

Annual Report



**2023
IN REVIEW**

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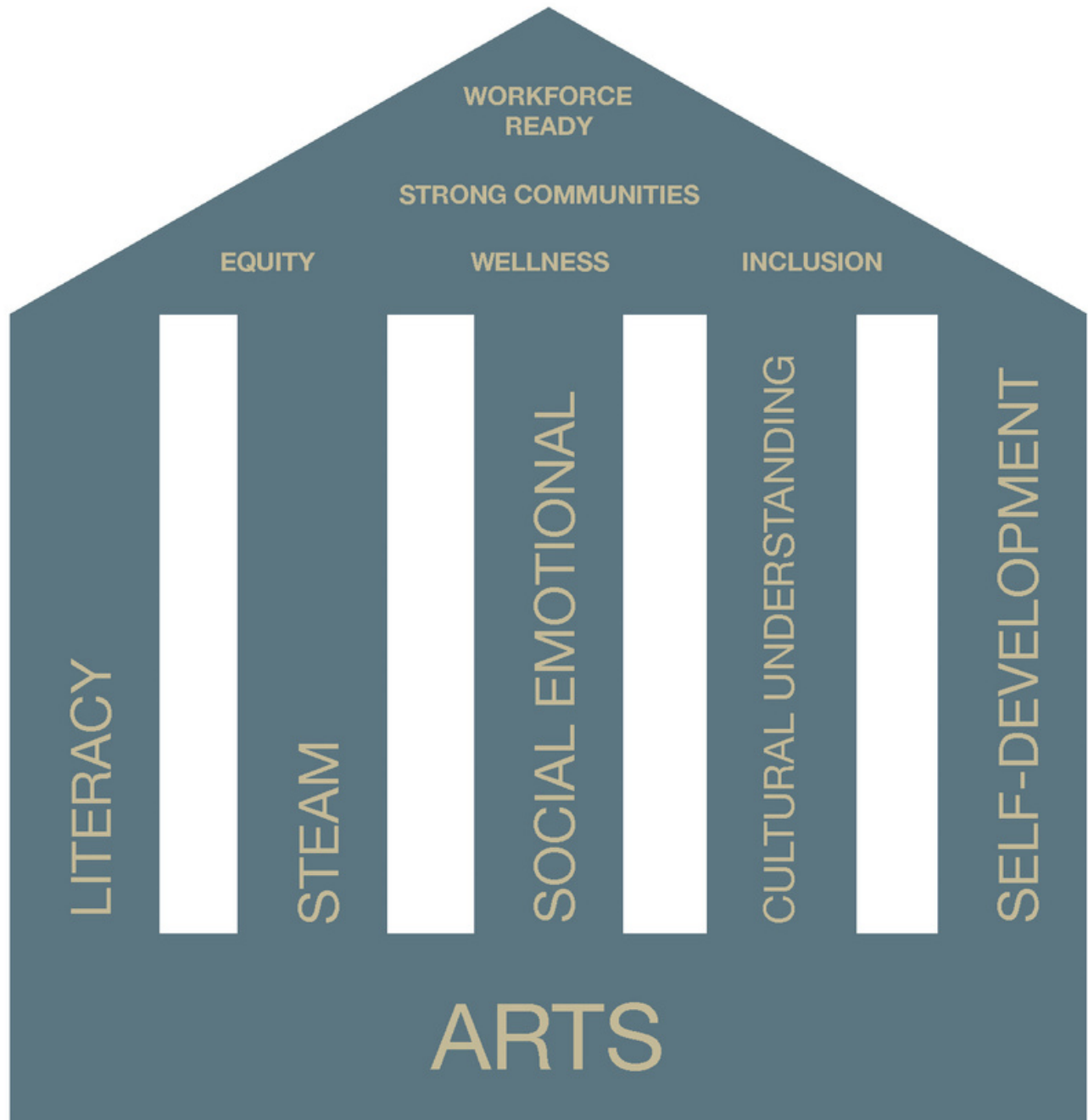
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Our story. Our tapestry.



Welcome home!





