



# Annual Report 2020



**CHANGING  
WORLDS**

Many stories. One city.

# Welcome to Changing Worlds!

*“Through art you can promote peace and express your own desire for peace, and share it with others.”*

This quote from a student at Ruiz Elementary so beautifully expresses our own desires! Over and over, the art and words of the youth we serve at Changing Worlds breaks through and touches us profoundly.

This report reflects on our FY20 year (9/1/19-8/31/20) - a year that was split in two by the COVID-19 pandemic and the persistent pandemics of racial struggle and injustice. Thank you for giving our story your attention.

This year roared in like a lion with momentum on our side; fall programming was successful and we were launching a Spring 2020 cycle of residencies when COVID-19 shut down in-person instruction in Chicago. We are immensely proud of how our team met the tremendous challenge of COVID-19 with grace, humility and flexibility. We quickly pivoted to meet students and families where they are. Throughout the spring, Changing Worlds framed our relationships with schools, families and students with a sensitivity to racial justice issues.

**We delivered programs through the pandemic:** 26 schools benefiting 1,786 students.

**We met targeted outcomes in the majority of residencies:** Data points we are particular proud of are drawn from fall 2019 assessments including 82% of students reporting an understanding of cultural concepts on post-surveys; 86% of 184 Pre-K and K music students were assessed as developing or exceeding rhythm standards, and 92% of students demonstrated an understanding of what a peacemaker is, a 35% increase from pre-survey.

**We committed to our team:** No layoffs were made to staff. A total of 28 Teaching Artists worked with 50 teachers.

**We managed our money well:** Our sound financial stewardship was supported by expanded funding from the philanthropic sector, success in obtaining a Paycheck Protection Program, forgiven loan, and robust board leadership around our virtual 2020 Benefit (which netted nearly \$120K!).

**We pivoted quickly:** The “shelter in place” shutdown was a transition for our team, but was also very fruitful, allowing us to maximize the skills of the Program Team in ways that exceeded their work plans and job descriptions for the year.

**We brought music to youth via Foundations of Music programs:** FoM Programming was delivered in six schools (continuing and new). They have been met with incredible enthusiasm.

Now, in this year, we are in the midst of celebrating **25 Years of Impact** while preparing to translate our ambitions into a new strategic plan which will help us achieve a 50% increase in programs in three years. We will lean into our strengths—including a focus on social-emotional learning, the power of the arts to heal, and the importance of individual voices and stories. We will also continue to challenge ourselves. We have work to do in honoring Asian-American and Indigenous voices in our classrooms. We are determined to go deeper with selected partners and we will increase our support for our Teaching Artists.

**Thank you for reading, and for your support and alliance.**



Alicia Vega  
Executive Director



Sarvesh Soi  
Board President

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Page 2:** Letter from the Executive Director

