



# Annual Report 2020-2021



Making a difference in the lives of youth in La Plata County since 1994!

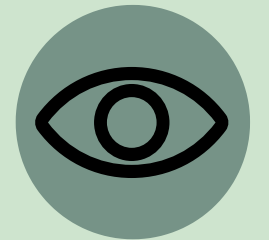


# Message from our Executive Director



## Our Mission

La Plata Youth Services supports and advocates for youth facing challenges in school, home, or court.



## Our Vision

Our ultimate vision is that youth in La Plata County are empowered and have the support and resources they need to strengthen their well-being and engage positively in their community.

**Dear Friends,**

Despite many difficulties over the past year, La Plata Youth Services (LPYS) has continued to provide meaningful services and programs to youth and their families who are facing challenges in school, home, or court. Throughout the course of the pandemic, we have also focused our commitment to supporting the wellbeing of our staff and the youth and families we serve.

Additionally, over the past year, we have had the opportunity to redefine and rediscover what is important to our agency. As a result, we are further rooted in the relevance and impacts of our services to the youth in our community and in the meaning of our work. **What we have discovered that is most important about our work includes:**

- **Prioritizing the well-being of our staff and the youth and families we serve**, with a focus on supporting the mental and physical health of employees and clients.
- **Helping with what is needed, at the moment.** In a balance of creativity and our current reality, we have worked hard to address community needs exacerbated by the pandemic by providing mental health support, IT support, shelter assistance, and grocery stores, gas, and other gift cards.
- **A commitment to our core value of social justice** and our agency's internal professional development work in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). This has included providing opportunities for our staff and Board to build skills to better serve marginalized populations and to dismantle systemic inequities, and we have made it a priority to provide DEI self-study resources, learning groups, and training.
- **A focus on creating an authentic connection** as a continued pillar of the agency's work with clients, community partners, and among our staff.

Moving forward, we will bring with us the lessons we have learned, including what is most important to our agency. Furthermore, our core values of **Social Justice, Creativity, Collaboration, Integrity, and Compassion** become even more relevant to keep us grounded in our evolving history as an organization and as a community.

I invite you to join us as we continue on our journey to build a community in which ALL youth are empowered and have the support and resources they need to strengthen their well-being and engage positively in their community. For more information, and to get involved, please visit [www.lpys.org](http://www.lpys.org).

**Sincerely,**

**Katy Pepinsky**

### PRESIDENT

**Sandy Irwin**  
Durango Public Library Director  
Term Start: Jan. 10, 2020

### VICE PRESIDENT

**Pat Senecal**  
Citizen-at-Large Board Member  
Term start: Jan. 10, 2020

### TREASURER

**Martha Johnson**  
La Plata County Dept. of Human Services  
Term start: Jan. 3, 2017

## LPYS Board Members 2021

**Steve Brittain**  
Citizen-at-Large Board Member  
Term start: Jan. 10, 2020

**Vanessa Giddings**  
Executive Director of Student Support Services/Durango School District 9R  
Term start: Sept. 6, 2019

**Alexandra Herlong**  
Deputy District Attorney-Juvenile Prosecutor/District Attorney's Office  
Term start: Nov. 1, 2019

**Joe McIntyre**  
Bayfield Town Marshall  
Term start: 2012

**Kirk Phillips**  
Ignacio Police Chief  
Term start: 2012

**Ray Shupe**  
Durango Police-Community Programs Unit  
Term start: July 26, 2021

**Tom Trimberger**  
Durango High Noon Rotary  
Term start: Jan. 10, 2020



Staff and Board BBQ-July, 2021



# Our Programs & Services

## About La Plata Youth Services

La Plata Youth Services (LPYS) was founded in 1994 to provide a continuum of services to youth facing challenges and their families in La Plata County.

LPYS programs strengthen and enhance a web of community- and school-based supports for youth through strategic partnerships, increase the well-being of youth, and expand restorative practices to repair relationships, reduce harm, and foster community connectedness.

