



think360
ARTS
FOR LEARNING

2025 Community
Report



A Letter from our Board Chair

Dear Friends of Think 360 Arts,

I am delighted to share with you some meaningful highlights of the year here at Think 360 Arts for Learning. Every day our incredible teaching artists bring creativity, learning, curiosity and delight to communities across Colorado – enriching the lives of people of all ages.

This report outlines the impact we have had this year in urban and rural communities supporting students, young children, art teachers and leaders, older adults, and partner organizations. None of this would have been possible without our outstanding and steadfast staff, dedicated board, talented teaching artists, and generous donors. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you who have committed time, heart and financial support to Think 360 over the past year.

I hope you enjoy reading about the collective impact that we have made – thanks to you.

As we look ahead to 2026, I am excited for what is to come. Together, we will continue to spark joy across Colorado through outstanding arts programming. Here's to a moment of reflection and gratitude for all that we've accomplished in 2025, and to an exciting new chapter in the year ahead.

With warmth and gratitude,



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

173



Community

92 unique venue partners



Creative Aging

nearly 914 older adult experiences
through 29 programs



Youth Experiences

15,298

Wolf Trap

14 classroom residencies, 32
educators & 200 children ages 3-5



Professional Development

over 1,288 teachers served





Creative Aging

Fruita Community Center

Artist Pavia Justinian led a series of monthly painting workshops at the Fruita Community Center, inviting older adult participants to explore creativity through themed projects such as mandalas, Colorado wildflowers, and fall aspen trees. Each session provided a welcoming space for community members to connect, learn new techniques, and express themselves through art.



In one summer installment, participants celebrated the season's abundance by painting colorful fruit scenes:

“Everyone had fun painting fruit to celebrate summer and the harvest... It's great to see all the different ways people interpreted the painting.”

-Pavia Justinian, Teaching Artist



These workshops fostered creativity, connection, and confidence among community members, showcasing how accessible, hands-on art experiences can bring people together.

Denver Public Library: Ross-University Hills

In May, teaching artist Jennifer Ghormley led a two-part printmaking workshop at the Ross–University Hills branch of the Denver Public Library, engaging older adult participants in a creative exploration of mixed media techniques. The workshop introduced linoleum block stamping alongside layered materials, encouraging participants to experiment with texture, color, and composition.



Through this hands-on process, attendees discovered new ways to express themselves artistically while connecting with others in a supportive, community-centered setting.

Creative Aging is funded by Caring for Denver Foundation, Colorado Creative Industries, SCFD Arapahoe, Broomfield, and Denver Counties, and Denver Arts & Venues.