**Page 3:** Table of Contents

**Page 4:** Impact Map

**Page 5:** Manifesto

**Page 6:** Current Programs

**Page 7 – 11:** Articles:

***EXPANDING*** *The Power of Music:*

*Ashe Elementary*

***EXPLORING*** *Voice & Choice:*

*Mapping our Future*

***COMMITTED*** *Staying the Course: Adelitas*

***RESPONSIVE*** *Meeting the Moment:*

*Making Art with Family & Friends*

***PERSISTING*** *Resilience in Pilsen*

**Page 12:** Honors

**Page 13:** Financials

**Page 14 – 17:** Donor list

**Page 18:** Boards, Our Team, Teaching Artists

**Page 19:** Donation Form

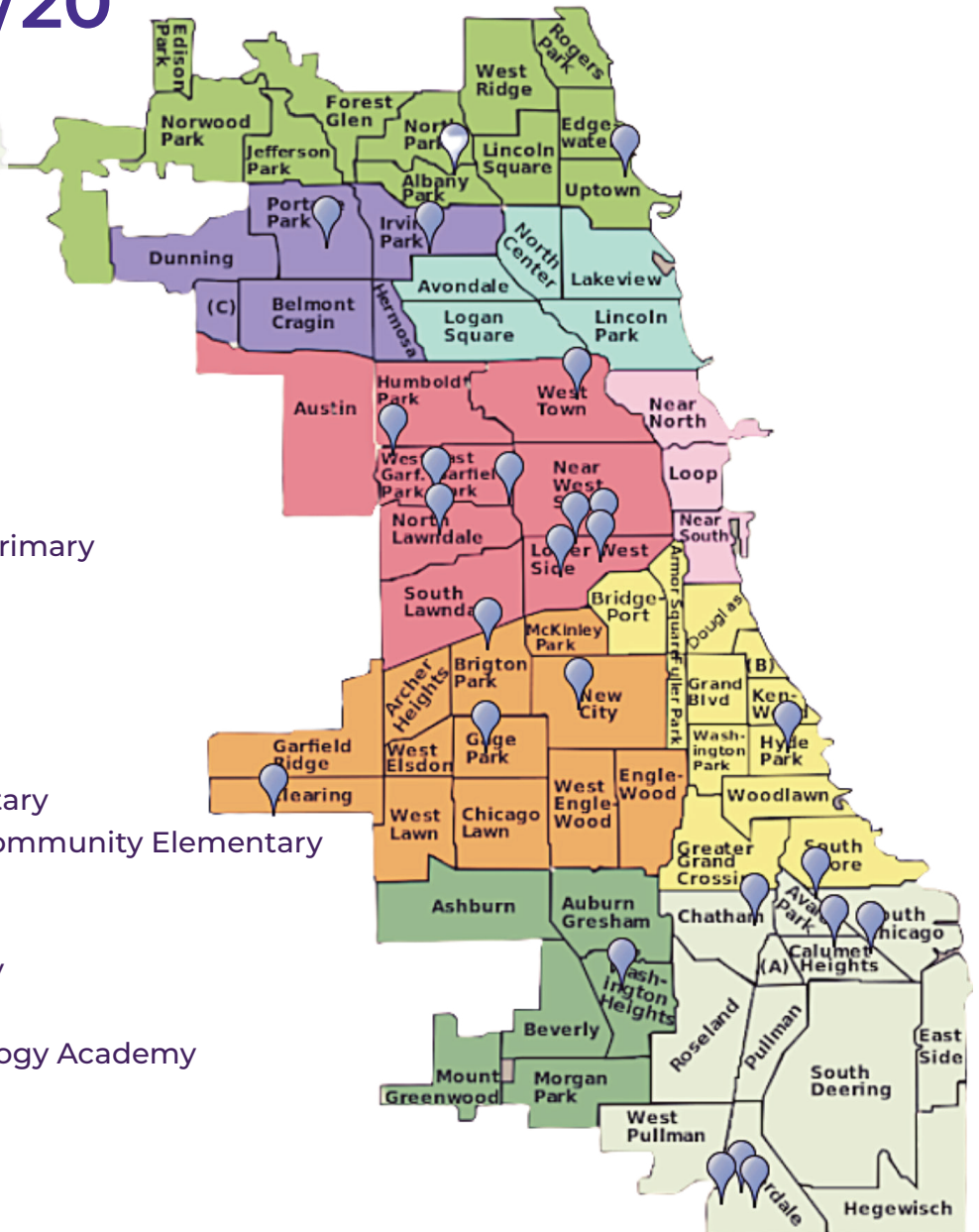
**On the cover:** “Untitled” by Emily Hurtado, 2020  
Benito Juarez Community Academy



# Residency Sites

9/1/19 - 8/31/20

Aldridge Elementary School  
Arnold Mireles Academy  
Arthur R. Ashe Jr. School  
Benito Juarez High School  
Brett Harte Elementary  
C. Hughes Elementary  
Calmecca Academy  
Carl Schurz High School  
CICS Loomis- Longwood  
Dubois Elementary  
George Washington Carver Primary  
Hedges Middle School  
Hernandez Middle School  
Horace Mann School  
Irma C. Ruiz Elementary  
John C. Dore Elementary  
John T. McCutcheon Elementary  
Joseph Kellman Corporate Community Elementary  
LaSalle II School  
Ole A. Thorp Elementary  
Orozco Community Academy  
Pilsen Community Academy  
Spencer Elementary Technology Academy  
Sumner Elementary  
Thomas Hoyne Elementary  
Volta Elementary



**26 schools  
across Chicago...**





**story** is more than words.

**art** is more than paint on a canvas.

**song** is more than melody.

It is a fearless reflection of myself.

