Creating Pathways
From High School to College to Career
WE BELIEVE A QUALITY EDUCATION SHOULDN’T DEPEND ON A CHILD’S ZIP CODE

In his book *The Vanishing Middle Class*, M.I.T. economist Peter Temin writes that escaping poverty requires almost 20 years of effort with nearly nothing going wrong. Not surprisingly, the first and most important driver of economic mobility is having access to a quality education. To create transformational change in a young person’s life, this education must then be sustained over a number of years. Of course, college is part of that equation. But even more than attending college, we know that graduating with minimum debt—or none at all—is the game changer for our community. Now imagine if a graduate also has the opportunity to build a network with top employers, giving them pathways to a well-paid career. Wouldn't that be something?

Yes, it would. And that’s why after thirty years of listening and learning, we’ve honed our approach to focus on three main pillars to set up our students for success.

First, we teach underrepresented students in Title 1 schools the art and technology of digital game development through computer science, coding, animation, music, and storytelling.

Second, we provide our students with private-school-level college-access services to ensure they earn the maximum in scholarships and reduce their debt burden.

And third, we connect our growing network of alumni to mentorship and internship opportunities at leading media and technology companies, generating a new and diverse talent pipeline for New York City and beyond.

Since we launched our college access program in 2017, 100% of our students have matriculated, earning more than $10M in scholarships. Each year our alumni cohort swells. With that, we gain new corporate partners who provide valuable entry and exposure, developing the next generation of talented hires. Further, we’re excited our new Gaming Pathways initiative, in partnership with City College of New York, aligns with Mayor Adams’ economic development plan to drive inclusive growth while renewing NYC.

Thank you for your support over the years. It grants us the opportunity to inspire and affect real and lasting change. Whether you’re new to Urban Arts or a long-standing partner, we always welcome your voice.

ELYSE DREYER, BOARD CHAIR

PHILIP COURTNEY, CEO
philip@urbanarts.org
I am from aluminum bowls, oil paint, and mistolin.
I am from repurposed tenement buildings
and graffiti that lines the staircase walls
I am from the Bayahibe Rose
The blueberry bush that we watch bear fruit and fall
I am from tan skin, dark curly hair and strong women
I'm from cooking soup on hot days
And Sarandelas

I'm from making little drawings of each other on napkins
and playing games of Castillo on the couch
I am from Spanish ballads, Bachata and R&B
That plays loudly on the speakers during cleaning day
and I am from the inevitable interruption of grabbing the nearest person to dance
I am from the hallway
Where pictures hang with the long line of people who have sacrificed
leaving the home they knew, to give me mine

I am from an old shoebox now filled to the brim
with photos from many disposable cameras
I am from East New York
I am from the Dominican Republic.
I am from love.
OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

DEC 21 Urban Arts wins a prestigious $4M Education, Innovation, and Research (EIR) Grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education to develop our custom curriculum in North Carolina and Brooklyn.

JAN 22 Our mentoring pilot mentioned in last year’s letter has flourished. NBCU, Take-Two Interactive, Bad Robot, Roku, Hasbro, Niantic, and more have joined to help students build a professional network.

JAN 22 The American Rescue Plan grant from The National Endowment for the Arts provides essential funding as we recover from the pandemic.

FEB 22 The Charles Hayden Foundation supports our enriched Alumni Program, which includes college- and financial aid-application support, college persistence guidance, and networking events.

MAR 22 Urban Arts is powering AT&T’s Achievery, a global platform to engage K-12 students and make online learning more effective. We’ve taped over 45 learning units so far.

APR 22 The Color Ball makes a splash, with honorees Mr. John Ricciello of Unity and Mr. Gordon Bellamy of University of Southern California.

MAY 22 Mayor Adams and CEO Philip Courtney announce Gaming Pathways at CCNY. See page 5 for more.

MAY 22 The MetLife Foundation generously gifts $625,000 to Urban Arts through the sale of their renowned N.C. Wyeth murals.

