

# URBAN **GATEWAYS**

All over the city of Chicago and the surrounding region young people are exploring the arts through Urban Gateways programs. In addition to art-making and appreciation, this exploration results in a critical and creative conversation that forms a foundation for lasting social change.

Take a look at the pages that follow to dive deeper into four of our program areas -Touring Performances, Residencies, Street Level, and Teen Arts Pass - and to meet youth, artists, staff, educators, and community partners who have participated in those programs. What each story has in common is that program participants and collaborators have used these arts experiences not only as access points leading to personal and creative growth, but as a mechanism to ensure that our city and our society are growing and evolving - and that creative voices are leading the way.

Urban Gateways engages young people in arts experiences to inspire creativity and impact social change.

95,228

**PARTICIPANTS** 



5,132

TOTAL HOURS OF **PROGRAMMING** 



251 **PARTNER** SITES



Urban Gateways Programs, September 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019

# IMPACT OUR R

This map represents cumulative hours of arts programming by zip code, across Urban Gateways Touring Performances, Artist Residencies and Workshops, Street Level, and Teen Arts Pass, for FY2019 (September 2018-August 2019).

We hope this visual gives you a sense of both the breadth and depth of arts experiences we provide for young people and communities across the Chicago area. (Our programs travel even farther; we couldn't fit our full reach on this page!) You can explore the specific programs we've highlighted here throughout this report.



Touring Performances at Alphonsus Academy & Center for the Arts (pg. 6)

Photo by Giovany Rev



New collaborative partnerships with Street Level (pg. 10)

an Gateways Staff

Teen Arts Pass at the Chicago Auditorium Theatre (pg. 12)

vays Stai

Photo by Urban Gate

0 hours

1-2 hours

3-10 hours

Artist Residency at Mays Elementary Academy (pg. 8)

E

11-20 hours

21-100 hours

101-200 hours

# TOURING PERFORMANCES

Urban Gateways Touring Performances travel to schools and community spaces, meeting young people and audience members where they are to share the inspiration of live arts experiences. With 44 performances across dance, music, and theater, covering a wide range of disciplines and cultures, our partners value the fact that they can rely on our roster for shows that are certain to spark deep engagement with any group of young people.

At Alphonsus Academy and Center for the Arts in Lakeview, Director of Arts Integration Becky Manuel adds impact to her school's arts programming by sprinkling Touring Performances and their linked Immersion Workshops across the curriculum. From a historical revue of African-American music to an exploration of dance across genres, a slam poetry performance, and storytelling for the younger set, students in 2019 got a broad taste of Chicago's arts scene without leaving their school.

Becky spoke about an impactful performance of "Voices of Chicago: Slam Poetry" by touring group Poets with Class (a program of The Chicago Poetry Center) in February 2019: "We're working on integrating poetry - and this was a way to do it where students could see it in a contemporary way as it relates to their city, with real artists."

Luis Tubens is one of the poets who performed at Alphonsus. "I'm born and raised in the city of Chicago, so the vast majority of my poems are about my lived experiences here in the city," Luis said. "I try to give [young audiences] a well-rounded version of my experience, both positive and negative, in Chicago. My perspective is heavily Latino, and specifically Puerto Rican. So that's one of the things that I hope they draw from, is there's not one type of experience in Chicago – it depends on your background, race, ethnicity, language...all of that informs your experience."

Students had the opportunity to dig deeper and record their own Chicago stories during an Immersion Workshop with one of the poets following the performance. "It was all about [our students'] particular experiences, and building empathy through those experiences," Becky said.

She feels that performances like this one, presented by diverse voices and perspectives, are critical for a mostly white student body. Luis added that in majority white schools, there are always a few students of color, and for them, the performance can be impactful in a special way.

"I feel that when I give my poetry and there are students that relate on a cultural level, being in school with people not from their same background - they come up to me. They say things like, 'I know the food you're talking about, I understood that word you used, [this reminded me of] my grandmother."

