



We believe the best education
has creativity at its heart.

sidex**side**
AWAKENING TOMORROW'S INNOVATORS
SIDEXSIDEME.COM

Annual Report 2021-2022



“But really
what is arts
integration?
It is the journey
and the
destination.”

Dear Side x Side Community Member,

Looking back over the 2021-2022 school year for Side x Side, three themes stand out: creativity, collaboration, and resilience. Side x Side has weathered a few turbulent years, pivoting to find new ways of connecting with teachers and students, and forming new collaborations with districts, teachers, and community members. Prior to the pandemic, Side x Side programming was positively impacting learning outcomes. However, in the current landscape, the need to support students to thrive, be resilient, and realize our mission has only become clearer.

But really what is arts integration? It is the journey and the destination. Through working with classroom teachers, our teaching artists shift the learning experience in that environment to lead with creativity. Through comprehensive arts-based programs, teachers connect curriculum with hands-on, active experiences; bringing critical thinking, innovation, and social emotional learning into the classroom. It is about challenging ways of learning and celebrating how students can engage their whole selves in their learning.

Side x Side was fortunate to be founded in 2014 nearly entirely with the support of federal grants. We have moved from our infancy with those funds, providing value to schools in Lewiston and Portland. Federal funding of these activities is usually intended to help establish strong organizations that can then garner support independently in their communities. As we move to increase our private funding, we have been incredibly proud of the engagement and commitment from our community to maintain and grow this work to support Maine students.

We are honored to share our annual report that beautifully illustrates the successes, lessons, and impacts from the past year. Together, we can help children in Maine thrive. Thank you for your partnership and support on this journey.

Emily Marczak
Chair, Side x Side Board of Directors

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As I look back on this past school year, I am filled with hope. The perseverance and dedication of our teachers and the creativity and resourcefulness of our teaching artists, amazes me. Together, we brought arts-integrated programming to more than 1400 students across eight schools in Portland and Lewiston. These programs provided equitable opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate their knowledge. Students flourished as their classrooms became more joyful and inclusive—and they began to see themselves and each other in a new light.

Side x Side programming began with the support of the U.S. Department of Education with two four-year grants. In 2018 we established a special relationship with the family of the Lily Sarah Grace Fund which now serves as one of Side x Side's primary funders.

Arts integration helps students thrive. Our programs increase engagement and bring joy and connection into the classroom. The shifts that take place in participants are powerful and profound. When students feel connected, are provided multiple pathways to learn, and are seen by their teachers and peers for their strengths, they are more likely to succeed.

Highlights of our work are being able to collaborate with our public school teachers and administrators such as J. Dionne, Assistant Principal of Connors Elementary School in Lewiston, who shared with us,

"I am in love with your program and excited for our students to have these experiences that are so thoughtfully and collaboratively created. Not only does Side x Side prioritize contemplative artful engagement as central to the educational experience, but the program also expands possibilities for our kids in terms of how they want to positively impact their communities and world around them. Kids develop skill sets and build beautiful community partnerships. Really motivating!"

We are proud of Side x Side's programs because they help students express themselves and demonstrate their understanding of academic content while building confidence and connection. They provide learning strategies for all students, regardless of academic standing, culture, or language spoken. We are tremendously grateful to all our participants and our supporters. I feel hopeful as Side x Side moves into the new year knowing that together we are building a brighter future that is inclusive, creative, respectful, and loving!

With deepest gratitude, Beth Wilbur Van Mierlo
Side x Side Executive Director



“...the program also expands possibilities for our kids in terms of how they want to positively impact their communities and world around them.”

- J. Dionne

While participating in a Side x Side program led by teaching artist Sarah Boyden and integrated with a “Who We Are” unit, a mostly nonverbal first grade student with full-time ed tech support, found connection and community through arts integration.