An expression of my history and my identity  
that fosters a spirit of empathy and compassion.

Brings people, cultures and ideas together.

And becomes a foundation

for stronger, more dynamic communities.

No, my story isn't just a story.

It is a bold statement  
that can change minds.

It is a powerful expression  
that can change hearts.

And it is a spark  
that can change worlds.

# CURRENT PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

## CURRENT PROGRAMS

### In-School Residencies

Two Models of Program Delivery:  
Our Arts, Cultural and Literacy Connections program focuses on project-based arts integration within middle-school classrooms that engages teachers as collaborators for goals that span arts, writing and social/emotional learning. Our Arts and Performing Arts Cultural Connections program focuses on the gaps of students' learning a particular art form along with related personal identity and cultural linkages.

### After-School Programs

*Our After-School Programs range from 10-week experiences to year-long residencies led by Teaching Artists that harness the power of the arts to improve student learning, foster identity exploration, and bridge cultural divides.*

### Community Programs

We promote joy and encourage creative artistic expression for students and their families during family nights, culminating events, and public student art exhibitions.

We are lead presenting agency of the Ten Thousand Ripples public art project. Two traveling exhibits embrace diversity and encourage community.



## NEW!

### Music

In 2019, CW integrated the programs of Foundations of Music into our organization, and we are now delivering models of both In-School and After-School programming.

**General Music** programming for grades Pre-K through 5th works in a teacher's classroom for up to 30 weeks. The young students in this program learn the vocabulary of music and practice key developmental skills.

**Songwriting/Music Production** is offered to Middle School Grades 6-8. This program is designed for smaller project-based groups of students in designated one-hour sessions.

### Adult Programs

Beginning in 2019, and throughout the COVID-10 pandemic, CW has broadened our scope to include service to more adults through CPS parent workshops and "The Art of DEI Living" program.

### Survive & Thrive

This new initiative, funded by the Arts Work Fund, is a regranting program for Changing Worlds Teaching Artists, which will enable them to grow their personal artistic practices and complete projects.

# Music at Ashe

FY20 was a year full of music, as Changing Worlds fully integrated the high-quality programs of Foundations of Music into our program roster. During the past year, despite COVID-19 challenges, Changing Worlds brought the power and joy of music via in-person instruction at six schools and reached 480 students with music programming.

A shining example can be found at Ashe Elementary, located at 8505 S. Ingleside. Ashe had a prior track-record with FoM and the principal supported our ongoing work with his Pre-K and K students, writing these words, **“Over the last three years, Arthur Ashe Elementary School has cultivated a strong partnership with Changing Worlds. The staff feels Changing Worlds is an exceptionally enthusiastic partner that has been able to expose students to music instruction that they would not have received if it weren’t for this ongoing partnership.”** Veteran Teaching Artist Avo Randruut is seen in this picture teaching the “Instruments of the Artist”: body, voice, imagination, emotions, and the five senses.

During this stressful period, we are leaning into the beneficial aspects of music instruction to promote the capacity of music to promote joy, and healing!



Imagination



# Voice & Choice:

## An innovative **Essentiality Needs**

## **Assessment** points the way to the next 25 years



Give Students Choice—and a Voice! 1,527 youth, 306 adults, 24 Chicago Public Schools, 9 listening sessions, 4 community organizations, and 2,000 surveys informed an Essentiality Needs Assessment in 2019-2020, and the data gathered is rich, and useful. This investigation of what's essential (to our youth, our families, our communities) was made possible through generous support from the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation and Polk Bros. Foundation, and the expertise of our partners: The Taproot Foundation, PwC, Quo Vadimus, and Morten Group LLC.

**One message came loud and clear from youth surveys and comments: Youth want voice (authentic ways to creatively express their understanding of the world) and choice (flexible student-driven learning environments rich with relevant learning options).**

Our researchers found abundant evidence of the importance of choice and voice, which is increasingly considered a best practice within student-centered education.