As a result, data from La Plata County continues to show increased community safety, fewer court caseloads, a decrease of youth in detention, and a decrease of youth sentenced to state juvenile facilities. Youth are referred to LPYS by schools, law enforcement agencies, the courts, and parents and youth themselves.



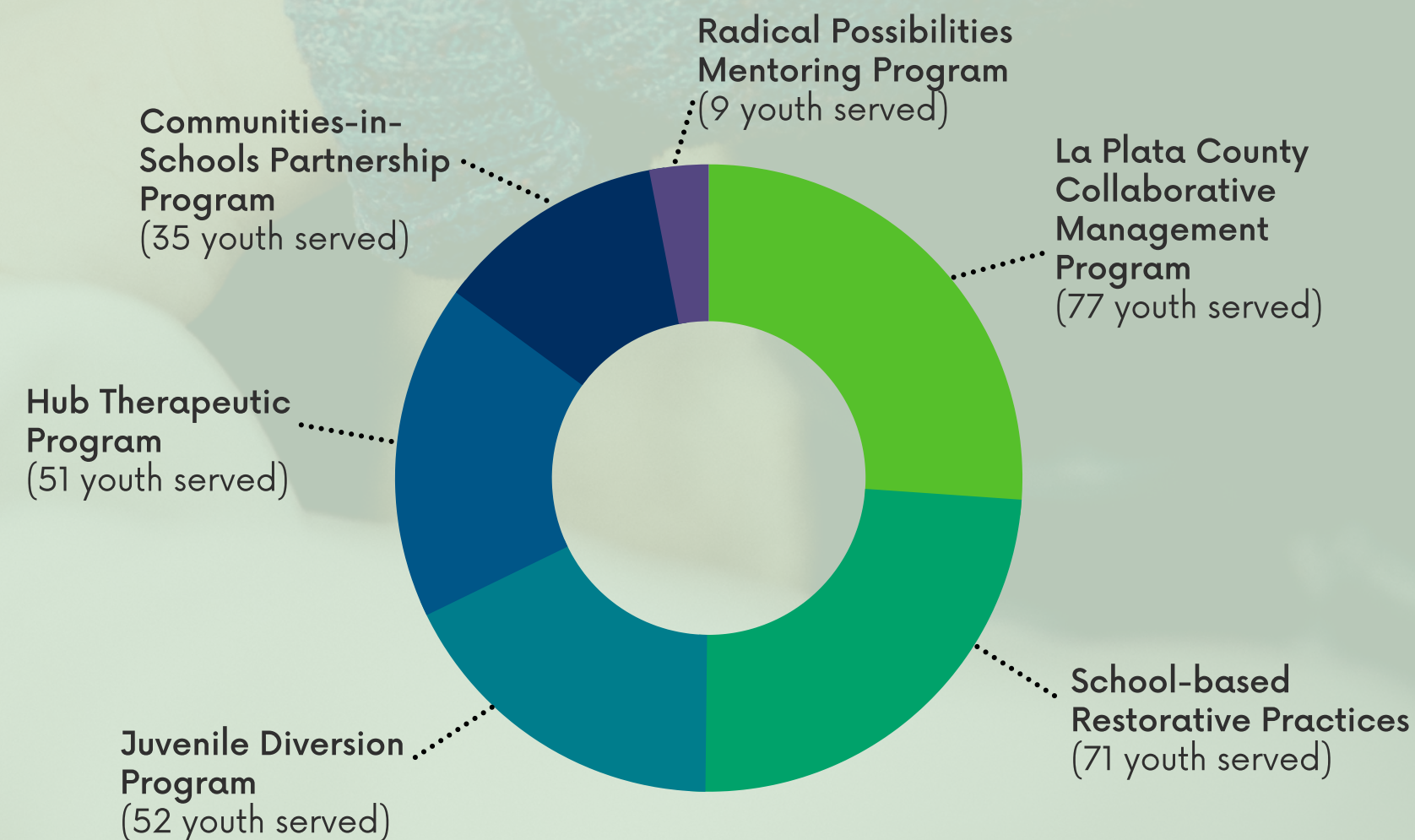
*Art Panels at LPYS Office*

## Current Programs

- 1) LPYS Juvenile Diversion Program
- 2) Communities-in-Schools Partnership Program
- 3) Radical Possibilities Mentoring Program
- 4) School-Based Restorative Practices

LPYS serves as the backbone agency for the **La Plata County Collaborative Management Program** and is a key partner and services provider in the **Hub Therapeutic Program**. During summer months, LPYS supports **positive youth engagement programming** for students.

