

**1,419**  
students  
served

**35**  
neighborhoods  
represented

**275**  
new  
students  
served

**51**  
teachers  
supported



**15**  
scholarships  
provided



**500+**  
songs  
sung



**1,020**  
scenes  
acted



**17**  
teaching  
artists  
employed

## **Rehearsal for Life IMPACT REPORT 2021-2022**

***Together We Stand***



Urban Improv | Freelance Players

To view the entire report, visit  
[rehearsalforlife.org/impactreport2022](https://rehearsalforlife.org/impactreport2022)

# Dear Friends,



This year has been a year of transition at Rehearsal for Life—from our extraordinary first 30 years to entering our next 30 with collective leadership. Doing things in an ordinary way is not how we got here.

Please take a moment to reflect on the past year with pride in what has been accomplished and with thanks to the donors and friends listed in this report.

It was among the most distinguished school years in our history, which is a credit to the loyalty and generosity of our supporters, and the dedication and artistry of the Rehearsal for Life staff. The work in the classrooms and in the community is what excites and ignites us all. We have never been more energized by what we see happening throughout the organization.

Conventional wisdom might suggest that in challenging times such as these we should temper the idiosyncrasy of our work. Many would suggest the risks are too high to take chances; however, in our minds and in our actions, by not taking risks, we risk the loss of our distinction.

With a growth mindset, and leaning into our strengths in improv, community building, and creating safe and brave spaces, we have sharpened our image, enhanced our programs, and are more imaginative in our pursuit of resources. You have helped to make these efforts possible and we can't thank you enough.

My best,  
James Benenson, Chair

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*"I felt privileged to be a part of something so empowering, uplifting and validating not just for our Bigelow students but for myself as a BIPOC who's had to struggle my way through in enabling myself to speak up in a white-dominated workplace... I was simply blown away by how so many students energetically leaned in (despite it being such a sensitive topic), eager to listen & speak up, and showing willingness to advocate for others."*

– Kaori Urayama, Co-Lead, Bigelow Middle School Chapter at Families Organizing for Racial Justice



*Newton Troupe's original musical "The Rash at Ohio State".*



*Zeenia and 4th graders acting at the Murphy School.*



*Our talented team at Rehearsal for Life.  
**We love what we do!***

## MISSION, VISION, VALUES

**MISSION:** To strengthen young people's social and emotional skills for every stage in life, through dialogue, creativity and performance.

**VISION:** Empowered youth building diverse and inclusive communities where all voices are heard.

**VALUES:** As an organization working toward a socially just and equitable society through youth enrichment and empowerment, we uphold these values: Creativity, Empathy, Respect, Cooperation, Empowered Self-Expression, Diversity and Inclusion, and Positive Social Change.

# Our Programs

Our kid-centric theater programs embody the following Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Key Measures: Creative Self-Expression, Empathy, Conflict Resolution, Relationship building/ community, Diversity & Inclusion.

*Merle, Holly & IJ  
with 4th graders at  
Murphy School.*



## Urban Improv

**9** week residencies in **6** BPS partners (BTU School, Conley, Hale, Haley, Murphy, Mission Hill) and one Boston parochial school: Mission Grammar School.

**51 classrooms—approximately 1,200 students, grades 4-8**

Our teaching artists create realistic scenes about topics such as bullying, peer pressure, racism, and healthy relationships. At a pivotal moment, the facilitator calls “FREEZE!” Students jump into the scene, using their minds, bodies and creativity to resolve the conflict, and experience their choices first hand. This year, the ensemble piloted curricula surrounding microaggressions and expanded on race, gender and identity.

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*Needham  
Troupe celebrates the  
closing of  
their spring  
show.*

## Freelance Players

Our after school, tuition-based musical theater program fosters imagination, self-expression, empathy, and community.

Our young thespians worked hard to present a mix of classic Freelance shows and brand new titles, including two original pieces devised in collaboration between Director Sally Campbell, Music Director Mike Healey, and the members of the Newton Freelance Players troupe.

### ***The Troupes and The Shows***

Driscoll: *Clam's Casino & Mything Links*

Jamaica Plain: *Mystery at the Musee Segretto & Shakespeare's Daughters*

Needham: *Shakespeare's Daughters & So Many Stories*

Newton: *Stand By... & The Rash at Ohio State*

Spotlight: *Red Hats & Hamletta*





*"You will not believe the conversations and action you inspired amongst the residents that will surely continue and impact our clinical work. The scenes felt so realistic, injected with a sense of comfort and comedy to help temper the difficult nature of these real-life circumstances. Literally every resident was so impressed and saying what a powerful workshop it was."*

– Sabrina Karim, Resident Physician at Boston Children's Hospital & Boston Medical Center

### Re:Action Assemblies

Interactive assemblies jumpstart healthy dialogue on challenging topics at schools and community groups in New England and beyond.

This year, in collaboration with Families Organizing for Racial Justice in Newton, we piloted a city-wide middle school assembly series on Microaggressions. We also created an interactive workshop for pediatric residents at the Boston Medical Center & Boston Children's Hospital, using the Urban Improv method to allow the residents to practice having challenging conversations with co-workers and patients. This work will be expanded to the staff at Mass General Brigham next year.

*Star, Youth Unscripted participant, conquered stage fright to sing a solo in "We Deserve."*



### Youth Unscripted

Our after school program for Boston teens builds self-awareness, community and confidence through creative exploration of themselves, their communities, and social justice.