We also found strong validation of Changing Worlds' SEL approaches,

especially around trauma-informed practice. The violence in Chicago communities is a harsh reality. Many families are exposed to community violence. 50% of the almost 300 adults interviewed ranked community violence as the most important challenge faced by our youth.

Out of all that we learned from the Essentiality Needs Assessment, we decided to immediately focus on youth voice and choice in the Fall of 2020: In all listening sessions, youth told us that voice and choice is important, the obvious question was what does youth voice and choice look like in CW programs? Despite our mission to affirm youth identity, we never explicitly examined youth voice and choice in our assessments. Program staff and teaching artists could most likely speak to multiple opportunities for youth voice and choice but based on the findings of the Essentiality Needs Assessment, we were pushed to query it in a structured way, and to see if the youth recognized it for themselves. To that end, we added voice and choice on our program observation tool, we included a post-survey question gauging voice and choice on student, teaching artist, and classroom teacher end-of-residency surveys. We are eager to see how we measure up.



**“My intention is for youth to walk away with the process of thinking for oneself and having open-mindedness for things that are outside of their control, like what’s going on right now with the pandemic.”**

—Shenequa Brooks,  
CW Teaching Artist

# Staying the Course:

## Program Spotlight on “Adelitas”

A key innovation at the heart of Changing Worlds is our emphasis on art AND culture. We provide a blend and balance of creative experience, expression, and education as it relates to culture (which we interpret to include identity rooted in place, history, and action, as well as ethnic heritage). Changing Worlds embeds the historical cultural significance of the art form in residencies in a wide variety of disciplines--dance, theatre, visual arts, music, and digital media. **Youth are engaged in project-based learning where they express their own culture while activating key social-emotional behaviors such as self-awareness, cooperation and empathy.**

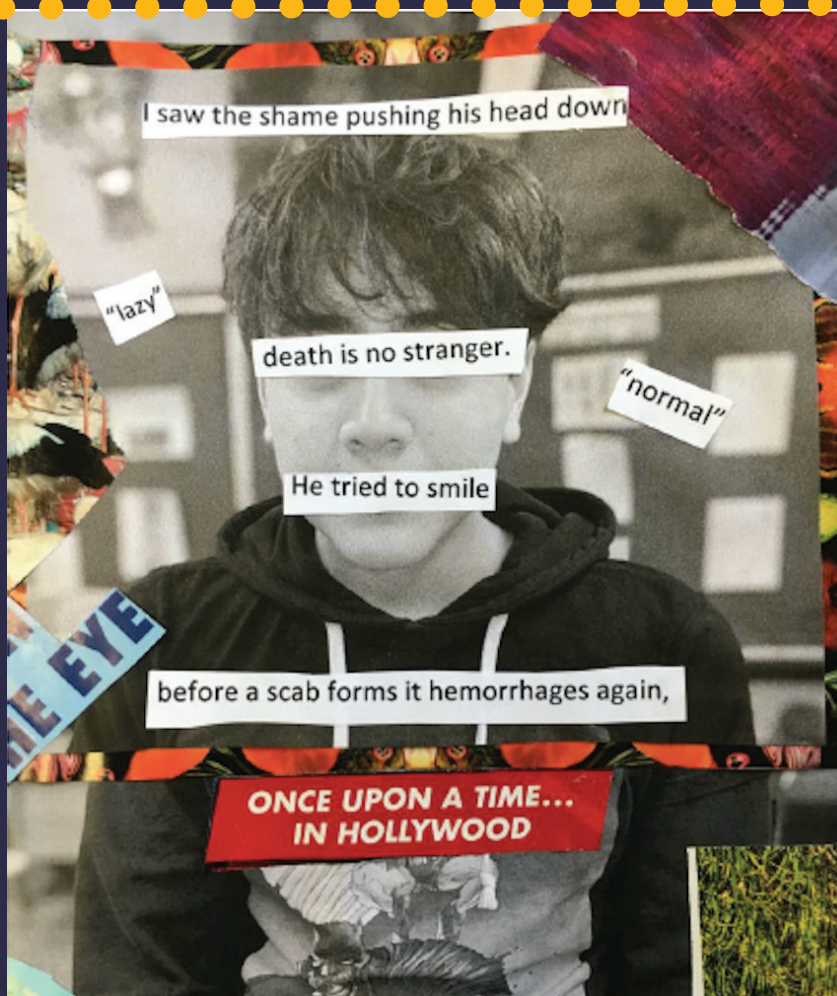
“Adelitas: Women & Femmes of Courage” is a program that does all this—and did it in FY20, completing the residency before the pandemic hit. Adelitas promotes and impacts the visibility of queer women through its process, its leadership and its content. The “Adelitas” curriculum was created by lifelong Pilsen artist and activist Diana Solís, a Lesbian/Chicana/Feminist icon throughout both the United States and Mexico. Diana’s original Adelitas curriculum uses arts integration methods to teach Mexican Women’s history to grade school students. Diana partnered with Robin Reid Drake, a non-binary, trans-femme