## Total Youth Served in FY21 = 295





# Serving Youth in Four Program Areas

## Youth Diversion Program



### What we do...

We provide an alternative, voluntary option for youth at risk of entering the juvenile justice system. Our process is youth-centered and restorative in nature by providing youth opportunities to repair harm and build connections. We also give youth the tools to remain resilient during life's challenges which increases their overall health and wellbeing.

### Our results...

- 52 youth served
- 94% completed successfully
- 100% did not reoffend while enrolled

“The diversion program helped me get closer to my family and I learned how to be more responsible for my own life.”

- Diversion Program Client 2021



Annual Animas Splash & Dash Fundraiser



# Serving Youth in Four Program Areas

## Radical Possibilities (RP) Mentoring Program

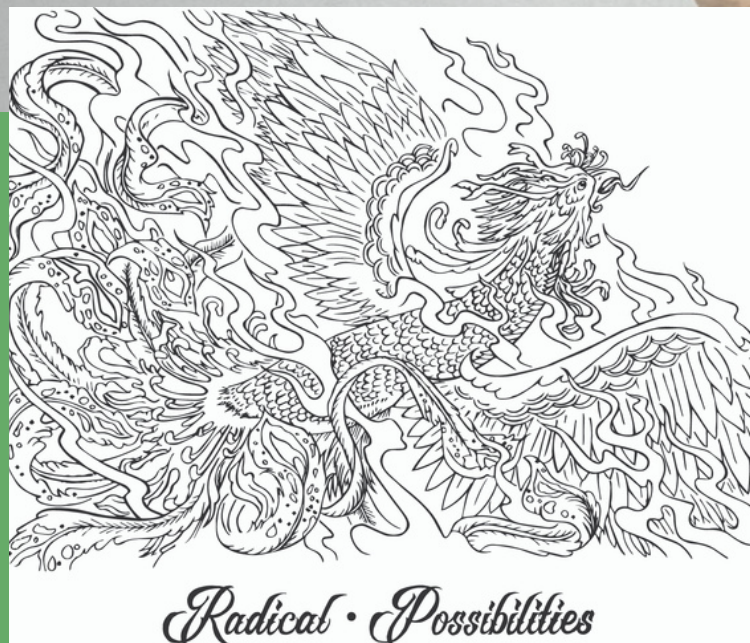


### What we do...

We serve youth in grades 6-12 who are facing adverse life conditions that affect their well-being and ability to engage positively in their lives. Through the support of skilled mentors, RP helps youth become more empowered and resilient in the face of life's challenges. Youth have the opportunity to engage one-on-one with their mentors as well as participate in group activities. Participants often develop increased self-confidence and a new sense of belonging in their community.

### Our results...

- 9 youth served
- 29% increase in school engagement
- 57% increase in community connectedness
- 50% increase in factors that contribute to resilience



### The Magic of Mentoring

K was a 13-year old who was isolated at home for the summer with little parental support and no social connections. He had no outlets for play and no access to phone or internet. K hadn't previously had many opportunities for being outdoors so his mentor introduced him to mountain biking. K loved it so much that when he and his mentor were riding, he would often whoop in exuberance along the trail.

By building trust and rapport through outdoor activities, K's mentor was able to broach deeper topics such as struggles with family, being bullied, and future dreams. K's mentor worked with him on developing self-acceptance and self-respect despite his challenges. At the close of the mentoring relationship, K was so grateful for the experience that he sent a card to his mentor stating that he was the best mentor K had ever had.