When students relate to or draw inspiration from a performance experience, it sparks connections. "We're in this great big city of Chicago - so much is happening, and that should be part of their experience," Becky said. "They're part of a bigger world. Through the arts, they find themselves within that bigger world. It's essential for being part of a community, now and in the future."

And some of those audience members are our city's future artists. "When they see us expressing our personal experiences, it empowers them to realize, 'I can do that too,'" Luis said.

381

TOTAL PERFORMANCES



44

UNIQUE SHOWS *81,373* 

AUDIENCE MEMBERS







Urban Gateways Touring Performances, September 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019

Touring Performance "Voices of Chicago." Photo by HC Studio & Co.

# ARTIST RESIDENCIES

At Mays Elementary Academy in the south side Englewood community, multidisciplinary Teaching Artist Zahra Baker has collaborated closely with music teacher Sharon Mason over the course of four springtime residencies, working with multiple grade levels each year. Urban Gateways Residencies are carefully customized to match a school or partner with an artist who can best support that partner's goals; long-term programs like the one at Mays encourage relationships to blossom, a culture of creativity to take root, and young people to learn the importance of their own perspectives.

Initially Zahra and Sharon led students through an artistic exploration of historical moments like the Great Migration and protest songs of the 60s - but students expressed their desire to focus more on their present Englewood community. So in spring 2017, Zahra used the concept of a community radio show to lead 6th graders in performing drumming, dancing, poetry, and spoken word. They acted out scenarios in which neighbors called in to discuss what was happening in their community, naming their show "Tell Me Something Good."

The following spring, with the same group of students (7th graders in 2018), Zahra and Sharon decided to turn to expression through the visual arts; they explored the connections between superheroes like Black Panther and ancient Egyptian art and culture, created silhouette collages and dream catchers that signified goal-setting, and much more. Five students had work shown in Chicago's All-City youth visual arts exhibition, and the Mays 7th grade class was featured at the Loyola University Museum of Art as part of an Urban Gateways exhibition.

In spring 2019, Sharon and Zahra decided that interweaving personal voice with activism would be a natural progression. Not only did the 8th grade students produce a poetry anthology titled "To fly and be free", but they hosted a community forum to read their poetry and discuss topics concerning their neighborhood.

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2019 IMPACT REPORT

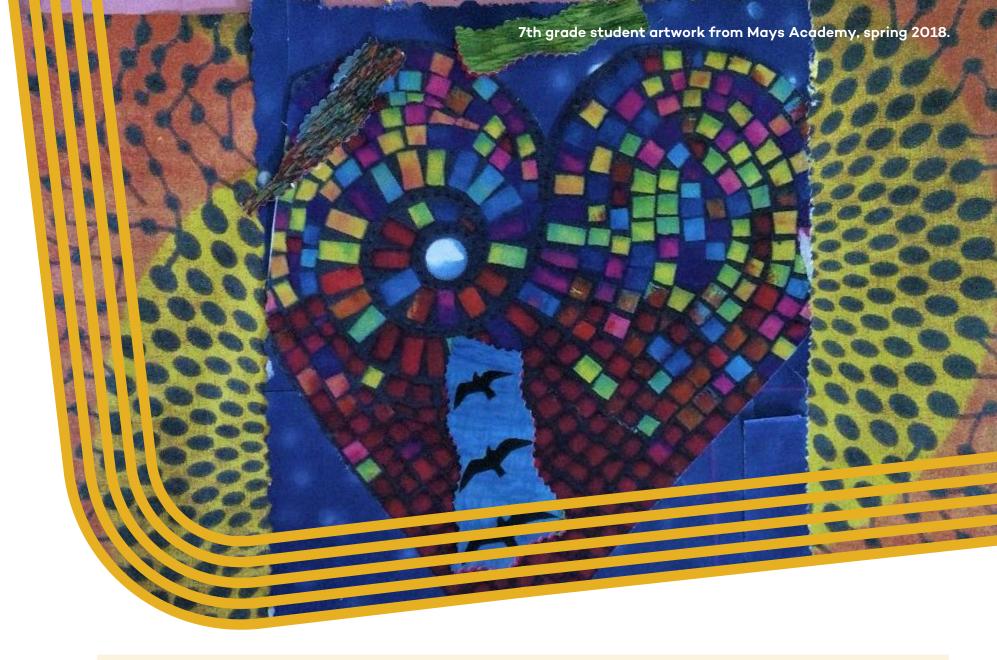
"The kids don't really feel they have a voice in anything," Sharon said. "It takes a very long time for them to believe that what they say can make a difference. And suddenly someone's really asking their opinion: What should people know about Englewood?"