poet and educator, to explore the possibilities of growth in this curriculum for older audiences with a more intersectional lens. The unit was delivered at Schurz High School.

She100 funding supported a residency rich with writing and art-making, including remarkable collages and journals.

Based on the program goals and projected student outputs/outcomes, a short pre-service survey is prepared by Changing Worlds to share with the students and these results are shared with the participating teachers. At the end of the program, a survey for participants is distributed to determine the students’ interests and specific new learnings during this program.

Throughout the program, Changing Worlds program staff visit to observe the teaching artists presenting the program in the classroom to ensure that there is fidelity with program goals, to enjoy the students’ interactions with the teaching artists and to informally engage with the students about their artistic output. These site visits also offer teachers opportunities to share their personal experiences and give feedback to the program staff.





# Meeting the Moment: Making Art with Family & Friends



As the pandemic inflicted a series of traumatic blows—including the closing of schools, Changing Worlds turned inwards to find strength, and build new skills. Then we turned outwards to connect with our communities in new ways. **The core of what we have always done is helping youth cope with their environment, often an environment they cannot control, using the arts.** They needed us now more than ever and we met the moment in a variety of ways, including live streaming interactive experiences which launched in spring of 2020.

Our talented staff created new workshops—**Making Art with Family and Friends**—which engaged intergenerational groups in dance, theater and music experiences. Existing skill sets within our team in the realms of Digital/Virtual Technology and Art Therapy. Healing proved invaluable in helping our cadre of Teaching Artists navigate this new world. The role of the arts in healing has assumed new importance this year and we are committed to an ongoing exploration on this theme.





# Resilience in Pilsen:

## Artist-Driven Project Receives Recognition

Last spring, long-time Changing Worlds Teaching Artists and devoted residents of Pilsen, Jean Parisi and Diana Solís, were commissioned by CW and funded by Illinois Humanities to collect stories using video and photography from residents of Pilsen during the summer of 2020. **One example are the Acevedos (pictured below) who care for the El Paseo Community Garden.** This COVID-19 Resilience project culminated in a series of moving interviews and photographs that were later extended to a residency at Juarez High School in partnership with art teacher, Liz Winfield. Sixty students photographed images of despair, endurance, isolation and hope. WBEZ chronicled this project and a rebroadcast inclusive of student interviews and artwork can be found at <https://bit.ly/2L6bK5G>. One participating student reflected, “By looking closer into how certain things have changed drastically, I’m able to not feel alone in being stressed about certain things, because I can relate to others.”

**This project shined a light on the energy produced when our Teaching Artists are supported in their personal practices – and inspired the “Changing Worlds Teaching Artists Survive & Thrive Program”.** This new initiative is funded by the Arts Work Fund and provides modest grants to Teaching Artists for artistic work.



# Honors & Awards

Looking back at FY20, we want to acknowledge some special people.

**STUDENT  
LEADERSHIP  
AWARD**



**Shakirah** nominated by Hani

**Cultural  
Connection  
Award**

to 3 Changing Worlds  
Teaching Artists,  
**Cynthium Woodfolk-Johnson,  
Diana Solís, & Mama Edie McLoud**  
with a special appearance by the  
late Martez "Mister" Rucker  
who created an amazing  
collaborative video  
for the May 2020  
benefit.