Artists in Schools

Eagle Valley Elementary

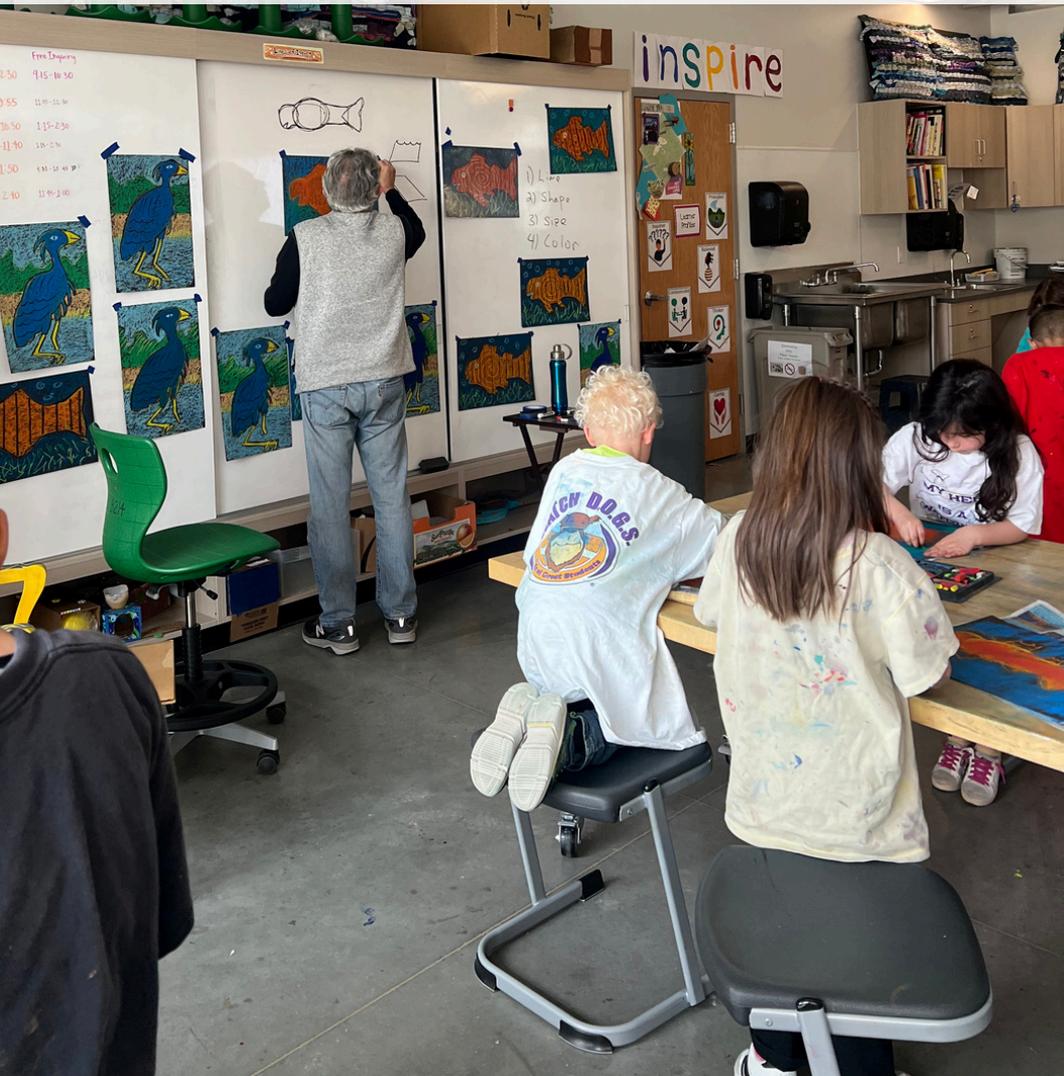
In May, teaching artist Tony Ortega led a two-day, school-wide bilingual arts program at Eagle Valley Elementary School. Over the course of the residency, students participated in hands-on workshops exploring chalk pastel techniques, inspired by Ortega's own illustrated children's books.



The program culminated in a family engagement evening on May 6, where parents joined their children to create pastel artworks together and hear from Ortega about his artistic process and storytelling through illustration. Students and families also had the opportunity to purchase signed copies of his books.

The school supported the project by providing art materials—including chalk pastel sets, black construction paper, and laminating film—ensuring all students could participate fully.

Ortega reflected on the experience, sharing that he “enjoyed working with this community” and appreciated the students’ “wonderful questions about the process of making the pastel drawings and the characters in the books.” Parents also expressed joy at seeing their children’s creativity come to life through the workshop.



Ellis Elementary School

Artist David Ocelotl-Garcia collaborated with 3rd–5th grade students at Ellis Elementary School to design and create a bilingual mural titled “Somos un jardín / We Are a Garden.” Through this project, students explored ideas of community, identity, and belonging, contributing their own artwork to a permanent mural that now hangs in the school.



In addition to leading the student workshops, Ocelotl-Garcia worked closely with art teacher Jessica Buchberger to develop strategies for extending the mural’s theme to K–2 students, ensuring the project’s impact reached the entire school community.

As a Title I school, Ellis Elementary was able to realize this creative project with support from Think 360 and Denver Public Schools' A to Z Fund.



Reflecting on the experience, Buchberger shared that the residency “introduced the students to a professional artist, produced a beautiful student-made mural, and enhanced our identity as a community.” She credited the “amazing admin, guest teacher, and David” for ensuring the project’s success, adding that “the program was amazing—nothing could have been done better.”

Artists in Schools programs are funded by SCFD Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties; Colorado Creative Industries, and Young Audiences | Arts for Learning.

Equity in Arts Learning for Colorado Youth (EAL)

Since 2023, the **Bonfils-Stanton Foundation**, **Denver Arts & Venues**, the **Gates Family Foundation**, and **Colorado Creative Industries** have 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 administrator of the grant program.