OUR MISSION

Story Tapestries, a 501c3, uses the arts as a powerful tool to create accessible, open spaces and opportunities for individuals to reach their highest potential and to work together for a more inclusive community. We accomplish this by providing innovative, custom-designed performances, workshops and hands-on community and educational experiences; designing programs that develop skills, connect individuals, elevate diverse voices and celebrate youth, families, adults and seniors; and engaging and impacting individuals where they live, work and thrive.

REGIONS SERVED



DC Metro
Area



Maryland



National

OF ORGANIZATIONS SERVED

1300+



OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED BY SPARK VS. INTENSIVE PROGRAMS



20% vs. 80%

100%



of programs are funded by the public through grants, donations and community collaborations.

3 million

individuals
reached from
2010 to today



1.48m

Individuals



645,000

Children



838,000

Adults

2024 Projections

% OF STUDENTS SERVED IN OUR FOCUS DEMOGRAPHICS:



Montgomery
County, MD

ESOL
34.3%

Special Needs
11.7%

Performing below grade level
32.60%

Low-income
60.3%



Washington, DC

ESOL
24.4%

Special Needs
21.1%

Performing below grade level
65.5%

Low-income
99%



Prince George's
County, MD

ESOL
30.1%

Special Needs
10.8%

Performing below grade level
47.1%

Low-income
90.4%

Who we engage

Story Tapestries (ST) focuses on providing access to the arts for all ages, especially in communities experiencing disparities and economic challenges. We refer to Montgomery County's (MC) Zip Code Ranking Project to prioritize our efforts. ST uses the arts to help communities identify their strengths, transforming individuals and the community as a whole.

Our target communities have limited access to live professional performances and innovative arts in education programs. We provide arts programming in a variety of public spaces including community centers, local theaters, libraries, and schools at low- to no-cost. Our emphasis on learning takes a holistic approach and aims to share tools and techniques with educators, parents and community leaders that will further support children's growth and development from 360-degrees. In 2023 we were able to reach over 1,480,000 individuals; 645,361 children and 838,362 adults. Over 90% of programs are located in MC with a focus on the county's lowest performing and highest poverty communities (based on school FARMS rates), in which on average 63% live in poverty, 34% speak English as a second language and 13% have specific needs. Based on the statistics of the communities we serve, our average audience and workshop attendees are 48% Hispanic, 32% African American, 7% Asian American, 5% Caucasian, 2% multiracial, and 6% other. 90% of the programs we deliver are subsidized by grants or private support. We collaborate with like-minded organizations who share similar goals and target populations such as Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless and Latin American Youth Center. To further diversify our reach, we've sought additional collaborations with organizations such as early childhood centers, Prince George's County Public Schools, MedStar, YMCA of Frederick County, District of Columbia Public Library, and Montgomery Village Foundation.

What we do

- Performances and interactive workshops for all ages
- Artist-in-residencies in and out of school time
- After-school and summer enrichment programs
- Professional Development
- Family and community engagement events
- Named Initiatives -
 - Write Your Story - our approach to accessibility & inclusion in learning
 - REWORC - early childhood education and workforce development
 - Amplify US! approach to racial equity integrated in all programs
 - Sage Stories - performances and workshops to support seniors feeling isolated
 - Digital Solutions that Bridge the Divide - provides access to tools, resources and knowledge about the digital skills required to succeed in today's workforce



Vision

To give individuals access to tools and resources that use the arts as a vital form of communication for expression, skills development, enhancement of community connections and celebration of unique voices and stories.

Education connections:

- Literacy
- STEM
- Social Emotional Learning



Impact on Youth

- Increase students' literacy and academic achievement in all subjects
- Utilize all modalities of learning - auditory, visual, kinesthetic and linguistic - to reach every learner
- Develop Critical Thinking Skills
- Guide 21st Century Skills development
- Grow the understanding and application of STEAM concepts
- Guide students to find, develop and express their voices
- Improve emotional literacy, conflict resolution and interpersonal skills
- Teach how to create/maintain safe spaces for learning and student development
- Develop the skills to recognize emotions, share them, and ultimately manage them and self-regulate



Every program is custom designed to meet a community's specific needs!