WBEZ reporter Sarah Karp attended the forum and spoke to then-8th grader Tranise. As Tranise put it, "People should know that all teens aren't bad. We've actually got a great mindset. We just need to hang around the right people, and actually try to learn." Tranise told forum attendees she wanted to see fewer abandoned buildings in Englewood, and more programs focused on young women. Mays subsequently kicked off its own girls club.

"I saw them realize, we DO make a difference...I do have a voice. They gain that," Sharon said.

The program is set to continue in spring 2020, and Zahra hopes to build on the community forum concept so that students can cultivate their skills as community organizers as well as artists.

"I have already had 7th graders asking when 'Mama Zahra' is coming back," Sharon said in fall 2019. And Zahra, for her part, feels that the students have truly made her a part of their community. "Belonging: We all want that in life," Zahra said. "Every year that [the program is] renewed, it's like a gift."



**83** 

ARTIST RESIDENCIES



49

WORKSHOPS

*5,801* 

YOUTH
PARTICIPANTS IN
RESIDENCIES AND
WORKSHOPS

TEACHING ARTISTS



Urban Gateways Artist Residencies & Workshops, September 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019

# **STREET LEVEL**

Street Level, Urban Gateways' youth media arts center in West Town, is a whir of activity on any weekday afternoon. From DJing to video editing and youth clubs including LGBTQ Club, Anime Club, Editor's Club, and K-Pop Universal Club, it's a space for youth participants to hang out with like-minded peers and amplify their own creative voices. Mildsauce (mildsauce.org), Street Level's youth-led webzine created by the Editor's Club, spotlights youth perspectives through its online platform while helping young people build skills in multimedia journalism.

According to Ty'Kira Smalls, 22, a recent film grad from Columbia College Chicago who worked as a Mildsauce journalist at Street Level in summer 2019, "It's about creating media where people of color and black youth in Chicago can represent ourselves and see ourselves represented media that we can relate to. Also, reaching other people in our communities who feel as if they can't tell their stories."

> "No matter where you come from, everyone needs a safe space," said Street Level Program Manager Matt Woods. "We thought the best way to underline that was to have it as a theme for Mildsauce."

As the theme started coming together, the addition of a new safe space in the neighborhood signaled a timely partnership.

> The Night Ministry is a Chicago organization that works with people experiencing homelessness, providing services including health care and housing. The Crib, The Night Ministry's overnight shelter for young adults, is soon relocating to a new space on Ashland Avenue iust north of Street Level.

"When we ask youth about safe space, they usually say physical space, a place to feel safe and relaxed," said Jenny Merritt, Community Engagement Manager for The Night Ministry. "But they also talk about feeling emotionally and mentally safe...and about positive social space, where they can be open and be themselves."

Ty'Kira and her peers conducted video interviews with Jenny and clients of The Night Ministry's Youth Programs, compiling a video about The Crib to build support for its new location.

"My background in film really deals with being behind the scenes," Ty'Kira said. "With this program and project, it challenged me to be more comfortable in front of the camera, to think on my feet with interview questions. It challenged me with the 'people' aspect of interviewing, to look at a story from every angle and approach it creatively."

Jenny said that by working alongside Street Level staff and youth for this video initiative, The Night Ministry is "building community for the people we serve. That's really impactful. Things that may not be offered through The Night Ministry might be available with a program like Street Level."

"One of Street Level's central tenets is to amplify the voices of youth that are often unheard or ignored," Matt said. "But we can't foster creativity with our young people if they have challenges with food, transportation, shelter, health. The Night Ministry is concerned with those basic needs, and that kind of access is necessary for youth to then be able to take on other questions like, 'How do I want to get my voice out?' and 'What creative means do I have?"