2025-26 EAL Grant Cycle Highlights

In the second year, 27 schools and organizations representing 11 counties were granted funds for the 2025–26 school year, following a competitive two-stage evaluation process. In total, the program has invested nearly \$1 million in support of arts learning for youth in Colorado since 2024.



The Equity in Arts Learning for Colorado Youth grant aims to activate systems-level change, reaching across schools and communities to address systemic inequities in access to high quality arts education. By working together, our collaborative funding partners seek to ensure that historically marginalized and underserved youth statewide have access to the life-changing power of the arts.

The 2025-26 EAL grant opportunity is funded by Colorado Creative Industries, Bonfils Stanton Foundation, Denver Arts & Venues, and the Gates Family Foundation.



Second Year Impact by Numbers:

- Total Awarded: \$477,500
- 27 Awardees represented by 11 Colorado Counties
- Art form instruction represented includes:
 - Storytelling/Spoken Word, Digital Arts/Film/New Media, Visual Arts - 2D, Visual Arts - 3D, Dance/Movement, Drama/Theatre Music, Heritage/Folk/Traditional Art, Literature/Writing/Poetry





Greater Denver Wolf Trap

In 2025, we were extremely fortunate to receive regranted funds through our partners at Wolf Trap National, allowing us to continue our outreach efforts in Saint Vrain Valley School District.

Nederland Elementary

Teaching artist Betsy Tobin led a Wolf Trap residency at Nederland Elementary School, highlighting the organization's commitment to expanding its early childhood arts programs beyond the Denver metro area.



The residency introduced young learners to shadow puppetry and puppetry arts, using beloved children's books *The Little Yellow Leaf* by Carin Berger and *Little Cloud* by Eric Carle as creative inspiration.

Through hands-on storytelling and puppet-making activities, students explored movement, narrative, and visual design—building fine motor, imaginative, and early literacy skills.

The residency was child appropriate and brought in new skills that teachers don't necessarily have, so students can learn and walk away with new skills. After our sessions, the children in my class would often recreate or extend what they learned, building upon their new understanding.

- Emily Barth, Classroom Teacher



This residency exemplified how Wolf Trap teaching artists bring new creative tools and arts-integrated learning to classrooms, fostering curiosity and expression in early learners while supporting teachers with fresh, adaptable strategies.

Greater Denver Wolf Trap is funded by Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation, Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts, and Community Foundation of Boulder.

Community Programs

As part of its commitment to bringing high-quality arts education to rural areas across Colorado, Think 360 Arts collaborated with community partners to deliver engaging, hands-on workshops that connected young people to diverse artistic traditions and creative practices.

Berthoud Community Library

At the Berthoud Community Library, Think 360 supported the library's summer theme, "Color Our World," with a workshop for 6th–12th grade students led by teaching artist Yoko Hiraoka, who introduced participants to the art of Japanese calligraphy.

In a separate program, teaching artist Perla Kopeloff traveled to the Boys and Girls Club of the San Luis Valley in Saguache to guide youth through a papermaking workshop, combining artistic technique with environmental awareness.

Together, these workshops reflect Think 360 Arts' ongoing effort to ensure equitable access to arts learning statewide, empowering students in rural and mountain communities to explore creativity, culture, and self-expression.



Partnership with Denver Zoo Conservation Alliance

The Kusogea Nobi Drum Ensemble (KNDE) partnered with the Denver Zoo Conservation Alliance for a series of five evening performances as part of the Zoo's spring performance series. Across the events, KNDE brought audiences together through dynamic drumming, rhythm, and movement, sharing vibrant cultural expression and community energy.

Each evening featured an opening 40-minute performance, followed by two 20-minute sets, immersing patrons in an engaging celebration of music and connection within the Zoo's lively outdoor setting.

Community Programs are funded by SCFD Arapahoe, Adams, Boulder, Broomfield, Douglas, Denver, and Jefferson Counties; Community Foundation of Boulder, and Colorado Creative Industries.