Impact on Adults

Areas of focus

- teaching practices
- presentation skills
- stress management
- financial skills
- mindfulness and conflict resolution
- mental health and wellness
- workforce development skills



Outcomes

- reduced stress and burnout
- increased access to opportunities that increase pay grade
- improved ability to get and retain a job
- greater awareness and engagement for families
- deeper connections within the community



CORE VALUES

Arts are the Bridge - The arts have the power to break down barriers and create the possibility for sharing and learning.

Power of the Word - Literacy is the key that creates conversation and learning. It is the foundation for building skills in other academic areas like Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM).

Access for All - Every person should have access to tools and resources that can help them learn and contribute to their communities.

Community Building - Long-lasting change requires the collaboration of a wide range of community members.

Start With Your Neighbors - Building community with the person to your right, and the person to your left, is the first step.

Scaling up requires COLLABORATION

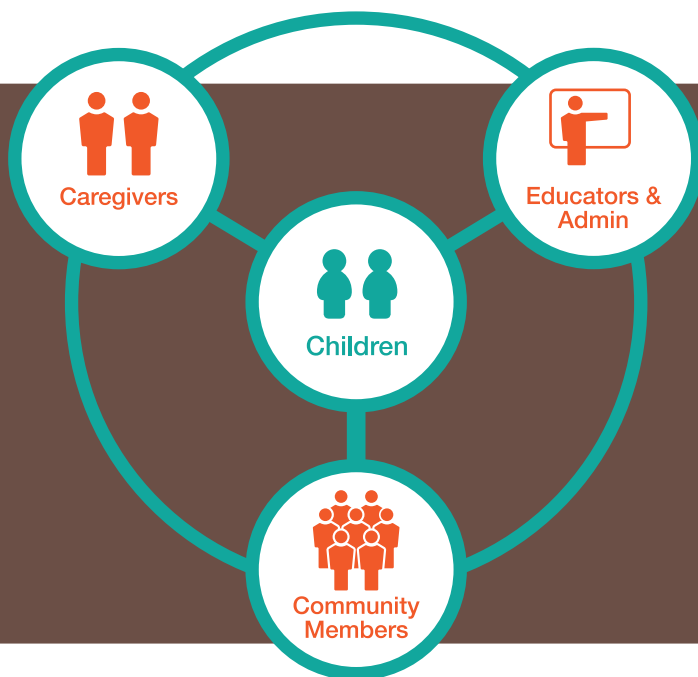
Some current key collaborators:



HOLISTIC APPROACH

We believe that children should be at the center of any approach to creating a brighter future for our communities. We can have the greatest impact on a child's development by taking a holistic approach, involving and interacting with those who also support their development: caregivers, educators and school administrators, and community members.

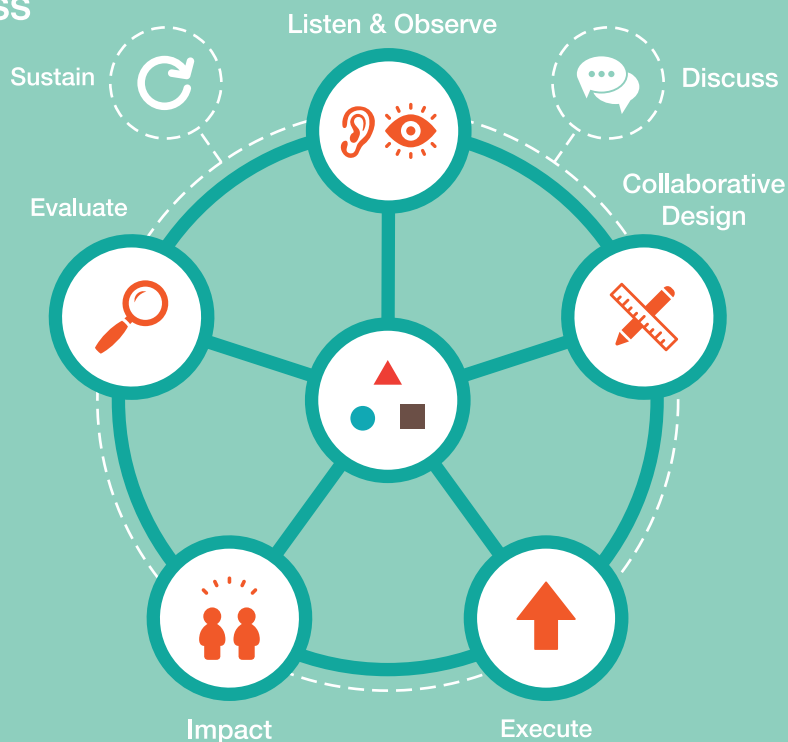
- Caregivers
- Educators & Administrators
- Community Members