# Serving Youth in Four Program Areas

## Communities-In-Schools Partnership (CISP) Program



### What we do...

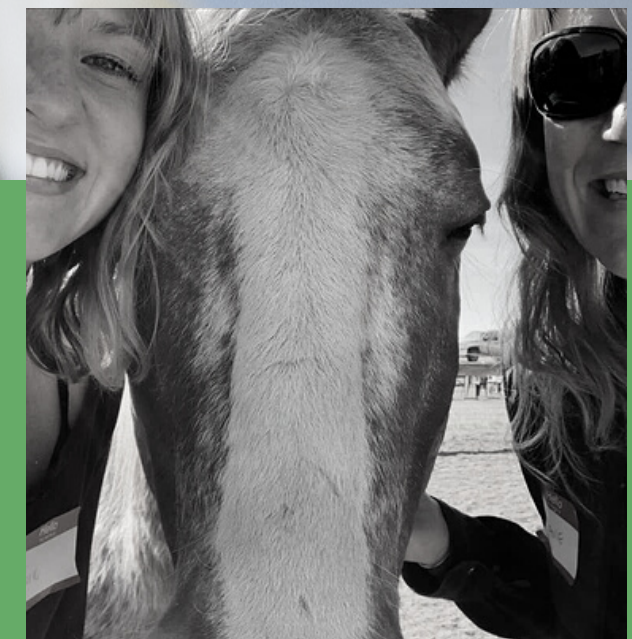
We provide school-based mental health and socio-emotional support services to students who face barriers to accessing care through individual and group sessions. Our goal is to improve overall youth wellbeing and resilience. This is done through a collaboration with local agencies and community partners who provide therapeutic services to young people in a school setting.

### Our results...

- 35 youth served
  - 57 total sessions provided
  - 8 schools participating
- 

### Building Resiliency

One of our most successful opportunity within our Communities-in-Schools Program (CISP) this year was a collaboration between LPYS, The Grief Center of SW Colorado and the Horse Empower Equine Therapy Program. In the aftermath of a traumatic loss, CISP coordinated with The Grief Center to provide individual therapy for the children directly impacted by the trauma. During therapy sessions, additional areas for growth were identified, and the CISP team supported them in accessing family-focused group care through Horse Empower. As a result, the family is developing healthy communication and relationships and family members are making significant progress in these areas individually and as a whole.



Equine Staff Retreat



# Serving Youth in Four Program Areas

## School-Based Restorative Practices (SBRP)



### What we do...

We partner with the Durango 9-R School District to transform paradigms around school culture, discipline, and school climate while supporting schools to fine inclusive alternatives to school discipline through an equitable lens. Programming coaches students and teachers in the principles of Restorative Practices, which include strengthening communities, allowing responsible parties to take accountability, and reducing the potential for repeating that behavior.

### Our Results...

- 72 Youth learned Restorative Justice practices
  - 6 schools participating
  - 99% of youth served did not enter into the juvenile justice system
- .....



Summer Engagement Program

### Positive Skill Building

One of our LPYS school-based restorative practice facilitators worked with a 4th-grade male student who was referred to us by his teacher, his mom, and the guidance counselor at a local Elementary School. The student was having trouble staying on task, managing social interactions, and being disruptive in class.

The LPYS facilitator started working with the student at the end of January through weekly 30-minute positive skill-building/strategy sessions using creative play, self-advocacy, self-regulation strategies, focus and attention activities, and learning to understand social dynamics/friendship nuances.

The teacher recognized that the student's academic work was improving and he was integrating better into the classroom. By the end of the term, everyone celebrated the students' hard work and progress!



# Our Partner Programs

## Collaborative Management Program

### What we do...

LPYS is the backbone agency for a collaboration among youth-serving agencies that supports youth with complex needs in our community.

The La Plata County CMP connects students, families, schools and other stakeholders through an Integrated Services and Support Team (ISST). The ISST functions as an integrated service planning model to bring resources and youth agencies together to better serve youth and their families.

The **Radical Possibilities Mentoring Program** and **Communities-in-Schools Partnership Program** are prevention programs of the CMP.

