



think360  
ARTS  
FOR LEARNING

**2024** Community  
Report



# A Letter from our Board Chair

Dear Think 360 Arts Family:

As I reflect on the past year at Think 360 Arts, I am filled with joy and gratitude for the privilege of being part of such an exceptional organization. As Board Chair, it is my honor to share some of the highlights from this year, and I hope they inspire the same excitement and optimism in you as they do in me as we look ahead to the future of our remarkable community.

This report offers a comprehensive overview of our accomplishments and the vital work we've done over the past year—achievements made possible by our dedicated executive director, talented staff, passionate teaching artists, and generous supporters like you. Think 360 Arts truly embodies a community united through creativity and the arts, and I am deeply thankful for every individual who contributes to our vibrant mission.

Within these pages, you will find the transformative stories of the arts' impact on lives across Colorado. From preschoolers engaging with our Wolftrap program to students collaborating with artists in schools, and older adults fostering community through our Creative Aging initiatives, the breadth of our reach is inspiring. Additionally, our commitment to high-quality professional development for educators and the work of our exceptional Equity in Arts Learning for Colorado Youth grantees highlights the significant impact Think 360 Arts continues to make.

I am excited to share these stories with you and to celebrate the powerful influence of the arts in our community.

Warm regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jillian Kelly".

Jillian Kelly (she/her)  
Board Chair, Think 360 Arts for Learning  
VP of Impact, Next50 Initiative

Since our founding as a Colorado nonprofit in 1963, Think 360 Arts has been dedicated to delivering high-quality arts education and advocating for the importance of arts learning across the state.



Rooted in community, we are excited to continue building on this legacy and expanding our impact for many more years to come!

# Mission

To engage Coloradans of all ages in innovative arts programming that inspires creativity, builds community & advances equity.

# Vision

All communities can experience the transformative benefits of arts education.

# Values

- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility
- Creativity & Delight
- Learning & Curiosity

## Total Programs

266



## Community

124 unique venue partners



## Creative Aging

nearly 1,800 older adult experiences through 55 programs



## Youth Experiences

21,967



## Wolf Trap

25 classroom residencies, 43 educators & 356 children ages 3-5

## Professional Development

over 550 teachers served





# Creative Aging

## Denver Housing Authority, Syracuse Plaza

Since 2022, teaching artist David Reuille has led seated movement programs at Denver Housing Authority's Syracuse residence. Participants have praised his classes for their accessibility, noting they help "prevent depression and ease anxiety," along with appreciating his "kindness and knowledge."

Think 360 is proud to continue offering programs that spark joy and foster community!



“I always feel happy and more energetic after class.”

-Creative Aging Program Participant

## Montrose Pavillion

In Spring 2024, teaching artist Rex Halterman launched a series of ceramics residencies in collaboration with the Montrose Recreation District. With a rich history of offering ceramics programs, this partnership aimed to revitalize these offerings, specifically focused on serving the older adult community.



Rex reflected on the program's success, noting that it was "very successful in creating social connections and helping the participants find something that they enjoyed learning about and doing."

“Rex is an amazing teacher, very personable and passionate about sharing all his knowledge in a very accepting and pleasant environment!!”

*-Creative Aging Program Participant*

“We have a few residents who usually avoid social activities, but with [this TA], they attended every class and were sad when it ended. It was something they looked forward to and engaged in.”

*-Creative Aging Partner*



## **Survey data from our Creative Aging residencies in the City & County of Denver**

- 78% of Older Adults expressed that the programming helped them exercise their brains
- 82% of Older Adults reported that they felt their connection with others “Improved” or “Greatly Improved”
- 79% of Older Adults rated their mental health as “Improved” or “Greatly Improved.”
- 80% of participants felt happier, and 75% found themselves more relaxed

*A teaching artist shared this observation of an interaction between program participants:*

“One man said to another participant ‘I have known you for decades and talked about the weather, but after just a couple of hours of talking about poems, I feel like I really know you.’”



