



2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT



# Linking Learning and the Arts

The diagram features a central purple circle containing the title 'Linking Learning and the Arts' in white text. Surrounding this central circle are various skills and concepts, each enclosed in a colored, irregular shape. These shapes are interconnected by a network of colorful lines (yellow, orange, red, green, blue) that crisscross the entire image, creating a sense of dynamic connection between the central theme and the peripheral concepts. The background is a solid dark purple.

Communication

Perception

Imagination

Performing

Literacy

Intellectual Learning

Collaboration

Critical  
Thinking

Ability  
to Focus

Collaboration

Motivation

Self-Confidence

Socio-Emotional

Empathy

Ownership  
of Learning

Leadership

Imagination

Self-Expression

Perserverance

Vocabulary  
of the Arts

Creativity

Engagement

Exhibiting

Language  
Acquisition

## Dear Friends,

**F**or 37 years, ArtsConnection has made it possible for the arts to be part of the daily lives of millions of children and young people in the New York City public schools.

Through work in dance, theater, visual arts, music and media, they have become aware of the life-changing possibilities that the arts offer—more self-confidence, better communication skills, the ability to collaborate with others, increased critical thinking, the motivation to see a project through to the end. These are the skills that every child will need to succeed in the 21st-century.

Producing this work takes a lot of partners: the program managers who direct our work in the schools, the teaching artists who work directly with the students, the teachers and administrators who are our partners in the classroom, and the parents and caregivers who view and support the work their children produce.

Equally important are our partners behind the scenes: the public, private and individual supporters whose contributions make all this work possible and give us the resources to extend the work into new communities every year.

On behalf of all of the children touched by ArtsConnection programming, I want to thank our partners for the impact you have had on their lives.



Steven Tennen  
Executive Director  
ArtsConnection



## OUR MISSION

To ensure the arts are an essential part of education, ArtsConnection connects performing and visual artists with children, teens, families, and schools in creative partnerships for teaching and learning.



## Creating a Rich Foundation for Language

Opening the door to classroom 328 in PS 153, Maspeth, Queens, you may discover the lights dimmed and all of the children focused on a glowing opaque screen. Some students are clustered in front as a captivated audience, while others take their turn behind the screen to practice the intricate art of presenting a shadow puppet play. These are Loriann Tholl's 2nd graders—a classroom full of English language learners who have mastered English Language Arts story elements—character, plot, and setting—through creating colorful puppets with unique personalities, adapting folktales to incorporate their own updated plot twists and sense of humor, and working together as an ensemble to produce scenery suggesting mythical times and places. Loriann is collaborating with ArtsConnection puppetry artists in her classroom and with other early elementary teachers from Queens public schools in ArtsConnection's signature professional development model, ***Bridges: Bridging the Achievement Gap through Puppetry***. ***Bridges*** gives Loriann a new toolkit of age-appropriate and engaging strategies to put into practice in her classroom, and the results are heartening.

Students who read below grade level have blossomed academically, emotionally, and socially. In their excitement to share an idea for a new character and invent new dialogue for a story, they are motivated to take part in group conversations and reach for the language to express themselves and their creative ideas to their friends. When they perform for the other 2nd-grade classes, they are engaged in recalling complex sentence patterns to tell their stories. As engrossed audience members, they are increasing their listening comprehension and using newly learned descriptive vocabulary to share feedback with the performers. Loriann's partnership with ArtsConnection and her own willingness to try new strategies is helping her students build bridges to success across the curriculum now and for years to come.

**14.3%**  
of the 1.1 million students  
in the NYC public schools  
are designated English  
language learners.





*“The puppetry curriculum has been field-tested for over a decade and has proven that the study of puppetry helps children build a foundation of oral language and literacy, particularly for those with weak pre-literacy skills.”*

Carol Morgan  
Deputy Director for Education  
ArtsConnection



“

*Theater, and the arts in general, has always been a place of breaking through barriers and challenging us all to change our collective narrative. Access and inclusion are huge initiatives in the theater community—the landscape of theater and the job possibilities in that world are expanding. The skills one learns being part of a theatrical experience—commitment, teamwork, punctuality, attention to detail—are transferable to every area of the workforce.*”

Laura Borgwardt  
Teaching Artist  
ArtsConnection





# Realizing His Potential

**W**hen Debra Vazquez's son Angel was two years old, he stopped making eye contact with her. He did not play with his cousins during family get-togethers. He did not speak like the rest of the children his age. Angel was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and at six years old was enrolled at P94M—The Spectrum School, a District 75 school on the Lower East Side.