COLLABORATIVE PROJECT PROCESS

Consistent with our mission, we collaborate with individuals and organizations to design projects that will provide sustainable community growth and development. The overarching goal of our work is to design a blueprint for programming that incorporates an integrated network of partners who will collectively support growth for the entire community. Each step in the cycle is essential to fostering quality programs, capable of addressing the changing needs of the community.

- Story Tapestries
- Program Collaborators
- ▲ Program Participants



Watch it in a video

Impact Video - <https://bit.ly/STImpactVideo>

2022 in Review - <https://bit.ly/ST2022inReview>

Write Your Story - <https://bit.ly/WYSFrederickCounty2022-23>

Community Visioning poem - <https://bit.ly/44yKdgl>

Elevate Voices – Celebrate Community Recap - <https://bit.ly/STEVCCRecap2023>

Unlocking the stories of seniors - <https://youtu.be/7d5w8i9LWU4>



Media coverage

The Baltimore Banner

<https://www.thebaltimorebanner.com/opinion/column/schoolhouse-rock-annapolis-theater-YIMDHDURZRBFDHZWQCEMTPPGQ4>

Montgomery Municipal Cable, Solutions, featuring Arianna Ross and Regie Cabico

<https://youtu.be/DS5P1YMWvwY?si=zoWZForr9hjfo1fs>

WTOP Radio News

<https://wtop.com/entertainment/2023/08/montgomery-co-nonprofit-story-tapestries-transforms-students-into-creative-artists/>

Fox 45 News

https://bit.ly/STonFox45_2023_07



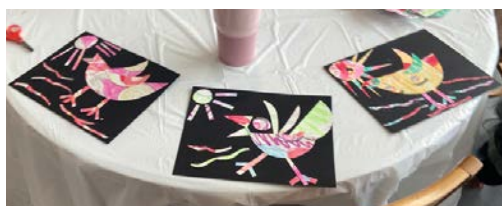
In their own words

"As a result of LAYC/MMYC's partnership with Story Tapestries, youth explored and developed artistic interests and voice previously untapped. Youth also demonstrated increased connection to each other and their work at the center. Similarly, many youths showed more **enthusiasm and confidence in sharing their voice in community spaces.**"

-Anastazyia Vareschi, Youth and Family Counselor, Latin American Youth Center

"A quick thanks to all of Story Tapestries. Your work is so good for our community! MCCH is extremely grateful to ST for providing a unique, impactful and trauma-informed experience for the children at our Seneca Heights supportive housing site. ST helped the children and those parents who attended develop social and emotional strengths, which have been severely impacted by both the experience of homelessness and the pandemic. The experienced facilitation of the artists opened the door to powerful and impactful moments where children could feel strong and capable. These children at Seneca represent such a small number who are better off because of what you do. The impact of ST on our students and families **was like introducing water to a desert – growth and blooming happened in beautiful and necessary ways.**"

-Lynn Rose, Community Engagement Manager, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless



"Our pre-K and K students loved their sessions with Khalesia Thorpe-Price. The sessions were **interactive, full of language and movement, and culturally relevant** to our students... Her focus on storytelling with a classic African folktale **brought smiles to many families** who come from Africa, and after the performance multiple families stayed to talk and meet each other. It is a growing segment of our community who are eager to connect with others from their region, and **this performance naturally opened that door for them**. The art kits were appreciated by our pre-K families. **These students have minimal supplies at home**, so providing them with hands-on materials to take home is valuable. The partnership with ST is **such a fantastic opportunity for increasing language skills**, particularly with our English Language Learners. We are grateful for your continued support of our academic program through arts."

