

Save
the Date:
Virtual Impact
Event!
10/06/21

Rehearsal for Life IMPACT REPORT 2020-2021 *Our Year in Innovation & Improv*



Urban Improv | Freelance Players

To view the entire report, visit
rehearsalforlife.org/impactreport2021

Dear Friends,

Rehearsal for Life could have closed its curtains this last year but we didn't give up—and neither did you.



With investment from so many, we adapted, learned, and delivered. We grew alongside our students, teachers, parents and community.

We continue to proudly be a work in progress, using improv as a tool for innovation.

In our BPS partner schools, our teachers learned how to teach remotely. We joined them. We listened to their needs, reviewed our curriculum and introduced new and contemporary topics to provide the Urban Improv experience to virtual classrooms.

The six Freelance Troupes rallied and created a virtual stage. We gathered in a safe, social-distance style over Zoom, with drones for outdoor scenes, resulting in twelve vibrant productions.

The Youth Unscripted team leaned in. We lengthened sessions with teens from across the city over Zoom. All resulting in a community-building year, producing a recorded performance of high artistic achievement and personal development.

We shared our story with the world. Our entire community came together as an improbable cast. We all starred in the most meta-fundraiser—Banned in Boston—ever created, on its 25th anniversary.

In a year of isolation, with connections held together by Zoom, we innovated through improv.

And we are not done. This year we will ask you again to help us improvise again to envision the future for Rehearsal for Life. A future where every student in our city can experience the magic of theater, while empowering them and providing critical social emotional support. At the same time we will complete a strategic, organizational, and cultural review that will prepare us for success for the upcoming year and beyond.

Thank you for keeping our doors open and the curtain up, and saying “Yes, and” in a remarkable year.

Sincerely,
James Benenson, Chair

Student Art & Accolades



Ms. McCabe, BTU School

Thank you!
We will miss you!
Thank you for your
kindness and
creativity!

You're GOAT
Thank you for all the fun
we had. And urban improv
is really fun that is only
one of the many great
things I can say about you.



Thank you for all the fun
and fantastic days, that all
of you have provided for
us I am going to miss
seeing the videos and
talking about them



Newton Troupe Digital Playbill

REHEARSAL FOR LIFE'S MISSION
is to strengthen young people's social and
emotional skills for every stage in life, through
dialogue, creativity and performance.

Our Programs

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

Urban Improv

Urban Improv served ALL students ONLINE this year. Teaching artists created realistic scenes on bullying, peer pressure, racism, and more. The facilitator calls “FREEZE!” and students jump into the scene, using their minds, body and creativity to resolve the conflict, and experience their choices first-hand. We piloted topics on loss/grief, anti-racism, and expanded on race, gender and identity.

New: Each workshop began with a land acknowledgment, honoring Indigenous Peoples on the land we work, live and play. It served as an opening exercise and connector in a time of physical separation. Digital films presented each week’s topic and were explored in 30-minute sessions, with expanded dialogue in breakout rooms. The Zoom chat function ignited conversation. Teaching artists performed live-Zoom performances! The first live virtual-theater production was Urban Improv’s very first scene: Marty Roche (*Roshay...not Roach!*).

- 9 week residencies in 5 BPS partners (Hale, Haley, Murphy, Mission Hill, BTU)
- 48 classrooms- approximately 1,000 students
- 12,960 minutes on Zoom
- 21 Digital Classroom Videos
- 1,482 Video Feedback Surveys
- 3 IN-PERSON workshops for 8th graders at Mission Hill, Murphy & Haley Schools

Youth Unscripted

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

- 15 student leaders participated virtually for 22 90-minute sessions
- 35 hours of creative collaboration in at least as many breakout rooms
- First ever **RFL Technology lending library** created.
- Community partnership with **Boston Camera Club**.
- Majority of students reported they would like to **return to the program next year**. CAN’T WAIT!
- Culminating performance & **YouTube premier in March** titled “The Life That’s Within Us All” featuring original spoken word, music and dance.



Re:Action Assemblies

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

Youth participants, 6 sites: Groton School (Groton MA), Beaver Country Day School (Newton MA) Madison Park Development Corporation Youth Programs (Roxbury MA), Kilmer School (West Roxbury MA)

Adult participants: Boston After-School & Beyond, Parent Professional Advocacy League (PPAL)

This year topics covered the spectrum: racism, gender identity, creativity & critical thinking, family/mental health.

The Kilmer School hosted a multi-day assembly series that covered: identity, friendship, family, conflict, communication...and students performed their own scenes on the final day!