This year, 19 high school students from across the Greater Boston Area presented "We Deserve," an evening of original visual art, music and food. The students gathered each week to explore their culinary prowess, experiment with different visual arts, and write original music in preparation for the production. Along the way, they learned new ways to use their voices to affect change in themselves, their communities, and our world.

## Shavorie Sings It!



*"All of the teachers are incredibly kind, dedicated, really motivating, and they have been incredible for my self-esteem. I look back and I think 'Wow! Three weeks ago, I couldn't sing a single word in this building, and now I'm singing entire songs.' I'm doing a lot of the things I didn't have the confidence to do before."*

– Shavorie, Youth Unscripted participant



*"A lot of people don't have accepting families so it's actually really nice and really helpful to have a place like this where there are other people who can freely express themselves."*

– Alex, Youth Unscripted participant

## Financials

Thank you to the many individuals, organizations, and institutions that have contributed to Rehearsal for Life in the 2021-2022 fiscal year. You are the reason we can continue to serve and spur on integral social and emotional learning with our youth programming. You are the reason Rehearsal for Life and our programs are thriving today.

### Revenues

Philanthropy: **\$507,607**

Grants/Government: **\$484,742**

Donated Goods & Services: **\$5,500**

Earned Revenue: **\$201,266**

ERC (Employee Retention Credit): **\$206,955**

**FY22: \$1,406,070**



### Expenses

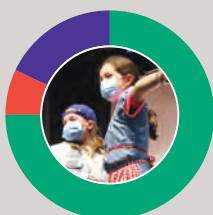
Youth Programs: **\$960,723**

Fundraising: **\$223,405**

General & Admin: **\$89,664**

**FY22: \$1,273,792**

**SURPLUS: \$132,278**





## The Kippy Dewey Service Award

**Ann Hall and Lisa Alvord**

This year the board of directors and staff were proud to honor founding supporters Lisa Schmid Alvord and Ann Hall with the inaugural *Kippy Dewey Service Award*. In recognition and celebration of their leadership, loyalty and generosity, which they have embodied since the first days *Urban Improv*. They have positively impacted thousands of young people, inspiring creativity and community. Volunteer service is a crucial part of how Rehearsal for Life sustains its mission, representing one of the largest building blocks of our success to date. Lisa and Ann's life work in support of Rehearsal for Life is a call to action for us all.

## Banned in Boston went back to school

Virtual Banned in Boston was a smashing success! Over 300 guests tuned in on April 14, 2022 and helped to raise \$560,000 in support of our youth programs. Our continued gratitude goes to Faith Soloway for telling a story with heart and humor and for crafting the music, script and lyrics, and to director Ian Brownell for going above and beyond! And, as always, we could not have done it without our amazing cast, including our superb guest stars, the indomitable Jane Lynch and Tim Meadows!



## Welcome to the Board, Class of 2023

Maryam Rahmani, Grade 5 classroom teacher, Pierce Elementary School, Brookline, MA



## STAFF 2021-2022

Lisa McColgan, *Office Administrator*

Kristen Sherman, *Head of Development & Finance*

Faith Soloway, *Interim Artistic Director, Urban Improv*

Kelsey Tidball, *Marketing & Development Assistant*

Mary Torpey, *Head of Program & Creative Director, Freelance Players*

Jamie Ullrich, *Head of Urban Improv & Community Partnerships*

## REHEARSAL FOR LIFE TEACHING ARTISTS 2021-2022

Julian Arroyo, *Urban Improv*

Sally Campbell, *Troupe Director, Newton*

Narcissa Campion, *Music Director, BrooklineTroupe*

Mike Casey, *Urban Improv*

IJ Chan, *Urban Improv*

Cooper Evello, *Urban Improv/Freelance Players*

Alissa Darsa, *Assistant Troupe Director, Jamaica Plain*

Kippy Dewey, *Troupe Director, Brookline*

Lillian Gomes, *Urban Improv*

Mike Healey, *Music Director, Newton*

Madeline Hurley, *Troupe Director, Jamaica Plain*

Elle Jansen, *Choreographer*

Jackson Jirard, *Associate Director, Urban Improv*

Zeenia Kolah, *Urban Improv/Freelance Players*

Merle Perkins, *Urban Improv*

Holly Tarnower, *Lead, Youth Unscripted*

Olivia Shure, *Assistant Troupe Director, Brookline*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021-2022

James Benenson, *Chair*

Lisa Schmid Alvord, *Co-Vice Chair*

George Bennett, *Co-Vice Chair*

Levin H. Campbell, *Treasurer*

Katie Kulikoski, *Clerk*

Lisa Case

Ted Clark

Kendrick Terrell Evans

Yujing Li

Kristina Hare Lyons

Skye Morrison Kramer

Thalia McMillion, *Chair, Freelance Players, Advisors*

Thomas O'Rourke

Lisa Pierpont

Maryam Rahmani

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## Follow Us



@rehearsal for life - freelance players  
@rehearsalforlife - urban improv



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For the full story, visit

**[REHEARSALFORLIFE.ORG/IMPACTREPORT2022](http://REHEARSALFORLIFE.ORG/IMPACTREPORT2022)**

Photo credits: Kelsey Tidball, Jamie Ullrich, Mary Torpey, Fredo Durand



Urban Improv | Freelance Players