During the program, students had created self-portrait puppets and handmade puppet theater books to capture their personal stories. In the last Side x Side session before a celebration of learning, the puppets and books were given back to the students to practice telling their stories in pairs. All the students were very excited for this moment, including this particular student and his classmate whom he had a close relationship with, despite very few words exchanged. The two boys' unusual energy and gregariousness attracted the attention of the teacher who was greatly surprised and encouraged to see their behavior. As Sarah Boyden describes it,

“The student's ed tech was not in the room at this particular time so I went to investigate. This was the first time I was able to give [this student and his friend] a little undivided attention as the other students were deep in their own worlds with their puppets.”

“As I sat with them asking about their work and how they liked the project, the student smiled and then put his head down on his desk behind his upright puppet theater book. At first I thought he was quietly withdrawing from my presence, or maybe resting, but he was actually putting on his own puppet show quietly to himself. I just listened and watched, and observed him becoming more animated with his own story. His friend told me that the boy likes to do things by himself and that they both loved the project, especially making the puppets. Shortly after that comment, the student raised his head with a full on smile! I then asked them if they would like to move to the rug and put on a show for each other. Another huge smile and they both scampered off to find a spot away from the other pairs.”

“In no time they were both sharing dialog back and forth with each other using their puppets, popping them up from behind their theater books and laughing. I went to the teacher and pointed them out and she lit up with happiness and wanted to immediately reach out to the student's ed tech so she could observe as well. We all stood in the door and watched with pride and joy at their playful teamwork.”

“It is a moment I will remember always and is the reason why we all do what we do.”

- Sarah Boyden, Side x Side Teaching Artist

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“It is a moment I will remember always and is the reason why we all do what we do.”



Side x Side’s arts integration model engages students in creative learning by connecting art making with core classroom content bringing critical thinking, creativity, and innovation into the classroom. Students gain agency by connecting personal expression, voice, and relevant interests to their classroom experiences. Side x Side collaborates with local experts, teaching artists, and school communities to build connections through hands-on arts learning. Our programs strengthen social emotional skills and support more inclusive classrooms by providing equitable opportunities for demonstrating and expressing knowledge, creative collaboration, and community building.



During the 2021-2022 school year, **side**x**side** provided arts integration experiences to...

1416

PRE-K-8TH GRADE STUDENTS



55

TEACHERS,
SPECIALISTS,
SPECIAL ED AND
ELL
INSTRUCTORS



8

UNIVERSITY
INTERNS / PRE-
SERVICE
TEACHERS



8

SCHOOLS
(ELEMENTARY
AND MIDDLE)



2021-2022 Highlights

- Our 15 teaching artists implemented 27 programs.
- We provided 32 hours of professional development to teachers and teaching artists.
- Our staff contributed arts integration and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) research and hands-on workshops at the National Arts Educators Association (NAEA) conference and the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) conference.
- In collaboration with Side x Side, the University of Southern Maine designed and implemented new BFA art education coursework in arts integration.

