director of Education Mia Branco, relocated to Maine to pursue new adventures. Mia was a wonderful asset to our team, supporting our students and staff as an Intern, Teaching Artist, and Director of Education for five years. Mia brought incredible insight, creativity, dedication, and compassion to her work and saw the organization through new leadership, a name change, and a pandemic. She met every challenge with ingenuity, resilience and steadfast commitment to supporting our schools, teaching artists, and students.

We have endless gratitude for all the work Mia did and her generosity in helping with the transition of her role. We will deeply miss her brilliance, care, and friendship and wish her all the best in this new chapter.

A special thank you to the students and participants in our programs for the beautiful artwork shared throughout this report!