At P94, thanks to a partnership with ArtsConnection, Angel became involved in musical theater. It was challenging learning lines, following choreography, memorizing and singing songs, becoming part of an ensemble. But he persevered. In 2014 he and his classmates traveled to Atlanta (the first time for he and his mom on a plane) to participate in the Junior Theater Festival where they performed scenes from *Aladdin Jr.* and garnered top honors for their performance and group skills. Angel had come a long way from the shy, non-communicative boy he had been. Today he is still at P94, in their high school program, and participating in ArtsConnection's Exploring Careers in Theater Program where he gets to visit costume shops, learn about ushering and box office duties, running sound and lighting, and meeting professionals throughout the industry. By the time he graduates, Angel will have the knowledge and skills he needs to qualify for a job in an aspect of theater. Angel's mom Debra says, "Before, I was so nervous, so stressed about Angel but now, he can stay in school until he is 21 years old. I hope ArtsConnection remains at P94 because they have really helped him communicate better and be more independent. He talks to everyone now. He's not afraid. He has friends here."



At 8 years old, the  
age of peak prevalence,  
an estimated

**1 in 68**

American children are  
on the autism spectrum.



## Building a Promising Future

**R**esplendent in her white suit, nineteen year old Shanalda held the ArtsConnection Gala audience in rapt attention as she shared her journey from Jamaica to New York City—arriving in a new country during her junior year and trying to navigate all of the challenges ahead of her. Her visual arts teacher suggested she learn about ArtsConnection, and soon she was participating in our ***Student Art Program***. She had entered the cultural life of our City.

Through the ***Student Art Program***, Shanalda saw her work exhibited in a corporate office and also received tickets to the Guggenheim Museum—which became Shanalda's first experience in a major cultural institution. Her interest whetted, she began exploring the other opportunities offered through ArtsConnection's Teen Programs. She began attending professional performances and recitals for \$5.00 through our ***High 5 Tickets to the Arts Program*** and joined our ***Teen Advisory Council*** where she helped plan and implement arts events for other teens. She worked at ***Student Art Program*** receptions and, after graduation, in her gap year, worked as a paid intern for that program. She found herself more and more interested in a career in art curation, which led to moderating a panel of teen artists at the Studio Museum in Harlem and a curatorial opportunity at the Dedalus Foundation.

With the help of ArtsConnection, Shanalda has grown from a shy newcomer to our City into a confident arts participant and thought leader with a passion for the visual arts—which she is now studying on full scholarship at Syracuse University.

Teen Programs  
draws students  
from  
**every**  
New York City  
Council District.





*ArtsConnection*  
2016 BENEFIT CELEBRATION

“In the fall, I will be at Syracuse University studying Art History. This is a journey that will fully cement the usefulness of all of the experiences I’ve had, and things I’ve learned and continue to learn at ArtsConnection. Not only has this organization helped me to discover myself as an individual and artist, but they have also established themselves as a permanent part of my lifelong growth.”

Shanalda ‘Jo’ Johnson  
Teen Programs Participant



“

*The Digital DELTA program is working, and working really well. The ArtsConnection teaching artists are seen as teachers at the school, and are now a part of the school culture. By getting to think and play creatively, students gain ownership over their work and their learning. This program has made the staff at JHS 185 start thinking about how to teach ELLs in a different way.*

”

Theresa Mshar  
Principal, JHS 185Q





# Developing English Language Literacy

**A**s the bell rings to commence classes at Junior High School 185 in Flushing, Queens, over 1,500 students and the echoes of over a dozen languages fill the hallways. Step inside one of the rooms and you just might see students gathering around an iPad with their ArtsConnection teaching artist, watching themselves dance, discussing and critiquing their techniques and suggesting changes. Once the students have concluded their analysis, they take their places on the classroom floor while one uses the iPad to record more dancing, incorporating peer feedback. Students alter and improve their chassé, passé-skip and other dance rhythms that express the emotions, objects or ideas created in their group discussions.

What you're seeing is not your average dance lesson. The junior high students are learning an art form, but what the dance instruction is trying to accomplish here goes beyond movement. The collaborative group effort, the deep discussions of dance vocabulary and the space to self-reflect and assess contribute to developing English language literacy.