*Creative Aging is funded by Caring for Denver Foundation, NextFifty Foundation, Colorado Creative Industries, SCFD Jefferson, Broomfield, and Denver counties.*

# Artists in Schools

## Nederland Elementary

In April, teaching artist Chelsea Gilmore collaborated with Susan Blurton, art teacher at Nederland Elementary, to create a large-scale outdoor mural for the school's inaugural Culture Week. PK-5 students came together to create a vibrant mountain landscape, with each student contributing personal imagery that explored the questions: *What makes home feel like home? How do I contribute to the mountain community?*



“I know this program brought a sense of pride for the students and the school. The parents and staff were really excited to see the mural going up and loved how it transitioned from a flat image of color to a dynamic landscape of unique stories.”

-Chelsea Gilmore, Think 360 Teaching Artist

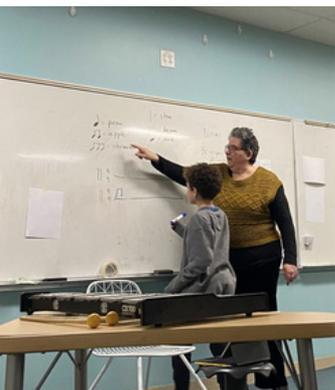


“This is an excellent program that has provided this mountain school with a lifelong positive experience and opportunity... Chelsea worked around inclement weather and with all ages of students and adults to bring out their best work and to feel good about what they were creating.”

- Susan Blurton, Nederland Elementary Art Teacher

## Downtown Denver Expeditionary School

Think 360 collaborated with Downtown Denver Expeditionary School (DDES) to provide year-round music programming for students in grades K-5, responding to a gap in their curriculum.



Students engaged with four teaching artists—Bob Hall (Kusogea Nobi Drum Ensemble), Andrea Asali, Barbara Hamilton (Colorado Chamber Players), and Katherine Dines—exploring diverse music offerings including African drumming, singing, songwriting, composition, and the neuroscience of music. With the program's success, Think 360 is partnering with DDES again for the 2024-25 school year to provide year-round music instruction!

*Artists in School is funded by SCFD Denver, Arapahoe, Adams, Douglas, Jefferson, and Boulder; National Endowment for the Arts, Colorado Creative Industries, and the Meow Wolf Foundation.*

# Equity in Arts Learning for Colorado Youth (EAL)

The **Bonfils-Stanton Foundation**, **Denver Arts & Venues**, the **Gates Family Foundation**, **Colorado Creative Industries**, and **The Denver Foundation** partnered with Think 360 Arts to realize a nearly half-million dollar fund.

The goal of this initiative is to dismantle the systemic barriers that have long prevented marginalized youth from experiencing the life-altering benefits of arts learning. Think 360 Arts is proud to serve as a critical thought partner and the administrator of the grant program.



## 2024-25 EAL Grant Cycle Highlights

In its inaugural year, the Equity in Arts Learning for Colorado Youth (EAL) Grant received 274 Letters of Intent from 36 counties, representing over half of Colorado. From these, 79 proposals were invited to submit full applications, evaluated by a panel of arts education experts and collaborative funders.