The Crib will move to West Town in March, and Street Level and The Night Ministry plan to continue their video campaign. They hope that as community awareness grows, neighbors will be eager to welcome youth to the area - and that by working together, Street Level and The Crib are creating a web of safe spaces that extends beyond their walls.

>> Check out Ty'Kira's video interview with Jenny and others at The Night Ministry online at bit.ly/NightMinistry. Learn more about Street Level at street-level.org.



YOUTH 4

344 youth served

15 FIELD TRIPS TO STREET LEVEL



11 collaborating organizations

Street Level Activities, Sept. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019

Ty'Kira (right) and Mildsauce Editors filming out in the field, summer 2019. Photo by Urban Gateways Staff.



Teen Arts Pass celebrated one year in FY19, and by the end of August there were nearly 8,000 members. TAP is transforming Chicago's arts scene; it's free for any teen to register, and once they do they gain access to \$5 day-of-show tickets with our 27 arts partners. Nearly 4,000 TAP tickets had been sold as of August 31, which translates to over \$19,000 in revenue for our partners. Thanks to the new TAP App (launched in October) and growing visibility, we expect the numbers to steadily climb.

We caught up with Rachel, a TAP Teen Council member since 2018, to discuss the program's impact. Council members spread the word to peers, guide Urban Gateways staff on everything from branding to app development, and of course, see shows.

"One of the first shows I saw was 'The Nutcracker' [by Joffrey Ballet 1. at the Auditorium Theatre." Rachel said. "It was the first time I'd been to the Auditorium - I went and I was like, wow, this is a really done-up place! It was overwhelming. I was like, box office? They still have those? I actually went twice, first alone and then with a friend. It was wonderful - the lines, the voices, the music, the characters."

Although a visit to an acclaimed theater can initially feel daunting, in the end Rachel said she never feels out of place. "I've had several conversations with people around me; they want to know what I think. They say they've been coming [to the theater] for 20, 50 years, and that they're so glad teens are coming to see these shows."

Nicole Wetzell, Director of Audience Development for the Auditorium Theatre, agreed that staff and patrons alike are excited to see teens in the audience. "They bring a special enthusiasm," Nicole said. "They may not have seen Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater or The Joffrey Ballet before. They may never even have been to the theater, making it a new and interesting experience to them."

Rachel also values TAP for the emphasis it places on teens' autonomy and general wellbeing. "TAP is unique in the way that it helps teens. You can get your mind off everything that's going on with something that's just cool."

Nicole reiterated the same points: "It's our initiative to be The Theater for The People - for anyone, from any community. And like Rachel said, TAP provides a chance to escape from, in some cases, heavy issues teens may be facing. We're glad to serve teens by providing a safe place to go and enjoy something beautiful."

Chicago's funding community is taking notice, too. "The vibrant arts and culture scene of Chicago, and the educational opportunities that come with it, are often intimidating and out of reach for young people," said Meghan Zimmerman of the Thierer Family Foundation, which funded the TAP App development. "We fell in love with the Teen Arts Pass program because it makes these cultural and learning experiences affordable and accessible to youth."

"It's not just for a select few teens, but for every teen," Rachel said. "That openness and inclusiveness is so important."

We look forward to watching TAP welcome many more teens into the arts, for many years to come.

Learn more about Teen Arts Pass at teenartspass.org.

7,710

**TAP MEMBERS** 

3,860

TICKETS SOLD

(including companion tickets)



TAP MEMBER ZIP CODES

**CHICAGO TAP MEMBER ZIP CODES** 

476

58

Teen Arts Pass as of August 31, 2019

## WHERE WE'VE BEEN WHAT'S NEXT

#### WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Leveraging the arts in response to the diverse needs of Chicago's youth and communities is a practice we're seeing more of with every year that passes: Learning enrichment, academic growth, health and wellness, neighborhood and school beautification, community enhancement, family support services, workforce development, and economic vitality are just some of the positive by-products that stem from the arts, and more and more, these benefits are recognized all over society.