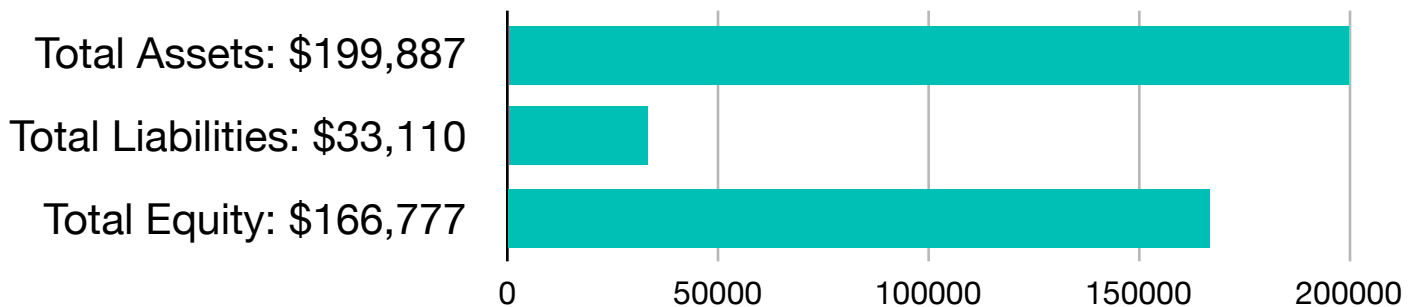
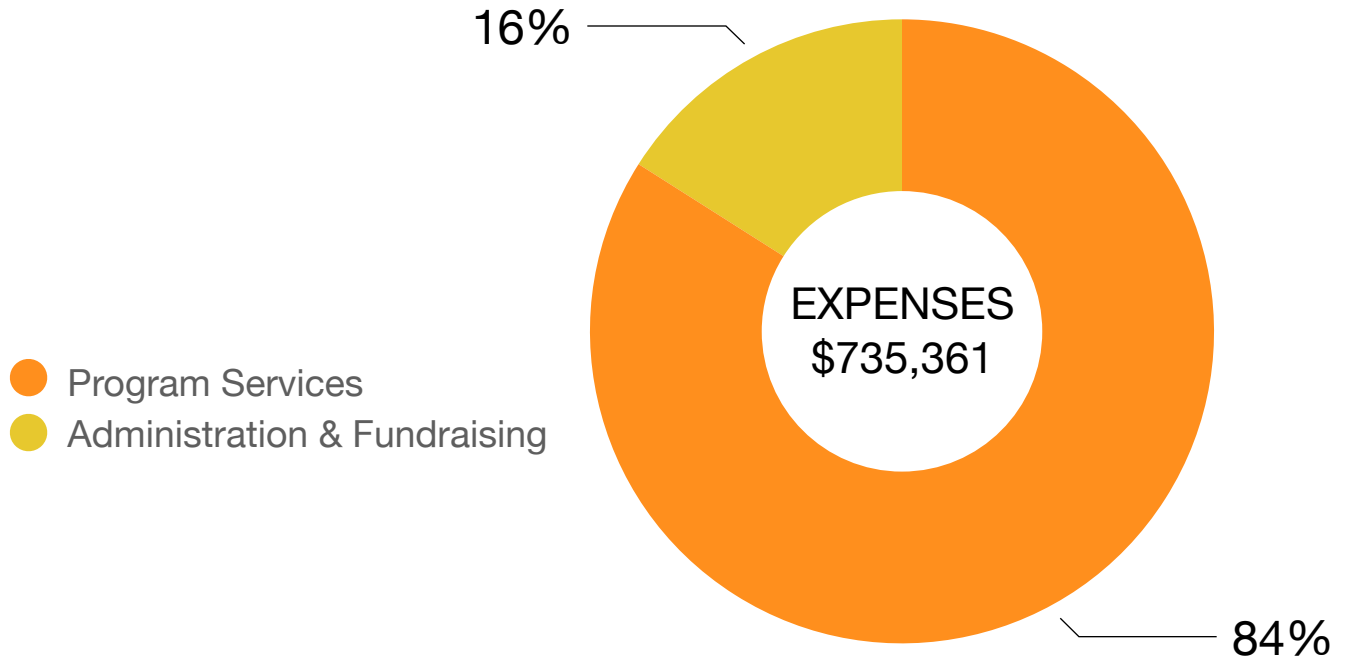
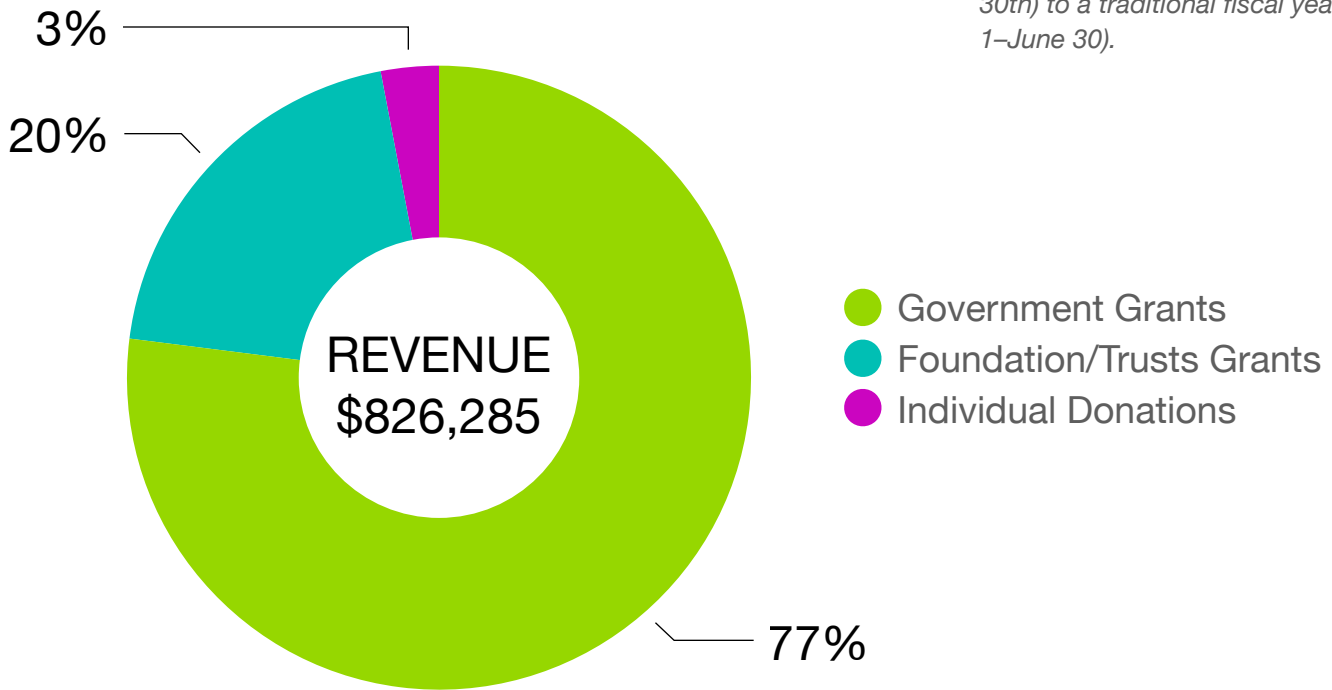
> 2021-2022 Visual Program Diary:

<http://sidexsideme.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2021-2022Slideshow.pdf>



2021-2022 Financial Overview

NOTE: In the summer of 2022, Side x Side changed from operating under a government fiscal year (Oct 1st–Sept 30th) to a traditional fiscal year (July 1–June 30).



2021-2022 Donors

7/1/21–6/30/22



FOUNDATIONS / ORGANIZATIONS

Cheese Louise
Eugen Friedlander Foundation
Katherine Lindsay Howell Fund
The Cabin Foundation

INDIVIDUALS

Anonymous
Sharon Allen
Mary Atkinson
Eliza Barnes
Tim Blackstone
Catherine Bloom
Victoria Bonebakker
Toria Brett and Geoff Schafer
Jane Briggs
Janet Burson
Pamela Cleghorn
Joan and Jim Cohen
Sheila Cook and Andrew Bloom
Tyna Donelson
Tom and Shelby Driscoll
John Elliott
Joe Hemes and Lois Seawall
Kristina Hewey
Alison Hildreth
Ellen Hirschberg
Daniel Hrenko
Rebecca Hunt and John Munroe
Mariusz and Judyta Jankowski
Melissa and Scott Knoll
Tara Kosma and Joe Partlow
June Lacombe and Bill Ginn
Ariel M. Linet
Sarah Linet and Dylan Maeby
Marjie Longshore
Emily and Tom Marczak
Christopher Scott Marx
Peter McDonald and Holly Hughes
Alice McNulty
Eric and Sharon Obery
Hilary Pidden
Suzi Pond
Christopher Price
Hazel Raby and Michael Alderson
Antonio Rocha
Katherine Sargent
Meghan and Curt Scribner
Jeni and Don Seymour
George Smith and Amy Curtis
Aaron Stephan
Erica Swan
Sarah H. Waite
Judy and Tom Watson
Annetta and Steve Weatherhead
Susan Webster and Bruce Fowler
Mary Wellehan

2021-2022 Research Highlights



Student Benefits Reported by Teachers:

- 99% increased **active engagement** with learning
- 99% increased **understanding** of academic content
- 88% improved their ability to **work with other students**
- 99% improved **confidence** in their ability to do the work
- 99% improved sense of classroom **community**
- Side x Side projects are particularly beneficial to **English language learners** and those with learning differences



WHAT OUR STUDENTS ARE SAYING...