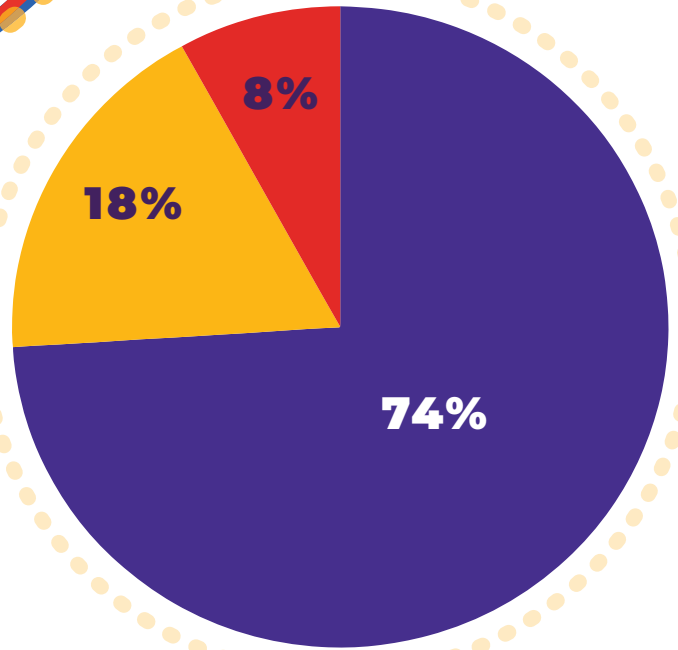


**STUDENT  
LEADERSHIP  
AWARD**

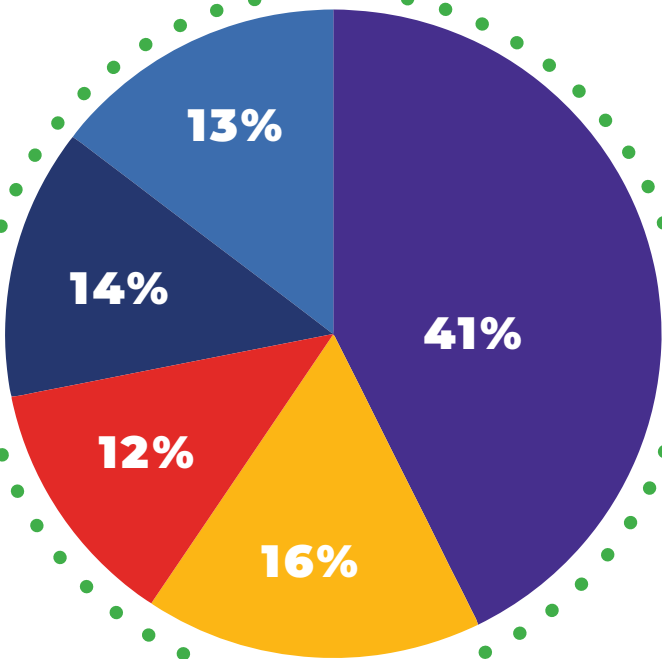
**Zuleyka Ramirez**  
nominated by Luis De La Torre

# Financials

**Total Expenses**  
**\$1,054,229**  
**Program 74%**  
**Fundraising 18%**  
**Management 8%**



**Total Income \$872,622**  
**Foundations 41%**  
**Program Service Fees 16%**  
**Contributions 12%**  
**Special Events 13%**  
**Government Grants 14%**



**Impact** | **25** Neighborhoods  
**Celebrating** | **24** Schools  
**Changing Worlds'** | **32** Partners  
**Reach** | Just over **100** Residencies  
 Over **1,700** youth | **94%** youth of color

\* Net Assets August 31, 2019:  
**\$286,161**  
 \* Change in Net Assets:  
**(\$178,998)**  
 \* Net Assets August 31, 2020:  
**\$107,163**



# Funder List

## **FOUNDATIONS**

The Abeles Foundation

Arts Work Fund

The Chicago Community Foundation

Christ Church Benevolence Fund

Communitas Charitable Trust

Alverin M. Cornell Foundation

Crossroads Fund

Farny R. Wurlitzer Foundation Fund,  
part of DeKalb County  
Community Foundation