Above all, the arts are a critical tool for creating access and equity across our city, where a vast opportunity gap exists for too many young people - particularly for youth of color living in Chicago's divested communities. Growing up in one of the most culturally rich cities in the world, every young person deserves to fully engage with these treasures that too often seem to exist a world away.

Urban Gateways has accomplished incredible things over the last few years. As we conclude another amazing year of programming we find it valuable to reflect on some of these accomplishments, knowing that where we've been can help guide us as we approach our 60th anniversary and a new phase of creating arts experiences for young people in Chicago.

We are committed to artistic excellence. Urban Gateways programs undergo constant analysis and reflection. This last year, we contracted an Independent Evaluation Consultant to take a look at our residency programs in order to understand our impact in new ways.

The results of the survey illustrated that Urban Gateways excels at matching Teaching Artists with specific partners to provide culturally responsive programming, and that those Teaching Artists have a clear understanding of how to integrate Illinois Learning Standards into their programs. As a result, young people show progress towards learning goals after a residency program with a Teaching Artist; young people also report growing and changing for the better after participating in our programs.

We are committed to innovation. Urban Gateways has made a variety of investments in upgrading and enhancing our technology and systems. We have upgraded "behind the scenes" systems like our email marketing platform, we've added additional licenses for our databases, and we've continued to work with our web developers to enhance the Teen Arts Pass website. Most notably, in October 2019, we launched a brand new mobile app for the Teen Arts Pass. Teens can now download the free app for both iOS and Android phones and have TAP at their fingertips; the app includes details about all TAP-eligible events throughout the city, the ability for teens to "favorite" events, and check-in at the venue once they arrive. The new TAP App will act as a vital tool for tracking youth engagement. Additionally, as of fall 2019, Urban Gateways staff is now "under one roof": Our administrative offices moved into the Street Level space at 1637 N Ashland in West Town. We hope that by housing all of our staff and many of our youth participants within one location, we can establish a cohesive and creative learning and working environment.

We are committed to equity. In FY19, Urban Gateways joined Enrich Chicago, a collaborative of Chicagoland arts and philanthropic organizations committed to ending racism and systemic oppression in the arts sector. As part of this work, in addition to a variety of professional development opportunities, every Urban Gateways staff member is participating in the "Understanding Systemic Racism" training as a vital strategy for more responsibly engaging youth and communities of color and disrupting the inequitable systems impacting them. This is ongoing professional work that reinforces our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our hope is to affect change across the arts sector, starting with our own institution. This is one of our internal efforts to inspire change - for ourselves, our city, and our society.

#### WHAT'S NEXT

As we strive to close the arts access gap for young people and encourage them to realize their creative dreams, passions, and talents, Urban Gateways has continued to respond (as the organization has done for nearly 60 years) by developing innovative program initiatives that expand opportunities for thousands more participants.

## We are curious. We are responsive. We are adaptable.

We have been investing in our organizational infrastructure and programs to ensure the growth and innovation necessary to stay ahead of the curve. We are trendsetters in creating impactful arts experiences for youth; this has been a part of our DNA throughout our organizational history. We intend to uphold this mantel, and we recognize that it's time for the next chapter of Urban Gateways.

Now is the time to build on our impact and innovation through new institutional investments for future generations of Chicago's youth. Nearly 100,000 young people engage with the arts every year through Urban Gateways programs, encompassing a wide range of experiences free of charge, such as classes, performances, workshops, and apprenticeships. We only expect these numbers to grow.

As Urban Gateways approaches 60 years since its founding and as demand for our services climbs, Urban Gateways looks forward to creating expanded and improved arts access for Chicago's youth.

But we can't do this work without help! Support from donors and funders, like you, can make all the difference in a single young person's life. Offering access to arts experiences through Urban Gateways programs, giving young people a platform to use their voices, and providing them with the agency to make their own artistic choices - this is what your support can do. Thank you for helping us continue this critical work. With so many exciting things ahead, we can't wait to share new stories with you in the coming months!