-Sharie Settlemyer, Community School Liaison, Capt. James E. Daly, Jr. ES

"I wanted to take a moment to thank you for working with my staff and students. It has been a really hard year returning into school, especially with only a third of staff and students returning in the spring. The community, while showing perseverance, is also showing high emotion and emotional regulation needs as well as an absence of basic needs. It has been nice to see them smile and connect with one another again through multi modal lenses of art and curriculum. Thank you for creating that safe space to just 'be' again."

-Meredith Casper, Principal, Dr. Charles Drew ES

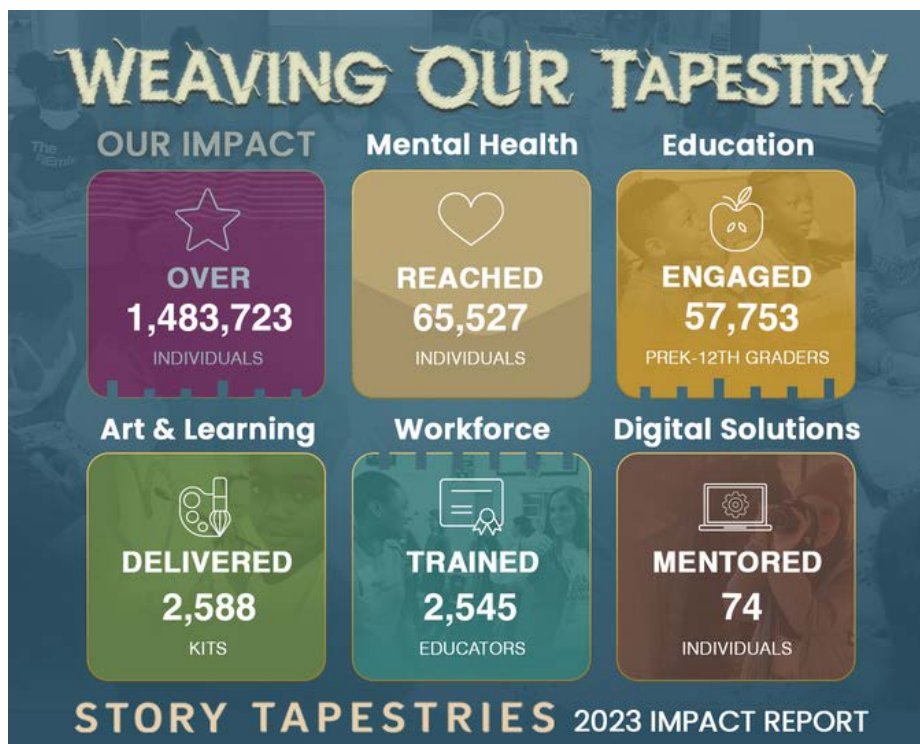
"You open up our kids. You inspire them. You are not judgy. You listen to them, and that is one of the things I love...I love the energy...You guys are amazing. You really do make a difference. You truly do. It doesn't tell the kids just to win, it encourages them to support each other and to be a family unit."

-Jennifer Deaver, 6th Grade ELA, Oberlin Middle School

"My students treasure the supplies they received like they are gold. Before Story Tapestries sent them their journals, they used to do their math on paper towels."

"Our most impactful takeaway was that some of our most impacted students with 504s and IEPs (support plans for students with physical or mental disabilities) were the students that shined when it came to sharing poetry. They were applauded by their classmates and brought teachers to tears because students who hadn't engaged in a genuine manner all year were commanding a presence through their written words."

"Students, particularly English as a Second Language, had the opportunity to practice speaking, listening, reading and writing. Students gained confidence in themselves and their ability to be creative, to think/write/speak expressively. (They learned) how to support others in a community."



Key Initiatives

Performances & Workshops

In 2023, Story Tapestries presented over **350 free family performances** and **56 community outreach workshops**. These events engaged over **1,480,000 community members**, building cultural capital and sharing stories and voices of those who have historically gone unheard.



