



2023



Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut

ANNUAL REPORT



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## OUR MISSION

The Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut is a nonprofit organization **activating creativity to enrich lives and to cultivate prosperity** for the people in Western Connecticut.



# 2023

## WHAT WE'VE DONE.

We are proud of the accomplishments with our partners, engaging hundreds in the community and showcasing local talent. Supporting after-school programs empowers Danbury's youth with artistic education. Collaborative workshops and public art underscore our dedication to activating creativity and uniting people. We continue to innovate and create unique experiences. Join us to go even further.

## Imagine...

### **Yourself immersed in the space of art and human interaction.**

A collaboration with Danbury Fair Mall to present a lively art pop-up event called "Human Connection." We activated an empty storefront, with fine artists who captured the essence of recent years. This innovative exhibition showcased talent from Connecticut and New York, attracting hundreds of individuals to appreciate and purchase featured masterpieces.

### **In a world where every brushstroke tells a story, and every color sings a memory.**

"Childhood Unmuted" art event last August showcased 86 unique pieces of fine art by over 80 artists reflecting on their youth. The exhibition, filled with vibrant memories and emotions, ran until October, captivating visitors and igniting discussions about the essence of childhood.

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Help us bring  
more Art &  
Culture to life.



"WHERE THE INNOCENCE RESIDES" Marsh John, Artist.



## Envision ...

### **Igniting the spark of creativity in Danbury's youth.**

The Creative Youth Development program is a beacon of artistic education and empowerment. Last year, we granted \$40,000 to enhance creative learning experiences. This initiative provides after-school programs to foster creativity and essential life skills, empowering Danbury's youth.

### **A vibrant fusion of art and community spirit.**

Together with the AIR Collaborative we launched a series of workshops that sparked a renaissance of creativity and collaboration. Twenty-five diverse innovators designed impactful arts projects within a modest budget. This initiative unleashed artistic expression and fortified community ties. The project is progressing toward implementation.

### **Breathing new life into the heart of Danbury.**

The Cultural Alliance and CityCenter Danbury united once again to bring sculpture to downtown Danbury. The "Mentor", by renowned artist John BonSignore out of Redding, CT was installed on Crosby Street to foster community unity and evoke a playful, child-like spirit.

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# The creative potential is limitless.



Creative Youth Development Program



## *Picture a world where ...*

### **Food is a masterpiece, and luxury cars set the stage.**

An extraordinary culinary experience at an unforgettable location. The Art of Plating event at Todd Maserati Alfa Romeo of Danbury showcased local chefs' signature appetizers, offering over 100 guests a glimpse into the creative process behind each exquisite bite. The networking evening was a symphony of taste, art, and innovation, brought together by the Cultural Alliance.

### **Creativity blooms and the arts are the seeds of community growth.**

Our signature networking event is not just an awards breakfast; it's a celebration of the arts, bringing together 300 local businesses and visionaries who champion the cultural heartbeat of our community. Dynamic presentations, stirring performances, and inspiring accolades, all dedicated to those who weave the vibrant tapestry of our artistic world. A feast for the soul, while nurturing regional connections.

### **Creativity fuels the economy.**

The Cultural Alliance's participation in the AEP6 study showcases the arts' significant economic impact, with over \$72 million generated in activity. This vibrant sector not only enriches society but also strengthens the economy, influencing public policy through robust data.

**We're doing it.  
But we can do  
more.**





# Join our mission

Dear valued supporter,

Reflecting on the past year fills me with gratitude for the vibrant community engagement and artistic expression flourishing in our neighborhoods, thanks to your unwavering support. Your involvement is crucial in making our vision of a creatively vibrant future a reality.

Join us by sponsoring an artist, volunteering, or participating in workshops. Every contribution, big or small, helps paint our society with vibrant colors and enrich our community.

The Cultural Alliance brought artists and the public closer, supported creative groups, and sparked meaningful conversations through art. With your continued assistance, we can achieve so much more.

Let's collaborate to turn every corner of our historic towns into spaces that celebrate creativity and belonging for all.

Warm regards,

*Lisa Scails*

Executive Director  
Cultural Alliance of Western CT



Lisa Scails and John BonSignore, Artist Sculpture, "The Mentor" located on Crosby Street, Danbury, CT



Creative Youth Development Program Partners

# Programmatic Pillars

## Elevate

We raise the bar on arts promotion, cultural support, and professional development.



Helping as many creative leaders as possible gain resources, make stronger connections and expand their reach to bring art to life. Our membership grew last year by 5%.

## Collaborate

We connect the business and arts communities to help grow the economy.