Professional Development

Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference

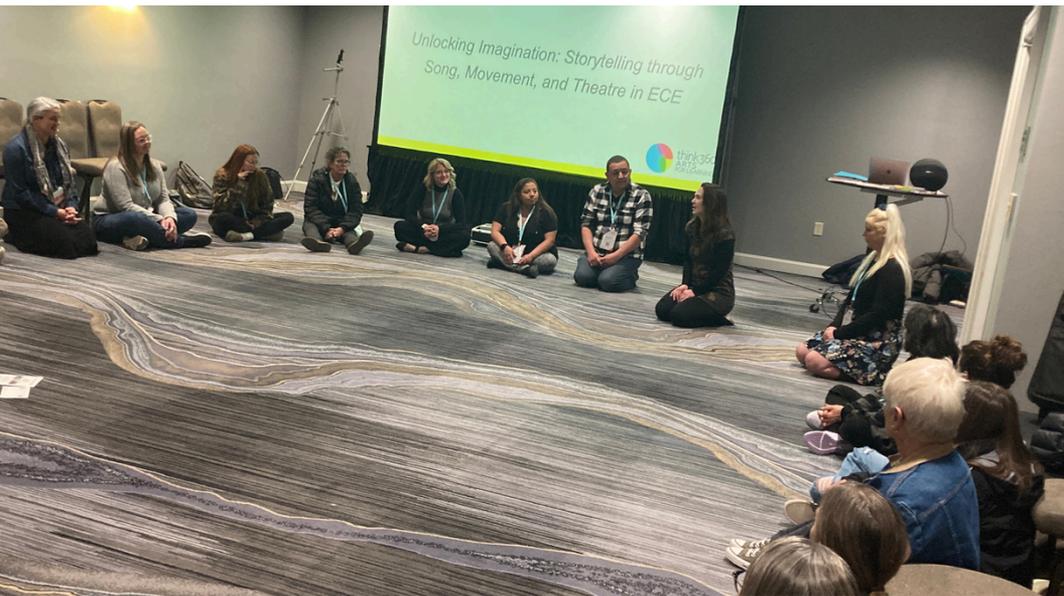
At the 2025 Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference, Think 360 staff member Elle Hong and teaching artist Courtney Esser led a 75-minute professional development session titled “Unlocking Imagination: Storytelling through Song, Movement, and Theatre in ECE.” The workshop reflected Think 360 Arts’ commitment to sharing innovative, arts-integrated practices with educators across Colorado.



Thirty-three early childhood educators participated in this hands-on session, where Hong introduced Think 360’s professional development and early childhood programs, and Esser guided participants through imagination-based theatre games such as “Magic Rocks” and “Museum.”

Using Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* as a foundation, Esser demonstrated how these activities can help young learners develop motor skills, imagination, emotional expression, and self-regulation.

The session offered educators practical tools to weave arts, movement, and storytelling into daily classroom practice —empowering students to explore creativity, build confidence, and express themselves through play.



Professional Development programs are funded by Colorado Creative Industries and Denver & Arts Venues.

2025 Institute for Creative Teaching (ICT)

Think 360 held its 36th annual Institute for Creative Teaching, in partnership with the University of Northern Colorado, in June 2025. This year's institute centered on themes of home, belonging, and place. Think 360 teaching artists, UNC staff, and special presenters including Helanius J. Wilkins and Little Theatre of the Rockies offered theme-related workshops and presentations.

Topics included creating immersive classroom environments through shadow puppetry, building a sense of belonging through shared movement experiences, and learning how to co-habitate with the microorganisms we share our worlds with.



“*Something valuable was the theme connecting us to where we are from and what makes us feel safe. I will apply that more into building meaningful relationships with my students so they can feel more comfortable and confident taking risks in creating artworks.*”

-ICT 2025 Participant



ICT 2025 sponsors included University of Northern Colorado, Colorado Creative Industries, National Endowment for the Arts, DPS Foundation, and Maxwell & Jodie Wilson.

Special Exhibitions

Creative Capitol: Art of Teaching Artistry

Think 360 Arts proudly partnered with Colorado Creative Industries, a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade to bring *The Creative Capitol: Art of Teaching Artistry* exhibit to the Colorado State Capital. This exhibit remained at the State Capital from March to August 2025, and is currently on display at Children's Hospital Colorado from October to December, 2025.