The person responsible for bringing ArtsConnection's innovative, research-based program model, **Digital DELTA: Developing English Language Literacy Through the Arts**, into the school's classrooms is Principal Theresa Mshar, who over the past six years has partnered with ArtsConnection. She champions arts education and wholeheartedly believes that the organization has been an invaluable addition, contributing to her vision and focus of improving academics and raising the level of standards for her students' achievements.



The margin of achievement of DELTA students taking the NYS English as a Second Language Achievement Test steadily increased over 3 years, to more than an

**18.5%**

improvement over their peers.

# ArtsConnection by the Numbers

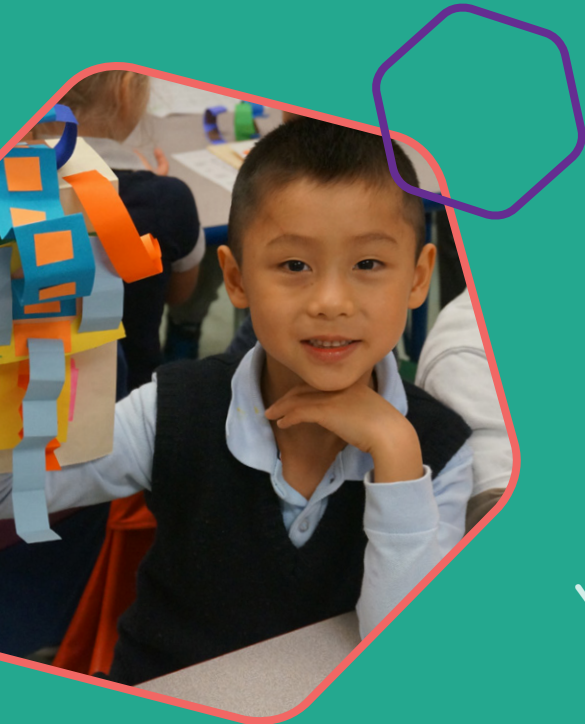
45,000

NYC students participating in-school  
and afterschool arts programming



373

*Student Art Program* artworks exhibited  
in corporate offices throughout NYC



37

Years of keeping the arts central to the lives  
of NYC's public school students





123

Partner schools in all  
five boroughs



3,357

Hours of Professional  
Development for teachers



122

Arts and cultural organizations contributing  
tickets to *High 5 Tickets to the Arts*