### Our Results...

- 89 individuals served through a total of 49 ISST Meetings
- 100% remained in their homes
- 100% did not enter diversion, probation, or parole
- 37% improved their academic performance

## The Hub Therapeutic Program



### What we do...

The **Hub Therapeutic Program** is an innovative educational model founded on a therapeutic approach to learning and development for students in grades 6-12 with significant emotional, behavioral, or psychological challenges.

This strategic partnership between Durango School District 9-R, LPYS, and the Child Wellness Center, among other community-based agencies, brings together specialized expertise in a central location.

Youth served are impacted by adverse childhood experiences or academic barriers connected to mental health.

### Our results...

- **51 youth served...** through student enrollment, academic wrap-around, Tier 3 referral screenings, therapeutic support, and psychiatric and medical evaluation and consultation





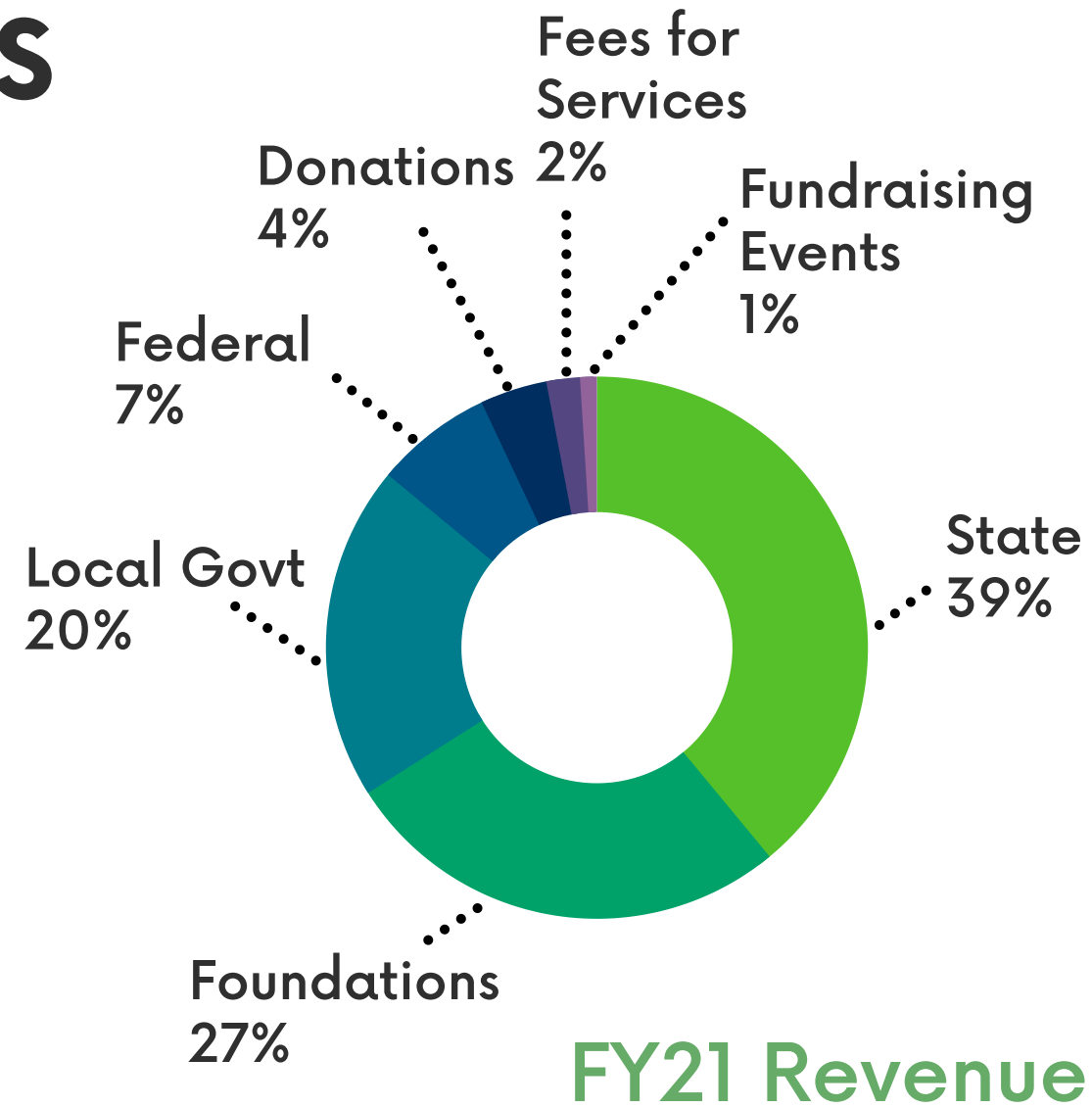
# Our Financials

## Revenue

State funding.....	\$435,709
Foundations.....	\$305,369
Local Government.....	\$218,216
Donations.....	\$44,596
Fees for Services.....	\$21,110
Fundraising Events.....	\$8,708
<b>Total Revenue.....</b>	<b>\$1,111,852</b>

## Expenses

Personnel.....	\$769,750
Professional Services.....	\$116,757
Supplies.....	\$86,427
General Operations.....	\$53,697
Facilities.....	\$18,470
Training.....	\$5,367
Travel.....	\$3,466
<b>Total Expenses.....</b>	<b>\$1,053,933</b>



## Summer Engagement Programming

LPYS supported area youth and the local economy during COVID by providing more than \$6,000 in scholarships to youth to engage in summer programs with local organizations.

Families and students could apply online for funds and choose from some amazing summer programs locally including with the **Durango Arts Center, Horse Empower Equine Therapy, Cross Bar X Summer Camp, and The Powerhouse.**

These funds supported local programs and connected youth to new opportunities to engage in their community!