“I am feeling more comfortable because you guys are making my class a big family.”

“I saw people’s creativity work. We learned so much more.”

“I learned that everyone does stuff differently.”

“This was the funnest thing I’ve ever done. I just want to do this all day.”



“Arts Integration is so important. Working with the teaching artists has improved my practice in many ways. I am more knowledgeable and creative. I have taken risks and have inspired children to take risks. I love working with members of the community. I have truly enjoyed growing relationships with the teaching artists and improving the projects we have developed. It has been an invaluable experience. I am so thankful for the work I have done with Side x Side. It has had such a positive impact on my teaching and my students' engagement in learning.”



“I have seen firsthand the access arts integration provides for students. Some who are not always engaged in ‘typical’ settings see major success when they get to use art to demonstrate their learning.”

“It brought us closer together as a community. We laughed, we danced, and learned about talents of some children we had not yet seen in an academic environment.”

SIDE X SIDE

- Cultivates supportive culture, relationships, and partnerships.
- Delivers professional development and mentoring in arts integration, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and Diversity/Equity/Inclusion/Accessibility (DEIA).
- Provides ongoing support for schools, teachers, and teaching artists.



TEACHING ARTISTS

- Collaborate to design and implement arts-integrated units.
- Cultivate supportive, inclusive classroom community.
- Integrate a variety of arts techniques to broaden student learning capacity.



STUDENTS

- Become members of a supportive, inclusive learning community that strengthens student well-being.
- Transform into engaged and capable learners in academics and arts.
- Are proud to share their work with peers, families, and community.



EXPRESS LEARNING THROUGH ART

EST. 2011

ENHANCING EDUCATION WITH ART SINCE 2011

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AWAKENING TOMORROW'S INNOVATORS

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A NEW WAY TO LOOK AT STRENGTHS THAT DON'T SHOW UP ON ASSESSMENTS

TEACHERS SEE A NEW WAY TO TEACH AND SHIFT

- EQUITY
- DIVERSITY
- INCLUSION
- ACCESSIBILITY
- SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL
- TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES

ARTS INTEGRATION
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



ATTENDS SIDE x SIDE TRAINING/WORKSHOP
THEY MAKE FOR 2-3 DAYS!
SAME PROCESS, AC KIDS!

FOR SOME, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THEY'VE BEEN AS GOOD AT SOMETHING.

- TAKE RISKS
- MAKE MISTAKES
- BE GROSS

ASK QUESTIONS

ART SUPPORTS STUDENTS

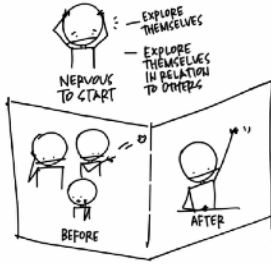
GET CURIOUS!



ART

LEVELS THE PLAYING FIELD

NOTICE



CULMINATES IN A CELEBRATION OF LEARNING EVENT

PUBLIC SPEAKING

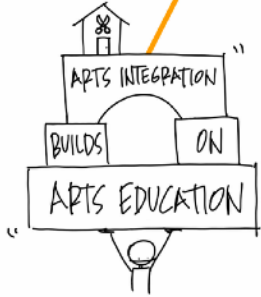
HOW TO SIT IN AN AUDIENCE

THEY COME ALIVE!

PLEASE SLOW DOWN

EYES BIG HEAD UP

CURIOUS · NOTICING · EXPRESSIVE · ENGAGED



SEE DIFFERENTLY
FEEL DIFFERENTLY
ACT DIFFERENTLY

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