JUN 22 Urban Arts goes to New Orleans for the International Society for Technology in Education conference, sharing our custom curriculum.

JUN 22 Microsoft delivers $120,000 in high-end tech to level the digital playing field for underrepresented students.

JUN 22 Board Member Steve Geismar, President & CEO of PACOA, hosted the annual Golf Classic Benefit.

JUL 22 Two of our alumni, experts on Epic Games’s Unreal Engine, Twin Motion, and Fortnite curricula, trained teachers from around the country on using the platforms to upgrade the teaching of core subjects within their classrooms.

SEP 22 Our students hosted Microsoft Vice Chair and President Brad Smith and the Mayor (again—IFYKYK!) at the grand opening of Microsoft’s accelerator space The Garage.

OCT 2022 Urban Arts was a featured partner at #TwitchCon in San Diego. We shared our mission with the gamer and streamer community. Everyone: “I wish this existed when I was in high school!”
BY THE NUMBERS

100 $10M

% OF OUR MASTERY STUDENTS MATRICULATE TO COLLEGE
STUDENTS HAVE EARNED $10M IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO DATE

22

MASTERCLASSES TAUGHT BY CREATIVE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

90

% OF STUDENTS ACHIEVE SIGNIFICANT GAINS—200+ POINTS—ON THEIR SATS

OUR STUDENTS
90% Low-Income Households
92% Students of Color
50% Identify as Female
10% Gender Nonconforming

SCHOOLS
Number of students served to date: 260,000
Number of teachers trained and supported: 3,000
Number of students we are serving this year: 5,000
Number of teachers we are training and supporting: 100

“The Urban Arts team and their expertly-developed resources have made my job significantly easier, helping me deliver rigorous, engaging Computer Science instruction to students of all levels and backgrounds. Not sure how I’d do it without their support!”
STEVEN VELEZ
High School Teacher, Queens, NY

Students reported greater interest and confidence in Computer Science and felt more encouraged to study Computer Science.

300+

Our Mastery program students spend 300+ hours learning game design, coding, narrative writing, animation, and storytelling

74% of Urban Arts students passed the AP Computer Science exam (compared to 40% in NYC schools)

2x (!) 2021 Generation Google Scholarships for Women in Gaming

COLLEGES
A sampling of where you can find our alumni.

15 years of the Nagler Scholarship, supporting 17 scholars.

“The Nagler Scholarship allowed me to be the game designer and educator I’ve always dreamed of!”
DARCY G.
Nagler Scholar, 2019

Our Alumni have won additional scholarships from:
- College Scholarship
- POSSE Foundation
- Questbridge College Match Finalists
- Generation Google Scholarship
- Adobe Design Circle Scholarship
- Jack Cooke Kent Foundation Scholarship
- ESA Foundation Scholarship
- CST Even Grant

CAREERS
100

We’ve facilitated 100 mentorship pairs.

“Microsoft’s mission is to empower every person on the planet to achieve more. Urban Arts’s programming is driving alongside us in that mission by empowering the next generation of developers and creators.”
JOSH REYNOLDS
Head of Modern Workplace, East Region U.S. Education at Microsoft

We help students earn professional industry certifications in the fields of computer science, machine learning, and coding from companies like Unity, Microsoft, and Unreal.

40

Number of alumni we’ve employed as Educators, Software Engineers, and Designers.

“Urban Arts gave me the tools to think creatively and use my voice in college.”
LOUIS ALBANEZ
Alumnus, sophomore, University of Chicago, CompSci

93%
of teachers said that our curriculum was an engaging way to teach students computer science.
For FY21, our most recently audited fiscal year, we grew our revenues by 20% to $6.2M as we increased our programmatic reach and brought on many new partners. As part of our ongoing strategy to diversify our giving portfolio 45% of the funds we raised were from private sources and 55% from public. We also continued to build our Earned Revenue stream.