## COVID Relief & Recovery Support

LPYS applied for and received COVID relief funding from a number of sources that was allocated to families in need during the pandemic. In FY21, we spent over \$8,000 to provide:

- 1) Mental health support
- 2) IT support
- 3) Shelter assistance and
- 4) Grocery store, gas, and other gift cards

Thank you to SW Colorado's Community Emergency Relief Fund, Tony Grampas Youth Services, and Colorado COVID Relief Fund!

## 6th Annual Virtual Splash & Dash 5-K and Fundraiser

LPYS encouraged everyone to get outside and be active during their annual Splash & Dash event which was held virtually. Participants could set-up their own webpage to raise funds and then get out on Aug. 22nd, 2020. **We exceeded our fundraising goal with a total of \$24,284 raised!** Funds went directly to our Radical Possibilities Mentoring Program (pg.4). Our community really showed up for youth this past year through online donations, sponsorships and other types of funding. **A huge "Thank You" to everyone who participated and donated!**





# We Can't Do It Without You!

Ways to help...

**Donate**

**Volunteer**

**Mentor**

**Be an Intern**

**Attend a Fundraising Event**

**Join Our Board**

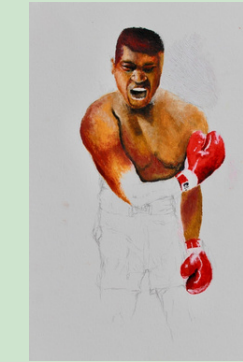
**Sponsor an Event**

**Participate on a Committee**

If you are ready to have a positive impact on youth in **La Plata County** then contact us!

**Contact:** [info@lpys.org](mailto:info@lpys.org) / 970-385-4440

*Unchain My HeART*



All youth in La Plata County were invited to virtual art workshops hosted by LPYS and to participate in our annual art exhibit. This was an opportunity for youth to build up their art portfolio and have a professional experience as an artist. Youth art sales exceeded **\$700**, **100% of which was paid directly to the youth artists** as art scholarships.

Through event sponsorships and donations, LPYS **also raised \$1,300** that went directly to the COVID Relief & Recovery Support Fund (pg. 8).

*At the time of the art exhibit we developed a partnership with Maria's Bookstore who displayed any of the artwork that did not sell. That was exciting for the youth to see their artwork in such a visible downtown space!*

-Katy Pepinsky, Executive Director