"I could see the story inside my head like it was a movie!"
- 4th grade student

Artist-in-Residencies

Story Tapestries uses the tools of the arts, arts integration and Universal Design for Learning methodology to support learning:

- arts
- literacy
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math)



- 14,170 students engaged
- 1,159 educators involved
- 62 sites participated

"I liked the creation of math problems. The process really helped them be creative and apply their math knowledge. They then mapped out the problem with a drawing and then performed it. The students were able to understand what the problem needed them to do in order to solve it."
- Middle School Teacher



Parent & Community Engagement

Parents and mentors learn skills that support what teachers are doing in the classroom daily, becoming a unified team with common objectives. Family Nights include a professional performance and interactive workshop. In 2022, we also introduced Parent Workshops as part of our workforce development initiatives, supporting parents' mental health and wellness and providing practical tools to better support themselves and their child(ren). This work expanded into Frederick and Prince George's counties in 2023.

It clearly enriches the education and experiences that the kids get at school and aftercare. I was most impressed with the warm and energetic personalities of each and every staff member and the clear rapport they have with the kids.
- Parent after Family Night

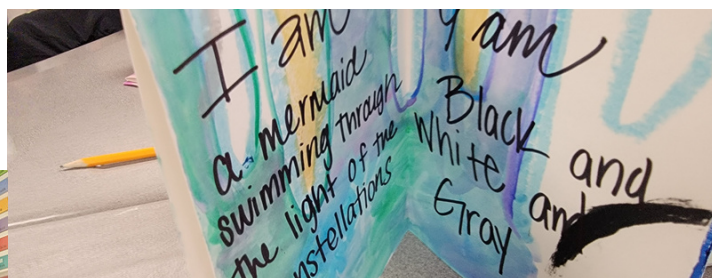


Students, primarily ESOL students, really were able to share their thoughts and ideas in a creative way. Students who were anxious about writing or getting up in front of the class came in with smiles and ideas and really flourished.
- Elementary School Teacher

Professional Development

1-hour to multi-day events designed to share tools, techniques and methods that educators, administrators, community leaders and teaching artists can immediately implement to integrate the arts, literacy, STEM, character education, and social emotional learning into daily lessons.

- 2,545 educators supported
- 146 early childhood educators received MSDE clock hours



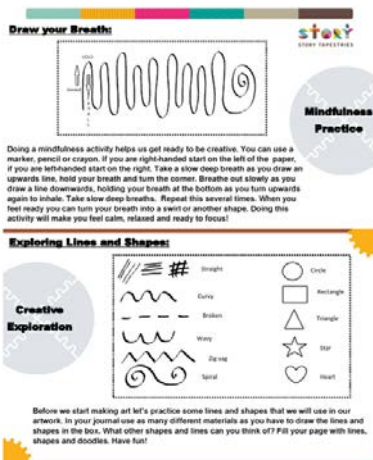
"Teachers walked away with a variety of tools to integrate lessons particularly by incorporating the arts into future lessons. All the presenters provided inspiration for adding more movement to the school day; which is greatly beneficial to students' cognitive and physical development."
- Middle School Principal