The Donley Foundation

The Field Foundation of Illinois

Forefront – The Mission  
Sustainability Initiative

Lloyd A. Fry Foundation

The Joseph B. Glossberg Foundation

John H. Hart Foundation

Hotels for Hope

Ingenuity & The Creative Schools Fund

Krafsur Family Foundation

Landau Family Foundation

The Lohengrin Foundation

Jerome A. and Estelle R. Newman  
Assistance Fund

The MacArthur Fund for Arts  
and Culture at Prince

Peace Development Fund

Albert Pick Jr. Fund

Polk Bros. Foundation

Renaissance Charitable Foundation

Benjamin J. Rosenthal Foundation

Rothman Family Foundation

SHE100

## **CORPORATIONS**

Adtalem Global Education

AMS Mechanical Systems, Inc.

Anderson/Miller, Ltd.

Avalon Trust Company

C22Tech

Frame Factory

Gensler

Gofen and Glossberg, LLC

Grafin Skin and Beauty

KPMG

LEVEL General Contractors, LLC

MPI-Invest

Neuberger Berman

Providence Bank & Trust

Trillium Asset Management

U.S. Cellular

Shepard Schwartz & Harris, LLP

Winston & Strawn, LLP

## **GOVERNMENT**

Chicago Park District

CityArts Grant from City of Chicago

City of Chicago - Department of Family  
Support Services

Illinois Arts Council Agency

Illinois Humanities

National Endowment for the Arts

## INDIVIDUALS

Ron Abramowicz  
Judith Adelman  
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Swapna Gigani  
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Jodi Gosinski  
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Toby Sachs  
Hedda Saltz  
Bettylu & Paul Saltzman  
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    Bob Vasquez  
Maurice Samuels  
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Max Taylor  
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Pete Thomas  
T. Jenese Thompson  
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Sheffield & Pod Janna Wolk  
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Tatsuya Yamada  
Amanda Young  
Jerri Zbiral & Alan Teller

# Our Team



## Changing Worlds Board

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Buck

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Brian Hahn  
Neuberger Berman

James Jones Jr.  
Leak and Sons Funeral  
Enterprise, Ltd.

Michael Martin  
All Nations Worship Assembly

Kimberlene Matthews  
PNC Bank

Laurie Miller  
Anderson/Miller LTD

Melanie Neely  
City of Chicago

Vincent Rizzo  
Hinshaw & Culbertson LLC

Brad Sheftel  
Valor Equity Partners

Michael Smoke  
Northern Trust

Norm Winer  
Vicki Woolner Samuels

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Operations Director

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Manager for General Music &  
Digital Music Programs

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Manager of Out of School time  
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Assistant

Jon Pierre, Marketing &  
Social Media Production Manager

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Development Consultant

Indira Johnson  
Art & Peace Consultant

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Graphic Designer

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Shenequa Brooks  
Nakia Brown  
Mars Caulton  
Luis Crespo  
Thomas Cullen  
Idris Daniel  
Luis De La Torre  
Robin Reid Drake  
William Eller  
Cassandra Fox  
Rick Graham  
Rhonda Gray

Mike Herrero  
Victoria Gabrielson  
Susanna Hostetter  
Cynthium Johnson-Woodfolk  
Sharon Krome  
Jesse Livingston  
Jonathan Mendoza  
Edie McCloud Armstrong  
Jenn Morea  
Hani Moustafa  
Sadira Muhammad  
Alva Nelms  
Maya Odim

Jean Parisi  
Bashirah Perine  
Amaniyea Payne  
Kristiana Rae Colón  
Avo Randruut  
Tim Rey  
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Assane Seck  
Diana Solís  
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Erika Valenciana  
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CHICAGO, IL 60616



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Changing Worlds prides itself on offering meaningful volunteer opportunities. Experiences range from leadership roles on our boards to working with teachers and families on arts, cultural awareness and literacy programs. Our volunteers help advance Changing Worlds' mission through one-time, short-term or long-term opportunities.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US AT

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# CHANGING WORLDS

Many stories. One city.