



TulalipCares.org

## Tulalip Charitable Contributions Funds Distribution Report

**NAME OF AGENCY:** Arts Corps

**ADDRESS:** 4408 Delridge Way SW, Suite 110, Seattle, WA 98106

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**GENERAL GOALS:** Through arts education and community collaboration, Arts Corps unlocks the creative power of youth so that all young people have the courage to imagine and freedom to create a just and vibrant future.

**SPECIFIC USE FOR THIS AWARD:**

This award was used as support for operational expenses and programs.

For more information please read the attached report from Arts Corps.



Code: Q3 2016 14.2

## Final Report to Tulalip Tribes- August 2017

**Organizational Overview:** Arts Corps is a nationally recognized youth arts education organization that works to address the race and income-based opportunity gap in access to arts education. Through participation in our arts integration, out-of-school arts and teen leadership programs, youth experience the transformative power of creativity and gain a deepened belief in their own capacity to learn, take risks, persist and achieve. In 2012, Arts Corps was awarded the highest national honor in community-based arts education by the White House, The National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award.

**Progress & Results:** Arts Corps' 2016- 2017 youth development programs successfully met our goals of providing underserved youth with transformative arts learning opportunities that develop artistic skills and foster creative capacities (also known as 21<sup>st</sup> century skills). Through our 2016- 2017 Creative Youth Development and Arts Integration programs, Arts Corps served 2,467 students. Approximately 70% of the youth who participated in Arts Corps programs come from low-income families and 80% are youth of color.

**Creative Youth Development:** Through our 2016- 2017 Creative Youth Development Program, Arts Corps continued to engage youth ages 5- 19 in high-quality after school arts instruction, open mic performances, workshop performances, poetry slams, break dancing competitions, and leadership activities. We provided 21 quarter-long classes, 10 workshops, 8 open mic sessions, and 6 drop-in writing circles for a total of 1,178 youth in Seattle and South King County. After school enrichment classes included spoken word poetry, break dance, choir, drum line, music production, Hula Ma 'Oe, Capoeira, visual arts, theatre, film, and our new hip hop class for teens, which explores the history, vocabulary, and foundation of hip hop dance, as well as musicality, moves and expression.

*The best part is drumline doesn't only teach you how to play the drum, it also teaches you life lessons.*

-Drumline student, Washington Middle School

Our Teen Artist Program kicked off in August 2016 with our Arts Liberation & Leadership Institute (ALLI) which shifted from a weekly format in the fall to an intensive, weeklong summer institute. 20 youth participated in this intensive training that explores the intersection of community organizing and artistry with participants learning concrete skills such as event planning, facilitation, outreach/communications, and public speaking. Through the training, participants also build artistic skills and cultivate a social justice framework. For example, 100% of surveyed participants reported that they felt connected to local social justice movements as an artist/activist after their participation in ALLI.

Following the Arts Liberation & Leadership Institute, in September 2016 Arts Corps brought in a group of 13 teen leaders to serve on our Spokes Teen Leadership Board. These young leaders received ongoing leadership training throughout the school year while serving as paid interns responsible for planning, organizing and executing myriad

teen performance events and workshops, such as our spoken word poetry slams and monthly open mics. Their focus was on creating their own path as artists while simultaneously acting as teen ambassadors to the community through performance and workshops.

With the support of Spokes leaders, Arts Corps successfully implemented our annual Youth Speaks Seattle Poetry Slam Series. Through our 2017 Youth Speaks Seattle spoken word poetry slam series, 35 teens performed at spoken word poetry slams before a combined audience of approximately 1,250 community members. These performances left a lasting impression on audience members because of the bold truth, creativity, and power displayed by the young poets. The culminating Grand Slam poetry competition was featured in a local publication, *The Seattle Globalist*. (See attached article.) 10 students performed in the final Grand Slam Competition, and five finalists won the opportunity to represent Seattle at Brave New Voices, an annual international poetry competition that was held in the Bay Area this summer.