11,193

Free and discounted tickets  
distributed to young people

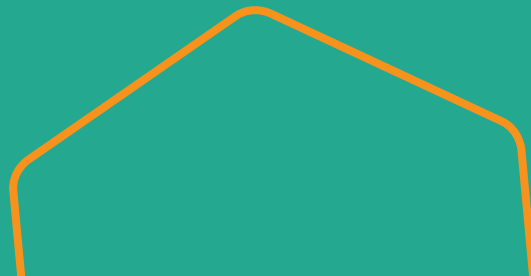
1,160

Classrooms served



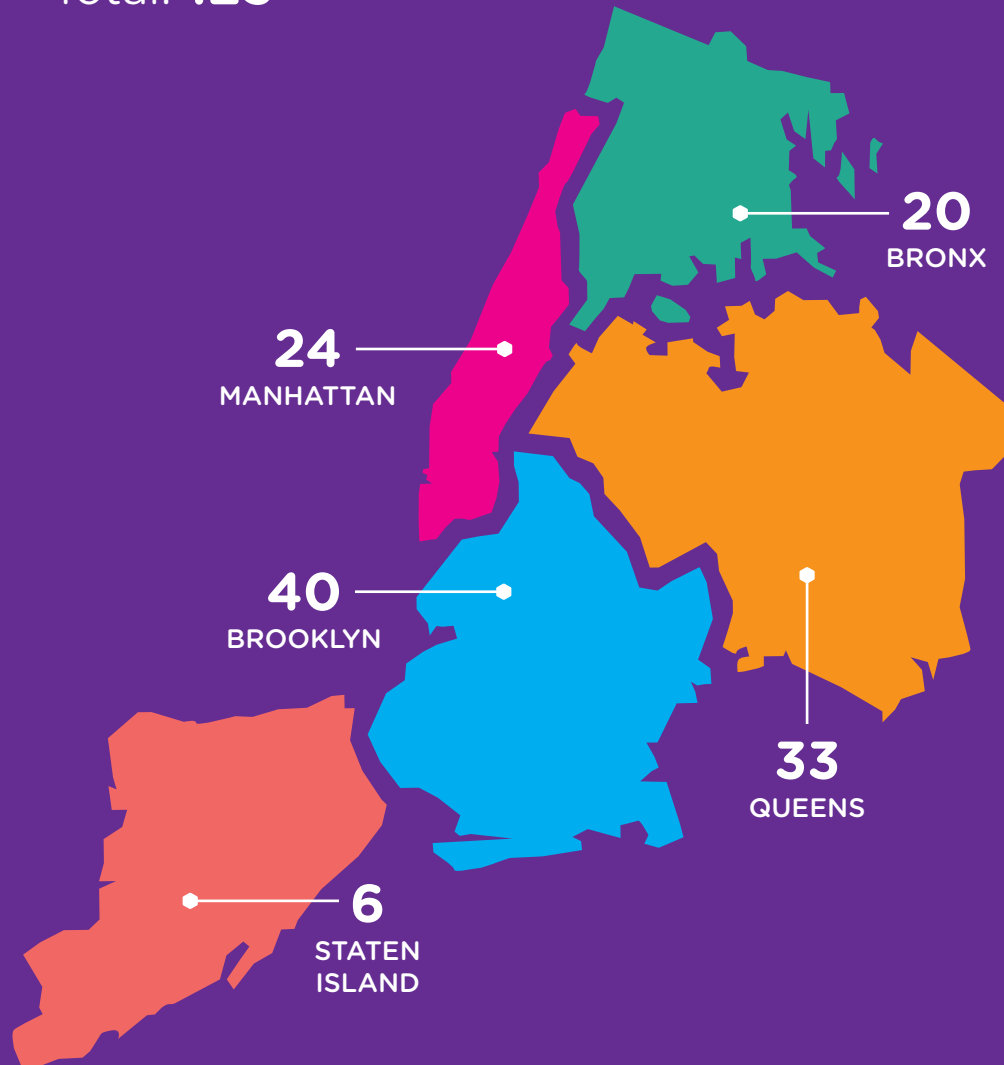
4 Million+

Students reached since 1979



# Schools by Boroughs

Total: 123



## BRONX

PS 5, PS 14, PS 49, PS 160, IS 181, MS 228, PS 277, PS 314, MS 327, PS 382, P 168 @ P 20, P 168 @ P 203, P 168 @ P 842, The Castle Hill School, Celia Cruz High School of Music, East Fordham Academy for the Arts, In-Tech Academy, Laboratory School of Finance and Technology, Lucero Elementary School, Morris Academy for Collaborative Studies

## BROOKLYN

JHS 14, PS 16, IS 30, PS 32, PS 38, PS 69, MS 88, IS 96, PS/IS 121, PS 124, PS 130, PS 160, PS 165, PS 167, IS 171, PS/IS 184, PS 193, PS 222, PS 230, JHS 259, PS 261, MS 266, PS 299, PS 312, PS 325, PS/IS 327, IS 392, MS 581, MS 598, MS 839, Academy of Arts and Letters, Brooklyn Environmental Exploration School, Brooklyn High School for the Arts,

Kappa V, Mott Hall IV, Park Slope Collegiate, Ronald Edmonds Learning Center II, Alternative Learning Centers @ W.E.B. Dubois High School, Alternative Learning Centers @ William E. Grady Career and Technical Education High School, William H. Maxwell High School

## MANHATTAN

PS 6, PS 59, PS 124, PS 148, PS 150, MS 514, MS 839, P 94 @ PS 51, P 94 @ PS 188, P 94 @ PS 276, P 94 @ PS 281, P 94 @ PS 340, P 94 @ PS 361, P 94 @ PS 397, Central Park East 2, Children's Workshop School, Earth School, Fashion Industries High School, Frederick Douglass Academy, Manhattan Comprehensive Day & Night High School, Neighborhood School, Professional Performing Arts School,

Renaissance Leadership Academy, Satellite Academy Manhattan

## QUEENS

PS 13, PS 19, PS 20, PS 22, PS 33, PS 50, PS 68, IS 77, PS 91, IS 93, IS 127, PS 153, JHS 185, IS 189, IS 194, IS 200, IS 208, PS 219, PS 229, PS 239, MS/HS 309, IS 562, PS 256 @ Gateway Academy High School, PS 256 @ St. John's Residence for Boys, P 993 @ P 191, Bayside High School, Corona Arts Academy, Epic High School North, Flushing High School, John Bowne High School, Martin Van Buren High School, Queens Children's Psychiatric Center, Thomas Edison High School

## STATEN ISLAND

PS 6, PS 16, PS 48, IS 49, PS 78, P 721 The Hungerford School



# ArtsConnection Supporters

Donor List September 1, 2015—August 31, 2016

Many thanks to all of our generous supporters. Due to space limitations, we cannot list all donor names here, but all of your contributions are deeply appreciated.