Art Kits

- 2,588 kits distributed
- 7,117 individuals impacted

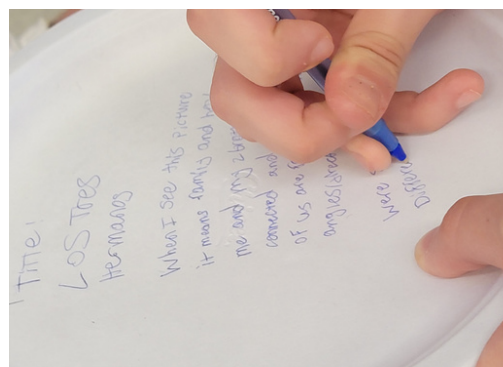
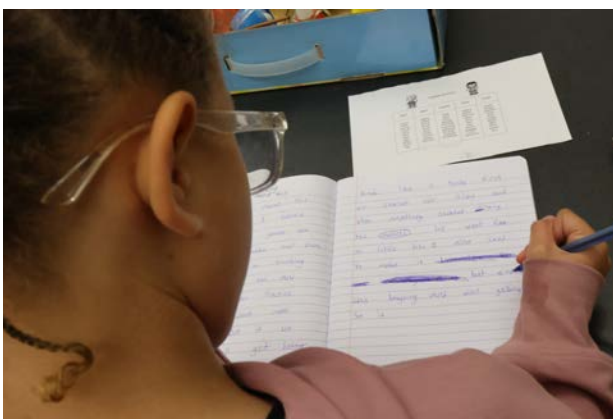
Art Kits including the supplies and materials needed to follow activity sheets developed by Story Tapestries' teaching artists and curricula development specialists. Activities are designed with activities that can be done individually, or as a whole family. Each kit is custom designed to support a particular learning objective, such as literacy, STEM, and/or mindfulness. The kits became a necessity during the pandemic when teachers realized that their students did not have the most basic instruments to support learning at home, such as pens, pencils and paper. Enthusiasm for the kits has pushed Story Tapestries to continue producing and distributing them. Corporate sponsors and individual donors help make that possible, both with cash and in-kind contributions.



Named Initiatives

Write Your Story

Write Your Story (WYS - pronounced “wise”) is ST’s approach to promoting accessibility and inclusivity in learning environments to support youth at every level of development. WYS aims to reach young people directly in their learning environment, during and out of school time, with arts experiences including **performances** and **artist-in-residencies**. Following our belief that to better impact youth you must also impact the adults who interact with them daily, WYS includes **Professional Development workshops for educators** and **family engagement experiences** that share tools and tips with parents so they can better support their children at home. **Art Kits** that include supplies and guided lessons further support at-home learning. Program design is responsive to needs that are identified collaboratively with school communities, including supporting literacy, social-emotional learning (SEL), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and 21st century skills development. This approach is particularly beneficial for students who are behind their peers in academic achievement, who live in households in or near poverty, speak English as a second language, and/or have identified special needs.



REWORC

REWORC addresses disparities in the field of **early childhood education** with a comprehensive approach that includes **direct instruction** for children along with significant **professional development** efforts for early childhood educators (ECEs) and a component that addresses **mental health and workforce readiness skills** for parents of young children. The program includes the Write Your Story program as described above with Embedded Coaching Residencies, plus a series of professional development workshops that help ECEs **earn required credentials recognized by the Maryland State Department of Education**. Finally, **Parent Workshops** give the parents of young children an opportunity to work directly with expert teaching artists to learn new techniques and approaches that support their own wellbeing and economic possibilities, which in turn boosts their ability to support their child(ren).



"Students experienced writing as a fun and accessible activity. Everyone was able to be successful because of the scaffolds and supports. The environment was a safe place, and a writing community was built that supported every child."

- Early Childhood Center Director

Learning Full STEAM Ahead

Story Tapestries uses the arts as a tool to develop high-impact programs that build 21st-century skills such as problem solving and critical thinking. Applying the arts to Science, Math, Engineering and Technology unlocks students' ability to engage in more complex reasoning while boosting social-emotional development. Our program approach works with all aspects of a child's network including caregivers and educators to set them on a positive trajectory for a lifelong love of learning. In 2023 Story Tapestries received funds from the Maryland State Arts Council, Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, Exelon-Pepco, and other individual donors to support STEAM programs, including:

- Family STEAM Nights
- Professional Development for classroom teachers
- Artist-in-Residency experiences
- Take-home Art & Learning Kits

"Fantastic modeling, repetition, and allowing for individuality and voice. Students were highly engaged, were activated to create, think critically, and express themselves."



"I liked the creation of math problems. The process really helped them be creative and apply their math knowledge. They then mapped out the problem with a drawing and then performed it. The students were able to understand what the problem needed them to do in order to solve it. Which helped with the conceptualization of the math in the problem"

Presented in
collaboration with:



CHART: Creative, Healthy ART

CHART: Creative, Healthy, ART uses the arts as a tool to develop high-impact programs that support social-emotional development. It is an intensive program designed for middle school students to support their **mental health** and **social emotional development**. Our program approach works with all aspects of a child's network including **caregivers** and **educators** to set them on a positive trajectory for a lifelong love of learning. The arts - specifically songwriting, visual arts, theatre, writing and dance - create a bridge to access and therefore success. Integrating the arts promotes accessibility and equity in learning, therefore closing the gap for youth with limited access to learning resources, which in turn improves their health outlook.