Our enduring partnerships are ongoing and have lasting impact. Currently, we are focused on funding for the implementation of the AIR Collaborative cohort's project in Danbury.

## Advocate

Nobody stands up for the arts and culture in Western Connecticut like we do.



Last year, we revealed the Arts and Economic Impact study results from 800 surveys and insights from 50 nonprofit organization. We're telling that story to our Allies. We began with Randy Cohen, a renowned researcher from Washington DC to discuss findings in Western CT.





# Board of Directors

**Lew Wallace, Chairman,**  
Director, CommonFund

**Dawn Kaam, Vice Chairman,**  
Realtor, William Pitt  
Sotheby's International  
Realty

**Paul Steinmetz, Secretary,**  
Director, Office of Sponsored  
Research, Western  
Connecticut State University

**Paula Woodhouse,**  
**Treasurer,**  
Bankwell

**Dennis Daugherty, (Former)**  
President of SCORE for  
Western Connecticut

**Andrea Gartner,** Executive  
Director, Norwalk River Valley  
Trail

**Vicki Taylor-Bloch,** Co-owner,  
At Home Design

**Matt Austin,** Public/  
Community Affairs Associate,  
Nuvance Health

**“Suze” Susan Shaner,**  
Founder and President, Sage  
Leadership Strategies, LLC

**Mikayla Hill,**  
Author and Reading Instructor



# Our Commitment

## Integrate the arts

We are passionate about connecting with artists, creative entrepreneurs, and arts and cultural organizations to offer them support.

## Local Partnerships

The relationships we forge are directly linked to our success in integrating the arts within the community.

## Arts for everyone

We are deeply dedicated to nurturing an appreciation for a wide range of voices through the arts.





# With Gratitude

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"Gratitude is the memory of the heart."  
- Jean Baptiste Massieu

Our hearts are filled with countless memories of the support we received in – ideas, connections, finances, resources, or simply attending events to celebrate art and culture. From Community Partners to Board Members, Volunteers, and our Sponsors, we are truly touched by their generosity. These champions of creativity are our greatest supporters, recognizing the importance of the arts. Their contributions are invaluable, enabling us to embrace diverse creative expressions that enhance our communities.



# FINANCIALS

## Income

In 2023, our organization faced a revenue drop as the CT Culture Fund, which provided \$50,000 in revenue in 2022, was discontinued. This funding cut had a notable effect on our operations. To mitigate the impact, we had to remove a part-time position and scale back services. Despite a 14% decrease in revenue compared to the previous year, effective cost control measures and solid community collaborations led to a positive financial result for the year, allowing us to continue making a difference through the arts.

Donations 25%	Grants 29%	Earned 1%	Membership 3%	Restricted 42%
\$46K	\$53K	1K	6K	\$75K