Our 2017 Massive Break Challenge (MBC) was also highly successful. The MBC is a partnership between Arts Corps, Northwest Folklife, and Extraordinary Futures, a nonprofit affiliate of the Massive Monkees breaking crew. This annual competition, which includes 5 preliminary break dance battles leading up to a culminating battle, is Seattle's largest regional break competition for middle and high school students, drawing from schools across western Washington. The final event takes place during the Northwest Folklife Festival and is free to the community. This year, approximately 60 students performed at the final competition before an audience of 432 people. (The event was sold out.) Audience members were deeply moved by the students' performances, with one audience member commenting in a note, "The whole thing was awesome and left me stunned by their creativity, fearlessness and athleticism."

Arts Corps' 2016-2017 Creative Youth Development Program also included The Residency, an innovative summer program for youth artists from low-income communities. A collaboration between Arts Corps, Museum of Pop Culture and Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, this 3 1/2 week (18 day) residency provided 42 aspiring teen artists with intensive training in creative songwriting, performance techniques and beat production. The residency culminated in a powerful showcase on Aug. 18, 2017 in which students performed original songs that they wrote and produced collaboratively during the residency. The passion, talent, and dedication of the youth were impressive, and the solidarity and support among participants was inspiring. Following the showcase, the youth participated in a new, 3-day business track focused on equipping participants with tools needed to become professionals in the creative industry. Panels and workshops featured highly acclaimed local artists and business professionals, including Zach Quillen, Business Manager for Macklemore and Ryan Lewis; Hollis Wong-Wear of The Flavr Blue, and Nikkita Oliver, 2017 Seattle Mayoral Candidate, spoken word poet, lawyer and social activist. Panelists reflected on the keys to success for those seeking careers in the creative industries and stressed the importance of following your heart and remaining open to letting your career take you in surprising directions.

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**MAKE ART ANYWAY.**

**Arts Corps is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.** Contributions to Arts Corps are tax deductible.

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## The Seattle Globalist

### Youth Speaks Seattle finalists serve up identity, politics and anti-racism

Posted on [Apr 10, 2017](#) by [Meiling Du](#)



Nikkita Oliver hosts Youth Speaks Seattle 2017 Grand Slam at Town Hall Friday night. (Photo by Meiling Du)

“We rise. We rise. We rise.”

My heart beat started racing when I heard these powerful words echoing at Town Hall Seattle, as I was sitting among the audience of the 2017 [Youth Speaks Seattle](#) Grand Slam Friday night. It opened with Maya Angelou’s poem “Still I Rise” performed by the 10 slam finalists and the host, Nikkita Oliver, [a Seattle mayoral candidate](#), anti-racist organizer and longtime slam poet.

“Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave. I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise. I rise. I rise.”

Oliver asked everyone to join in and we chanted, “We rise. We rise. We rise.”

Since 2003, Youth Speaks Seattle has held an annual poetry slam to showcase the original work of Seattle’s next generation of poetic change makers. A panel of judges at the slam score performances and determine the top five poets to represent Seattle at [Brave New Voices \(BNV\), the International Youth Poetry Slam Festival](#). This July, the finalists will head to San Francisco, Calif. for BNV 2017.

The first poem receiving a standing ovation was by poet Carlynn Newhouse.

“Just because you don’t acknowledge your privilege doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist.”



Carlynn Newhouse, champ of this year’s Grand Slam. (Photo by Meiling Du)

Her poem criticizes the Internet trolls that deny the existence of racism. She expressed the determination to fight against it in spite of frustration and anger:

“Dear Internet trolls, I’ve seen your kind of ugly before. Instead of white hoods, you hide behind computer screens. Maybe if you shut up and listen, you’ll learn something. And before you comment on this poem, I’m not ever gonna stop spinning. Don’t come for me unless I send for you,” she ended the poem powerfully. Right as the last word was finished, many of the audience members — me included — jumped up from our seats to cheer. I had never seen such energy and enthusiasm at any gathering before.

By the end of the night, Newhouse’s performances won her the champion title for Seattle’s Youth Speaks slam.

Competing poets Azura Tyabji, Ana Walker, Ezra Conklin, and Mercury Sunderland also made quite an impression on their audience and judges, rising to the list of top six finalists.