Children and families are experiencing great mental health challenges as well as economic hardship. Many of children have fallen behind their peers in academic achievement. In addition, many of adults who were struggling to improve their economic situation long before the pandemic now are set back even further by stress, burnout, feelings of isolation, and other mental health struggles. Story Tapestries has the **tools and community connections** to be able to reach these children, their educators, their caregivers and family members with a unique set of resources and services that boost their learning, overcoming barriers such as access and language, while also **increasing an important ingredient in their daily lives - JOY!** The arts create a bridge, promoting accessibility to learning and therefore a more equitable learning environment. Frequently students who are lagging behind their peers, when engaged in an arts integrated lesson, have **lightbulb moments of understanding** that launch them forward and feed their confidence and joy for learning so they continue and become more successful. This results in increased attendance, increased positive engagement in the classroom, and higher test scores.



"This program has provided a platform for students to gain confidence and inclusivity within our classroom."



Sage Stories

Sage Stories addresses the health impacts of isolation. The elders of our community have wisdom and insights to be cherished and shared, yet since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, **our elders have been isolated** from their families, friends, and communities and have suffered increased anxiety and stress. Sage Stories uses the power of storytelling to **re-engage our elders** as a vital part of the fabric of the community, engaging seniors through interactive storytelling performances, leading workshops that guide them to tell their own stories, and providing Sunshine Kits that deliver arts supplies and guided activities that improve dexterity and lift spirits, **impacting mental health**.



"I have never been to such a beautiful, fun performance.
They are fabulous!"

"I think they were even better this time than the last time!
Please have them back again."

"It is so nice to be able to share such culture and joy."
"Very engaging and fun."

"I loved the performance! Such professional talent. It made
my day...week...month!"

"Thank you, Story Tapestries and Seniors in Action. It was
wonderful!"

- Montgomery Village Foundation "Seniors in Action" participants



Thank you so much. We at
Brooke Grove are so
thankful to Story
Tapestries! You have opened
new doors to our residents
and have given them the
opportunity to experience
the arts in new and
interesting ways.
- Samantha Dubendorf, Life
Enrichment Director at Brooke
Grove Assisted Living Center



Digital Solutions that Bridge the Divide

Digital Solutions that Bridge the Divide addresses the gap in **access** to tools, resources, and knowledge about the digital skills required to succeed in today's workforce. **Tech Savvy Soundbytes** are YouTube videos featuring guest speakers who share practical skills and personal stories about how technology impacts their work life, helped them find work/education opportunities, or supported their ability to become an entrepreneur. **Digital Fundamentals** is a course designed to support community members in building their own digital portfolio. Finally, a **lending library** provides free access to computers, webcams, microphones, green screens and more to support the creation of high-quality content.



Kevin came to every session and when we had to take a break between sessions, he was so happy when we came back and said how rewarding it is to learn new techniques
- Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Men's Shelter



Meet the Staff



Arianna Ross,
CEO



Kellie Butsack,
Operations Director



Lorienne Beals,
Chief Development
Officer



Mavet Rosas,
Community
Partnerships Director



Valerie Baugh-
Schlossberg,
School-based
Program Director



Jamie Cowan,
Early Childhood
Education Director



Muka Chisaka,
Marketing &
Communications Manager



Jessica Wallach,
Documentarian and
Accessibility Specialist

Meet the Board



TJ Wilkinson,
Chair



John Naumann,
Treasurer



Suzanne Richard,
Secretary



Tony Spearman-Leach



Mimi Hassanein



Dr. Sue Snyder



Adam Basciano



Amanda Richardson



Lawrence Kotchek



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Advisory Board (non-voting)



Faith Klareich



Ana Gonzalez



Katrina Zimmerman

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Michael and
Laurie Burk





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STORY TAPESTRIES