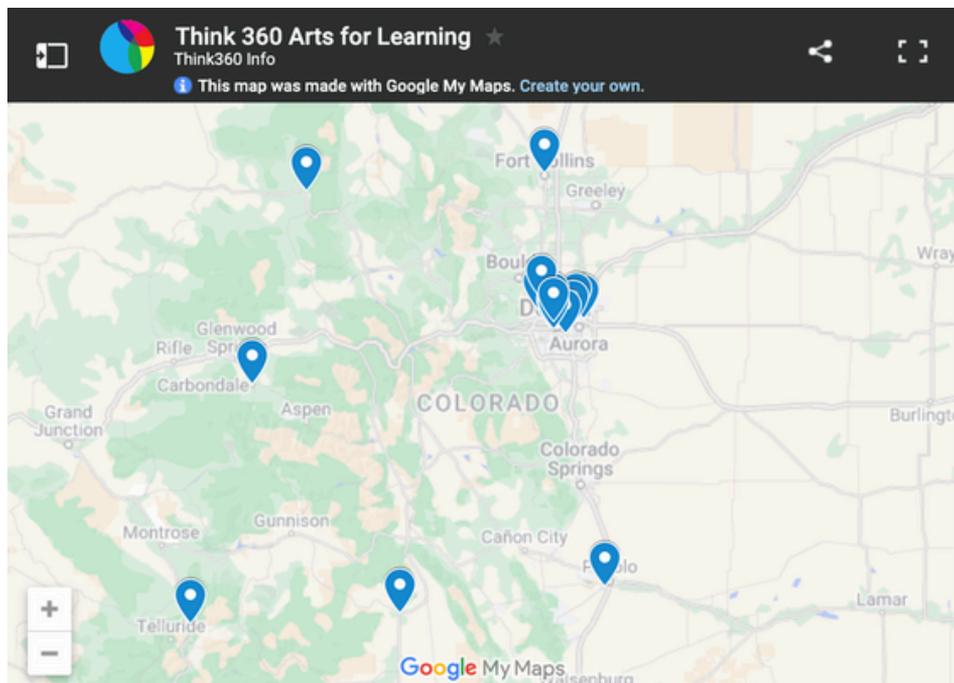


Through this competitive process, grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000 were awarded to 21 organizations across 10 Colorado counties. Notably, 87% of funded projects serve predominantly low-income student communities, 77% focus on the needs of BIPOC students, and three projects specifically support LGBTQIA+ youth.

*The 2024-25 EAL grant opportunity is funded by Colorado Creative Industries, Bonfils Stanton Foundation, Denver Arts & Venues, the Gates Family Foundation, and The Denver Foundation.*

## First Year Impact by Numbers:

- Total Awarded: \$398,750
- Average EAL Award: \$18,988
- 21 Awardees represented by 10 Colorado Counties:
  - Arapahoe, Costilla, Denver, Garfield, Jefferson, La Plata, Larimer, Ouray, Pueblo, Routt



## Explore our Interactive Map

Explore our interactive map to learn more about the impact of the EAL grant across Colorado.



# Greater Denver Wolf Trap

The Greater Denver Wolf Trap (WT) program reached 25 classrooms across 10 Title I and low-to-moderate income schools and early learning centers in the 23-24 school year. These residencies engaged 356 children and 43 educators, including teachers, teaching assistants, and paraprofessionals.



Our arts-integrated approach provide both academic and social-emotional growth, preparing students for future educational success.

We are proud to have expanded beyond Denver, partnering with Boston PK-8 in Aurora and Timberline PK-8 in Longmont. This highlights our ongoing commitment to broadening access to high-quality early childhood education across the state.

## Strengthening Our Teaching Artist Cohort

In October 2023, we strengthened our Wolf Trap cohort by training five new teaching artists in the Wolf Trap model. Two of these artists are bilingual in Spanish and English, enhancing our efforts to improve accessibility for diverse families.

Furthermore, two teaching artists specialize in supporting students with disabilities, ensuring our programs are inclusive and adaptive. This expanded expertise, particularly in music, offering classroom teachers diverse options for collaboration.



*Greater Denver Wolf Trap is funded by PNC Grow Up Great, Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation, Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, and SCFD Arapahoe County.*

# Community Programs

Think 360 is proud to collaborate with many metro area library districts including Denver Public Library, Anythink Library, Broomfield Library, Jefferson County Public Library, Aurora Public Library, and Englewood Public Library.

## Bilingual Programming

At the Lakewood Library, teaching artist Tony Ortega offered a bilingual paint-and-sip style workshop to library patrons of all ages. With instruction in both Spanish and English, this program engaged a wide audience, and everyone left with a beautiful painting. The librarian reflected that, “it fostered community connection among library patrons, Spanish speakers, and art creators.”





## Partnership with Anythink Libraries

Teaching artist Eureka led a summer toy-making workshop for youth at Anythink Bennett, where participants learned basic engineering skills to design pulley spinner toys. At Anythink Brighton, teaching artist Kia Neill facilitated a paint pouring workshop for adults. Teaching artist Jo Fitsell guided an adult workshop series at Anythink Perl Mack, teaching participants the art of basket-making through simple coil and stitching techniques. These workshops highlight Think 360's dedication to offering creative, skill-building opportunities for all ages.