In FY22 our most recently completed fiscal year, we secured $7.7M in revenue representing a growth of 24%. Earned Revenue continued to grow, as did contributions from Foundations. 57% of the funds raised in FY22 were from private sources and 43% from public. Building on FY21’s success, in FY22 we became more efficient, spending 80% of our budget on programs, compared to 71% in FY21. $1.6M of our FY22 surplus are funds allocated to be spent in FY23.

Our Total Net Assets as of June 30, 2022 were $6.2M including $3.5M in retained earnings and $453K in temporarily restricted assets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>($ IN THOUSANDS)</th>
<th>FY21 (AUDITED)</th>
<th>FY22 (UNAUDITED)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REVENUES</td>
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<td>GOVERNMENT</td>
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<td>EVENTS, INDIVIDUALS &amp;</td>
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<tr>
<td>EARNED REVENUE</td>
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<td>5,463</td>
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<tr>
<td>NET INCOME</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>2,278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I am from the loud train that passes as I work and sleep
From “Why are you still up? and “Did you even eat?”
I am from the youngest of three, two sisters and me
But I stand above them now
I am from here’s your Sunday dinner,
don’t get up take a seat
I’m from the Caribbeans, knowing a little Spanish
From my grandma’s bowl of candy and the jar of cookies that’s never empty
I’m from my tons of cousins who think I’m so bright
I’m from the friends that are family

I am from a room painted pink
before it belonged to me
From the squeaky door
From longs days throwing my bag on the ground
I’m from you should be a Doctor or Lawyer but game designer, that’s me
I’m from the room I spend years in, door unopened
The screen telling my eyes, please stay open
I’m from 2AM working and still going
I am from drawing on the train
I am from being tired of these delays.

DAQUAN’S PATHWAY

Urban Arts Alumnus + Teaching Artist / From Brooklyn, Currently at Hunter College
“New York City has always been the center of innovation, but it’s time that New York City level up and finally become a leader in the digital gaming space. It’s time to take advantage of all the talent we have here in New York by investing in the future of gaming. This $2 million investment will help us reach more than 1,000 students over the next three years and diversify the gaming field. This is how we get stuff done for our young people and for New York City!”

MAYOR OF NEW YORK ERIC ADAMS, MAY 16, 2022

We’re providing students with private-school-level college-access services to ensure they earn the maximum in assistance and reduce their debt burden. While the success of this program is clear, we know that public education remains a critical space in need of investment. Graduating with minimum debt—or none at all—is the game changer for our community, impacting a student’s entire life trajectory.

So Urban Arts, in partnership with the Mayor’s Office and the City University of New York (CUNY), is developing Gaming Pathways, a first-ever, four-year, public-option Digital Game Design Bachelor’s Degree. Local Title 1 high school students will now define their futures within the U.S.’s largest urban university system and within NYC’s $2B digital sector.

Our rigorous curriculum will be expanded to schools in Harlem, Upper Manhattan, and the Bronx, charting new paths to personal, academic, and career success in students’ own backyards.

These students, freshly qualified and encouraged in the digital space, can attend City College’s new program, graduate with no or minimal debt, and embark into NYC’s booming digital economy with local, high-paying jobs.

“Gaming Pathways provides New York City students with a first-rate opportunity to access high-paying careers, while expressing their creativity in the city they love and call home,” said Kevin Wright, Chief Growth Officer.

Urban Arts is a key component in NYC’s Economic Recovery Blueprint, to drive inclusive growth in the Digital Games Industry, strengthen pathways to education, degrees, and jobs in the sector and continue to advance the City as a leading hub for digital game development. Boosting a diverse talent pipeline ensures that the digital economy looks like all of New York.
The Urban Arts Color Ball, the most dynamic gala of the season, broke all fundraising goals raising well over $700,000 in a single night. The event was awash in swag with colorful dopamine dressing, sky-high energy, and stacked with diverse powerbrokers from tech, finance, art, and media. Save the date March 8, 2023 and contact Genevieve King, below, to stay party-ready.

genevieve@urbanarts.org

VISIT LAST YEAR’S GALA FOR 90-SECONDS
I am from the persimmons and mints and the dark oak that stands in front still standing tall and strong since I remember. as if they will live forever.