Tyabji’s anthem fighting back against white supremacy inspired many in the audience to raise their fists and shout in agreement:

“Learn that fascism did not arrive with a name tag. It arrives as your friend. It arrives as Richard Spencer, well-manicured and well-behaved, speaking poison into cameras, spinning it unacceptable. We cannot allow this by any means necessary.”

In one poem, Ana Walker offered us some visceral imagery of the violence that people have been suffering worldwide as a result of American policy:

“I’m sorry you didn’t smell the smoke but the smoke has been drifting over from all the countries this government has bombed.”

Sunderland’s poem focused on youth identity, choice and self-determination:

Conklin also touched on these themes in their coming-of-age poem:

“How to turn a doorknob? Instructions: First, you must be sure your fingertips are strong enough and well-practiced. Second, you must be sure who you are before and how you may become who you need to be. Three, you must be sure why you are turning the doorknob and what you are leaving behind.”

“Why do you respect their ideas of what is like to be us, but not our own ideas of what is like to be us?”



Top six finalists, from left to right: Ezra Conklin, Carlynn Newhouse, Ana Walker, Azura Tyabji, Deqa Mumin, and Mercury Sunderland. (Photo by Meiling Du)

Overall, the finalists challenged stereotypes, redefining what it means to be themselves, be it transgender, gay, autistic and more.

After the featured musical performance by Otieno Terry, the six finalists were announced.

But the words didn't stop after the show was over. As people were leaving Town Hall, they could be heard chanting "Youth speaks is truth speaks."

In this post-election time, when hopelessness and devastation seem so prevalent and normal, Youth Speaks Seattle 2017 Grand Slam reflects hope for the future.

Or as Maya Angelou captured it best: "We rise. We rise. We rise."

*This story has been updated since its original publication to clarify someone's identity.*



**Arts Integration:** Through our 2016-2017 Arts Integration Program, Arts Corps successfully delivered arts integrated residencies at 11 high-poverty schools in the Seattle and Highline school districts. In our arts integration residencies, teaching artists collaborate with classroom teachers at high-needs and low performing elementary and middle schools with the goal of positively impacting student learning, engagement, and school culture. Teaching artists partner with classroom teachers to develop and implement culturally-responsive project-based lesson plans that integrate the arts with core subject areas while developing students' creative capacities, deepening academic learning, and building social/emotional learning (SEL) and 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills. This collaboration strengthens the learning environment and expands the teachers' ability to engage students creatively. A total of 1,281 students were served through this project.

Through our Seattle Creative Schools Initiative (SCSI), we partnered with Orca K-8, Sandpoint, and Hawthorne elementary schools. At Orca, visual arts were integrated with language arts & humanities classes. At Sandpoint, music and storytelling from the African diaspora were integrated into language arts curriculum. At Hawthorne, theatre arts were integrated into science curriculum. Each student received an average of 45 instructional hours.

Through our Highline Creative Schools Initiative, Arts Corps continued our partnership with the U.S. Department of Education to research the impact of arts integration on students' academic engagement and learning mindsets. Since the 2014-15 school year, teaching artists have collaborated intensively with 5th and 6th grade classroom teachers to integrate theatre and visual arts into language arts curriculum at four Highline elementary schools. Initial research findings from this project were made available this year, and they suggest that Arts Corps' arts integration model strengthens students' learning mindsets and academic performance, especially for academically vulnerable groups (i.e. those classified as needing special education).

Arts Corps also delivered residencies at Hilltop, Cedarhurst, and Seahurst elementary schools and piloted 3 new residencies at Southwest Interagency Academy (SWIA), an alternative Seattle Public Schools high school. The SWIA residencies were especially successful. Teachers reported that on some occasions the residencies were the only reason students attended school.

Through our 2016-2017 Arts Integration Program, we successfully met our overall goals related to student learning, a lasting model for in-depth arts integration, a more engaged school culture, and narrowing the racial opportunity gap in arts education. We conducted a thorough evaluation throughout the year, and a full evaluation report will be published in November.

We are deeply grateful to the Tulalip Tribes for your support of Arts Corps' program. We value your partnership with us in cultivating a generation of youth with the creative skills and courage necessary to bring about a more just and beautiful world.

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