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



The fastest and easiest way to support Urban Gateways is to make a donation online!

Donate at urbangateways.org.

Interested in a recurring donation, such as a monthly gift? Just change your 'donation frequency' after you select your amount.



Donate to Urban Gateways by phone.

To make a gift over the phone, please call Sherre Cullen, Chief Deveopment Officer at **312.445.2760.** 



Donate to Urban Gateways by mail.

To make a donation by mail, please send a check to:

Urban Gateways 1637 N Ashland Ave Ste 1 Chicago, IL 60622

#### **Honor & Memory Gifts**

Just select Honor or Memorial when you make your donation. You can even choose to notify the honoree with a special message.

### **Planned Giving**

You can make a lasting gift to arts education by identifying Urban Gateways as a beneficiary in your will, donating your retirement assets to Urban Gateways, or donating a life insurance policy to Urban Gateways.

### Give from your IRA Account

Donors age 70½ or older can contribute up to \$100,000 of assets from their Individual Retirement Account directly to Urban Gateways and have the gift count toward their annual required distributions from the IRA and removed from their taxable income. Ask your IRA Manager for more information on this type of donation.

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Do you have a Donor Advised Fund (DAF)? Recommend a grant to Urban Gateways directly.

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You can make a gift of appreciated stocks, bonds, or shares of mutual funds to Urban Gateways. If you have owned them for more than one year, there are a few key benefits to a gift of this type:

- Immediate Tax Deduction You receive an immediate income tax deduction for the fair market value of the securities on the date of the transfer, no matter what you originally paid for them.
- **No Capital Gains Tax** You pay no capital gains tax on the transfer when the stock is sold by Urban Gateways.

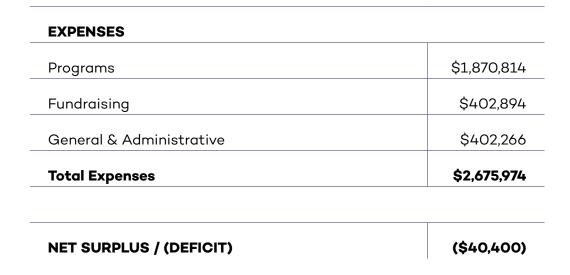
Please contact Sherre Cullen, Chief Development Officer at 312.445.2760 or scullen@urbangateways.org for more information on the above ways to donate to Urban Gateways.

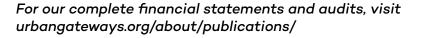
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

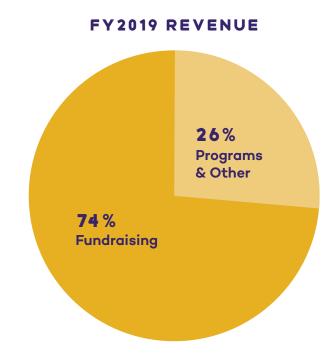
FY2019 September 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019

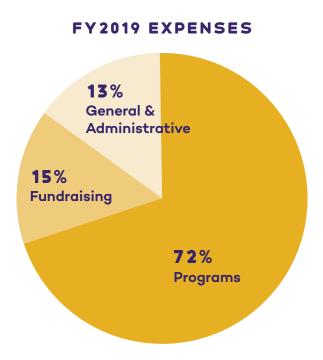
\$1,467,129
\$82,766
\$1,384,363

REVENUE	1
Programs & Other Revenue	\$694,279
Fundraising Revenue	\$1,941,29
Total Revenue	\$2,635,574









# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Thanks to all of our generous donors and funders, who make it possible for Urban Gateways to share transformative arts programs with thousands of young people in Chicago each year. (Names and amounts below reflect donations made from September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019.) Thank you for your continued support.

#### \$100,000+

Anonymous Deloitte LLP The King Family Foundation Pritzker Foundation Mr. and Mrs. Eric H. Steele Thierer Family Foundation

#### \$50,000 - \$99,000

Paul M. Angell Family Foundation Crown Family Philanthropies Illinois Arts Council LPA Search Partners The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Polk Bros. Foundation Zell Family Foundation

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