The exhibition featured 18 professional artists elevating their exceptional talents in a variety of art media. These artists work with Think 360 Arts for Learning as teaching artists, inspiring students of all ages while continuing their own creative practices. They show that teaching art is more than just a job—it's a meaningful and rewarding calling.

Curated by Daisy Fodness-McGowan, Executive Director, Think 360 Arts for Learning, with special thanks to Ruth Wilson and Colorado Creative Industries.

Making Meaning: The Transformative Art of Creative Aging

In the spring, Think 360 Arts partnered with 40 West Arts to bring *Making Meaning: The Transformative Art of Creative Aging*, a multidisciplinary exhibition that honors the profound power of lifelong creativity, to 40 West Gallery.

The showcase focused on uplifting the voices and visions of professional teaching artists and older adult participants from communities across Colorado.

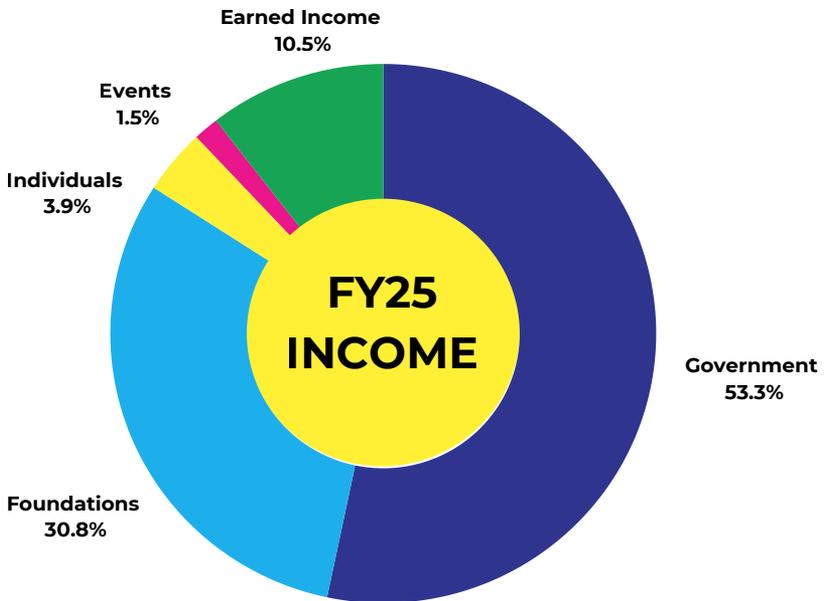
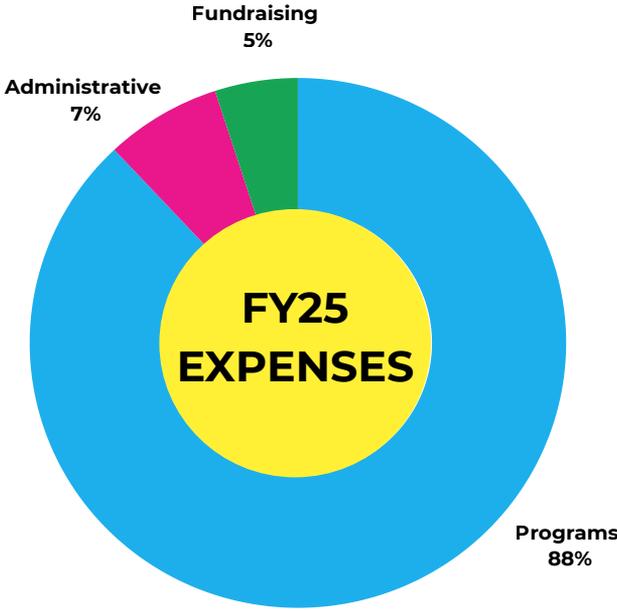
At a time when the “loneliness epidemic” continues to impact communities nationwide, *Making Meaning: The Transformative Art of Creative Aging* offers a reminder that creativity is not only life-affirming—it is life-extending.



Co-curated by Think 360 Arts Teaching Artist and board member Dona Laurita and Daisy Fodness-McGowan. Made possible thanks to the generous support of 40 West Arts District, Colorado Creative Industries, and the Denver Commission on Aging 2024 EDI Award.

Expenses & Income

July 1st, 2024 - June 30th, 2025





Thank you!

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

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