## In-kind donations:

Tickets for our High 5 Tickets to the Arts Program are provided by 122 arts & cultural partners. Subsidized studio space is provided by A.R.T./New York Creative Space Grant, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Space for Teen Programs workshops is provided by the Museum of Art and Design, New York Live Arts, HBO, and Sony.

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## \$500,000+

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## \$100,000+

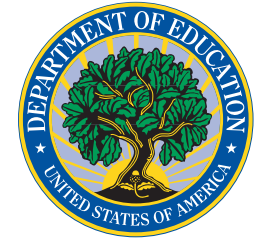
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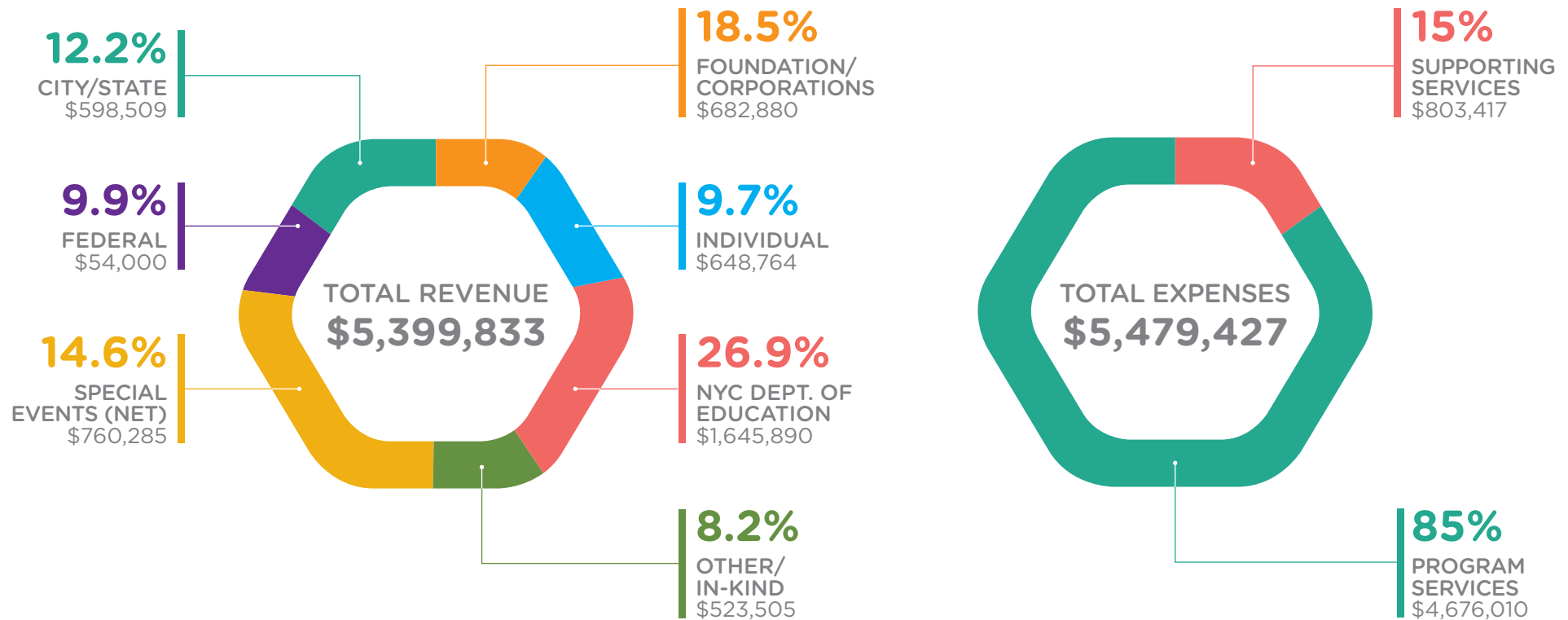
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FY16



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