*Community Programs is funded by SCFD Arapahoe, Adams, Boulder, Broomfield, Douglas, Denver, Jefferson; and Colorado Creative Industries.*



## Institute for Creative Teaching (ICT) 2024

In June 2024, Think 360 Arts resumed its 35-year history of ICT in partnership with the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). Think 360 teaching artists, UNC staff, and special presenters like Meow Wolf and Virgil Ortiz offered workshops and presentations on storytelling, worldbuilding, and fiction. Topics included using science fiction for poetic world construction, theatre for exploring place and setting, and sound as a tool for inclusive worldbuilding.



“The theme was a little intimidating for me because I didn't think it was one of my strongest areas. I learned so much because of that and my world was opened up to new possibilities in the classroom and outside of the classroom. I feel so enriched from the experience.”

-ICT 2024 Participant

“I loved that this conference was so inclusive and all encompassing as to the invitation for participants of a wide range of professionalism. There were no limitations to the direction of this conference. Any person with any professional background could have benefited from this conference. I would definitely recommend attending this conference in the future. It is one of the most meaningful conferences I have attended during my tenure of 30+ years of teaching.”

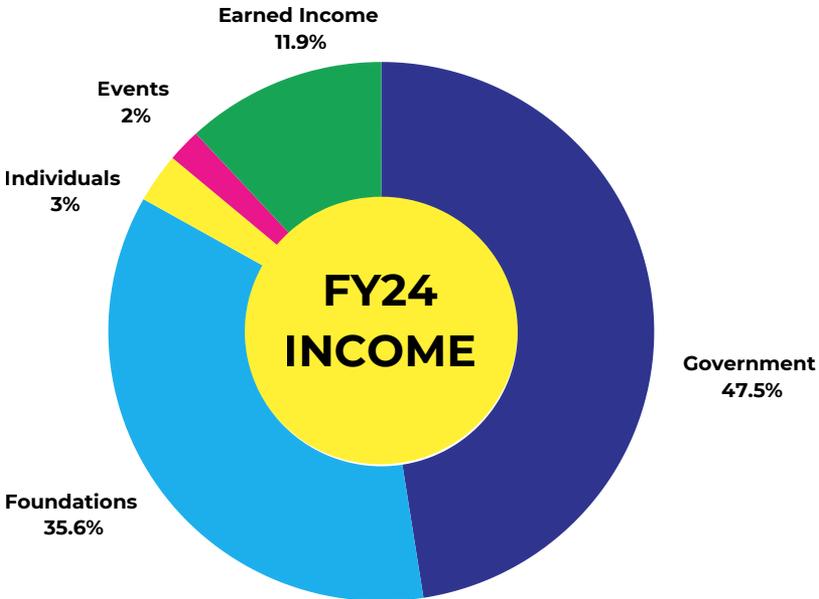
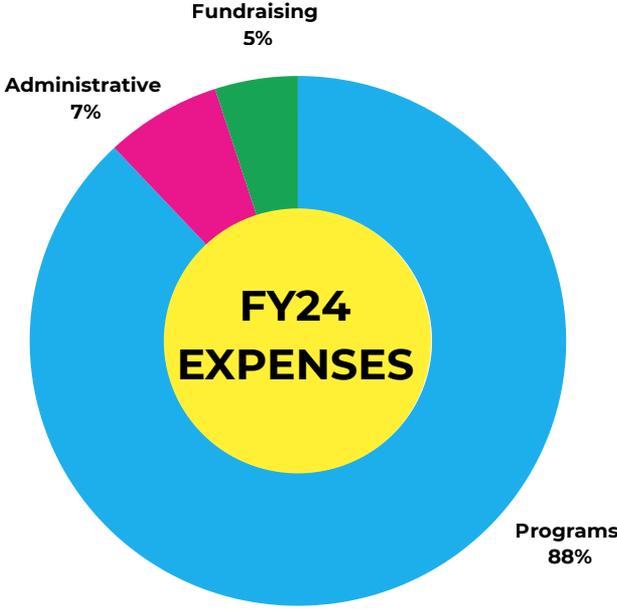
*-ICT 2024 Participant*



*ICT 2024 sponsors and partners included the University of Northern Colorado, Colorado Creative Industries, Denver Arts & Venues, SCFD, Meow Wolf, and Jodie and Maxwell Wilson.*

# Expenses & Income

July 1st, 2023 - June 30th, 2024





# Thank you!

We express our deepest gratitude to all  
of our individual donors!

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*\*Bolted names are FY24 Board of Directors*

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