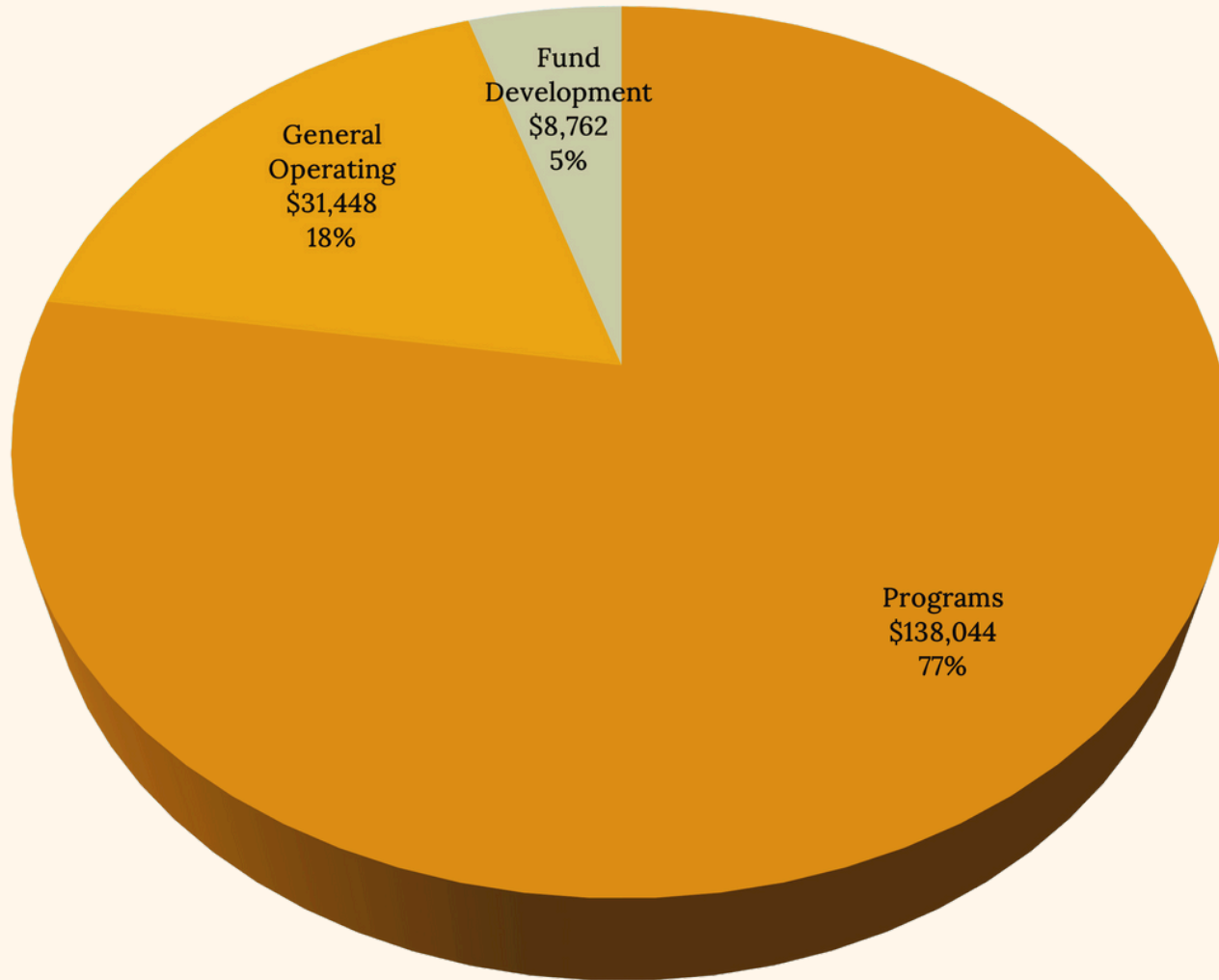
**Total \$182,135 in revenue**



# FINANCIALS

## ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES

TOTAL INVESTMENT OF \$178,254



# Champions *of* Change

## **Major Support by:**

DECD CT Office of the arts for the Designated Regional Service Organization Partnership, the CT Endowment, sponsoring the Arts Economic Impact Study.

## **Partners:**

CRIANA  
Connecticut Institute for Communities  
Hancock Hall  
MAP Agency  
RMedia

## **Donors:**

Roberto Alves  
June Baldyga  
Bright Ravens  
Wendy Cahill  
Dan Carter  
Ben Chianese  
Janice Chrzescijanek  
Barbara Cirella  
Marcie Coffin  
Dianna Colabella  
Emily Denaro  
Steven Greenberg  
Wilda Hayes  
Alice Hutchinson  
Maura Juan  
Graves Kiely  
Matthew Knickerbocker  
Julie Kushner  
Diane La Pine  
Ridgefield Library  
Barbara Maisonpierre  
Rudy Marconi

## **Major Funders:**

Be Foundation  
Fairfield County Bank  
Dennis Daugherty  
Andrea Gartner  
Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce  
Savings Bank of Danbury  
Union Savings Bank  
Lew Wallace

Neil and Lisi Marcus  
Ward Mazzucco  
Brenda McKinley  
Larry Mouning  
Sue Newton  
Jennifer O'Neill  
James Philipakos  
Gregory Pings  
Dawn Reshen-Doty  
Mary Elizabeth Salame  
Robert Sanders  
Raymond Sementini  
Suze Shaner-Brodax  
Patricia Short  
Jorge Sousa  
Linda Sparaco  
Paul Steinmetz  
Vicki Taylor Bloch  
Joseph Walkovich  
Faye and Jerry Walton  
Western Connecticut State University  
Paula Woodhouse

Mark Battista, Artist





## **Imagine**

being part of a dynamic community bursting with creative minds from all artistic backgrounds, igniting fresh ideas and bringing ambitious projects to life.

## **Envision**

immersing yourself in a vibrant art scene, attending captivating gallery openings, mesmerizing theater performances, and vibrant parks. Embrace engaging discussions, continuous learning, and a vibrant celebration of artistic expressions from various perspectives.

## **Visualize**

a flourishing arts sector driving economic growth, with thriving studios, galleries, and innovative startups forming valuable partnerships, attracting investments, and drawing in visitors from near and far.

## **Picture**

a community that values and amplifies all voices through the arts.

## **Realize**

a community nurturing creative talent of the next generation.

Let's create magic.