Freelance Players

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

The Troupes and The Shows

- Players: *Hamletta & NoZone*
- Driscoll: *Tumbleweed & The Universe and Other Stuff*
- Jamaica Plain: *Follow Your Hooves & Buzz ON!*
- Needham: *America’s Next Top Monster & Monopoly*
- Newton: *The Sacred Secret & New Troubles In Old Town*
- Spotlight: *Write Something & Freelance in the Spotlight*

- 6 troupes ONLINE!
- 141 participants
- 12 live-streamed performances
- 6 video/streaming productions
- 1 live-streamed performance



Student Voice & Choice

My name is Choice. I’m in the 11th grade, attending Boston Arts Academy (BAA). I usually write lyrics for myself, it was nice to collaborate with others. At BAA I have focused on classical and choir. The Youth Unscripted piece was R&B-like, there was beatboxing and rapping. Until now, I have not shared my R&B stylings with others (I only have shared bubble gum pop). I felt there were parts I couldn’t do, the stuff that really makes the genre R&B vocally. It has been eye opening. In Youth Unscripted I realized that I can do it! Throughout this Zoom experience, I have branched out. Youth Unscripted helped me learn about producing music. For the song I worked on, “The Sun”, as collaborative lyricists and vocalists, we ran with it, we were all part of making the melody. Inspiration came from the pandemic, especially school, being stressed out in general, about finally finding rest. It has to do with who we are as people, our mental health, our ethnicities, races, what it is like in our home lives. It all manifests in the song and showcases our talents and us as people. That’s what I want to do with my music.



Welcome Class of 2022!

New Members of the Board of Directors (photos left to right) Kendrick Terrell Evans, a content administrator at American Public Television

Shaunda Lewis, proprietor, Stone and Grace, a consultant specializing in building cultures for sustainable equity and inclusive environments

Lisa Pierpont, producer of *Boldfacers*, journalist, and assistant professor at Emerson College

Yujing Li, alumna Urban Improv, marketing coordinator, LiveNation

Thank You



Tribute scene & song Banned in Boston 2021
“The Dream Will Go On”

How do we thank the dynamic team who launched an organization that has helped over 80,000 and raised millions of dollars in support of social emotional learning for over 25 years? We carry on and grow like they intended. With open and full hearts, thank you Kippy and Cissa for a remarkable 27 years of service to the students of Boston, and your dedication to the staff of Rehearsal for Life.



Banned in Boston

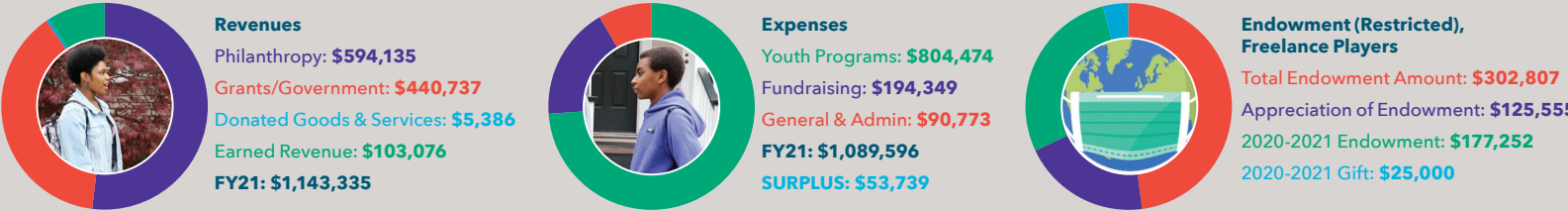
25th Anniversary – April Fools’ Edition

Twenty-five years in the making, our most successful Banned in Boston yet! Over 1,000 guests zoomed together on April 1, 2021 and helped to raise an incredible \$620,000 benefiting Boston youth. That’s no joke.

Our gratitude goes to Faith Soloway for reimagining with vision; creating the music, script and lyrics. And to Ian Brownell for directing the show from his laptop! Plus, our 40+ person cast! And new this year: thanks to the Boston Globe for their media sponsorship, allowing us to introduce ourselves and mission to thousands of new people! Special thanks to an up and coming star who made his Banned in Boston debut: Stephen Colbert.

Financials

Thank you to the many individuals, organizations, and institutions that have contributed to Rehearsal for Life in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. We remain committed to our students and are grateful for the donors who have given this year, in the face of uncertainty.



STAFF 2020-2021

Narcissa Campion, *Music Director, Freelance Players*
Kippy Dewey, *Founding Director*
Emily Duggan, *Marketing & Development Associate*
Lisa McColgan, *Office Administrator*
Kristen Sherman, *Head of Development & Finance*
Mary Torpey, *Head of Freelance Players*
Jamie Ullrich, *Head of Urban Improv & Community Partnerships*
Elena Velasco, *Executive & Artistic Director*

TEACHING ARTISTS 2020-2021

IJ Chan
Cooper Evello, *Music Director*
Jackson Jirard, *Associate Director, Urban Improv*
Camilo Linares
Kevin Madison, *Music Director*
Merle Perkins
Holly Tarnower

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-2021

James Benenson, *Chair*
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Francie Karlen
Shaunda Lewis
Yujing Li
Kristina Hare Lyons
Skye Morrison Kramer
Thalia McMillion, *Chair, Freelance Players, Advisors*
Thomas O'Rourke
Lisa Pierpont
Faith Soloway

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For the full story, visit
REHEARSALFORLIFE.ORG/IMPACTREPORT2021

Cover/Photo Credits: Screen shots, from top: Banned in Boston; scene with Youth Unscripted's Choice M., Teaching Artist Merle Perkins and Freelance Players Alum Cyrus P.; Freelance Players performance.



Urban Improv | Freelance Players