I'm from red envelopes and black hair and dark brown eyes from Great to Grand to Dad to Me.
I'm from too much rice and too many leftovers
From family gossip.
I'm from “My boy is so handsome!” and the Little Einsteins.

I'm from home shrine prayers.
I'm from the Bronx, my parents from Vietnam
From Summer rolls and pho
From monochromatic photos of prime grandparents and a worn-out straw hat that hangs on the wall for no one to touch.
THANK YOU

Urban Arts Supporter Levels

$500K and above
AT&T Foundation
MetLife Foundation
NYC Department of Education
US Department of Education

$250k-$499k
Adobe Foundation
NYS Education Department
Unity Technologies
William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust

$100K-$249K
Booth Ferris Foundation
Charles Hayden Foundation
Clara and Steve Geismar
Epic Games
Hearst Foundations
John Riccitiello
Microsoft
National Endowment for the Arts
NBCUniversal
Niclas Nagler
NYC Mayor’s Office of Media & Entertainment

$50K-$99K
Altman Foundation
Bank of the West
Bill & Amy Conway
Hasbro
Martha and Richard Handler
NYS Council on the Arts
Paramount Global
Siegel Family Endowment
Take-Two Interactive

$25K-$49K
Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation
Cox Enterprises
Dan Pelson
Elyse and Anthony Dreyer
Fresh Air Fund
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J.E. & Z.B. Butler Foundation
Kaya Chwals & Walter Lee
Keith Haring Foundation
Lamb & Barnofsky
Nintendo
NYC Department of Cultural Affairs
Roku
Sonos

$10-$24K
Bad Robot Games
Bigglesworth Family Foundation
Capital One
Charles Freiberg
Chobani
Claire Solot & Sinjin Bain
Deloitte
Derek Benham
Elizabeth Osterman Brown
F5 Tech for Good
Fisher Brothers
General Atlantic Foundation
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Justin Sunshine

$5K-$9.9K
3M
American Eagle Outfitters Foundation
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Dime Community Bank
Dumond Global
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Island Capital
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Jim Parise
John Croce
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Marsha Askins
Mo Baadarani
Pura Vida
Rachel & Ronnie Wexler
Robert Chisari
Sarah Martin
THANK YOU

Scott Goodson  
Sean Burke  
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Oatey  
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Phellix Rodriguez  
Philip Courtney  
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Rachel Aschalew  
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Recochem  
Respawn  
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Steven Brody  
Susie Fontana  
Taneka Stevenson  
Todd Bielen  
Tower  
UGL  
Yash Kulshrestha  
Zach Chess  
Zachery Price  

Additionally, thank you to all of our donors who contributed to our mission last year. We appreciate your support.
I am from the small house on the long hill
that’s taken in all of me, like an emotional sponge
I am from bookshelves filled with secrets
from a spice-filled cabinet above a counter with pastries
and fruits
I am from the overgrown grass
and the magnolia tree
whose pink petals bloom every spring
I’m from early Saturday morning vacuuming
and an afternoon nap that comes later
from my mother, my late father, and my brother
I’m from “you’re a perfect mix” and
“you have your grandmother’s eye for art”

And from the caramel skin of a Latina
I’m from the hospital in Manhattan, from New Jersey,
from Queens
From the sprawling coast of Lima, Peru
from ceviche to takeout sushi and bagels
Where we came from, to where we are now
From mom’s first time on the subway
asking strangers for directions
from the old book of CDs in the bookshelf
from my childhood photo album in my drawer
from a love that transcends hardship and tragedy.

SARAH’S PATHWAY

Urban Arts Alumnus + Teaching Artist / From New Jersey, Currently at Rutgers University
URBAN ARTS LEADERSHIP

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Composer
urban arts

ANNUAL LETTER 2022