



# IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023



# Dear friends,



After spending parts of three school years bringing social and emotional learning and support to our youth via the arts from computers and behind masks, Rehearsal for Life programs were once again fully live and in-person this past year and the young people we serve absolutely thrived.

Urban Improv marked 30 years of programming by expanding to new communities while offering Residencies and Assemblies addressing important topics like “cyberbullying” and “microaggressions,” and also hosting visits by Mayor Michelle Wu and Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper. And Youth Unscripted’s amazingly talented teens performed original pieces at the Youth Unscripted showcase in March. Not to be outdone, Freelance Players continued to offer outstanding multi-arts programming in a supportive, community setting across five Troupes - all while offering tuition assistance made possible by the generosity of the Rehearsal for Life community that shares our belief that no child should ever be turned away from the arts because they don’t have the financial means.

As we embark on the 2023-24 program year, there is a palpable buzz across the Rehearsal for Life community. This year’s theme is best described as “the sky is the limit” as Rehearsal for Life’s talented staff and dedicated board of directors look to the future with an eye on growth and adapting our programs to reach as many young people as possible. Exciting work is already underway to launch Rehearsal for Life summer programming while also expanding to support younger audiences in 2024.

A sincere and heartfelt thank you to the generous community of friends and donors who continue to believe in the magic of Rehearsal for Life and support our work. We are so appreciative of everyone who attends Rehearsal for Life performances and events and helps to spread the word throughout Boston. Thank you, truly, for all that you do.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JB'.

James Benenson, Chair,  
Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert'.

Robert Kordenbrock,  
Executive Director

P.S. Stay tuned for an announcement about the celebration of 50 incredible years of Freelance Players in 2024!

# Our Mission

Rehearsal for Life programs strengthen young people's social and emotional skills for every stage in life, through dialogue, creativity and performance.

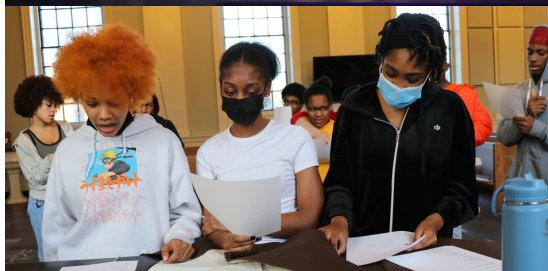
# Our Vision

Empowered youth building diverse and inclusive communities where all voices are respected.

# Our Values

As an organization working toward a socially just and equitable society through youth enrichment and youth empowerment, Rehearsal for Life values:

- Creativity
- Empathy
- Respect
- Cooperation
- Empowered Self-Expression
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Positive Social Change



# Our Programs

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



## URBAN IMPROV

9 week residencies at 7 BPS partner schools (BTU School, Conley, Hale, Haley, Murphy, Driscoll, Mission Grammar), **61 classrooms—approximately 1,400 students, grades 4-8.**

Urban Improv Teaching Artists create realistic scenes about topics such as bullying, peer pressure, racism, and healthy relationships. At a pivotal moment, the facilitator calls “FREEZE!” and students are invited to jump into the scene. Using their minds, bodies and creativity, they work to resolve the conflict while experiencing the outcomes of their creative choices first-hand, in real time, followed by dialogue and discussion with their peers and Rehearsal for Life Teaching Artists.



## FREELANCE PLAYERS

Our after-school musical theater program fosters imagination, self-expression, empathy, and above all, *community*. Freelance students rehearse and perform original musicals (some of which are written by the performers themselves) in venues across Greater Boston.

### The Troupes and The Shows

Brookline: “Shakespeare’s Daughters” & “America’s Next Top Monster”

Jamaica Plain: “America’s Next Top Monster” & “Red Hats and Other Dangers”

Needham: “Red Hats and Other Dangers” & “Stand By”

Newton: “The Birds III” & “X Marks the Spot”

Spotlight: “Norbert Beany, Action Man” & “Losing Eden”



## YOUTH UNSCRIPTED

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

During the 2022-23 school year, 19 high school students from across Greater Boston developed, rehearsed, and performed, “Throwbacks, the 2023 Chronicles,” an evening of original visual art, music and dance. The students gathered each week to write original songs and scenes that culminated in a performance that brought them into the future for their high school reunion. Along the way, they learned new ways to use their voices to affect change in themselves, their communities, and our world.



## ASSEMBLIES

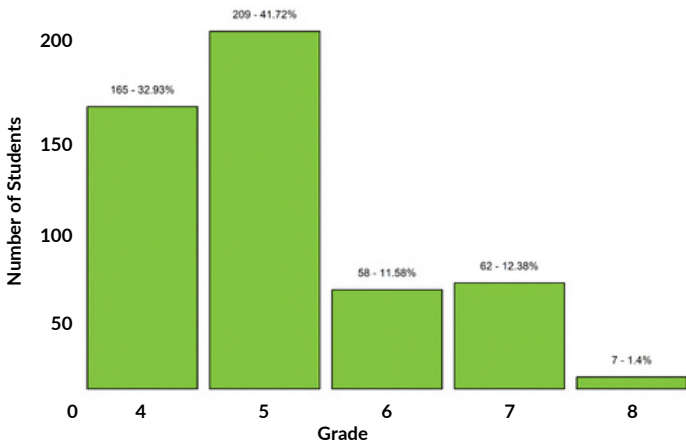
Our interactive assemblies and workshops using the Urban Improv method jumpstart constructive dialogue on relevant and sometimes challenging topics at schools and community organizations among students, educators, community members and families.

During the 2022-23 school year, we served teachers, families, adults and students throughout Greater Boston with curriculum on Microaggressions, Cyberbullying & Technology, and Bullying & Bystander Issues. Additionally, we expanded our reach to work with adults at corporations and community groups, helping them build community and trust and foster healthy communication through improv and theater games.

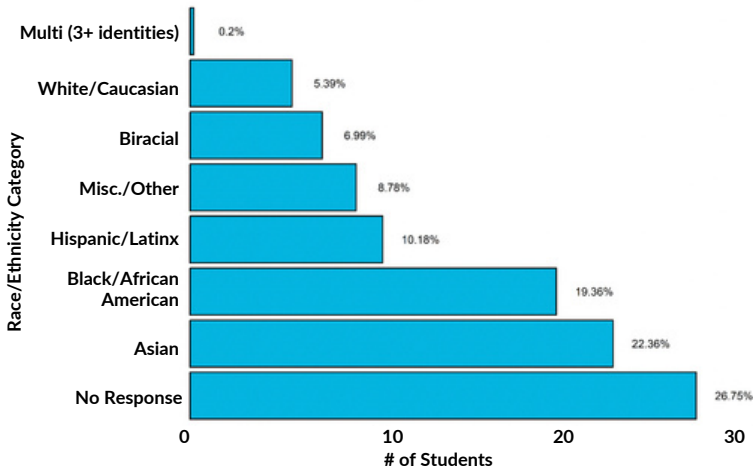
# Our Impact by the Numbers

Our Urban Improv School Residencies served 7 Boston Public Schools this year. Below is a breakdown of demographic information courtesy of evaluations done by Duke University Robertson Scholar Zachary Finacchio as a part of his graduate research.

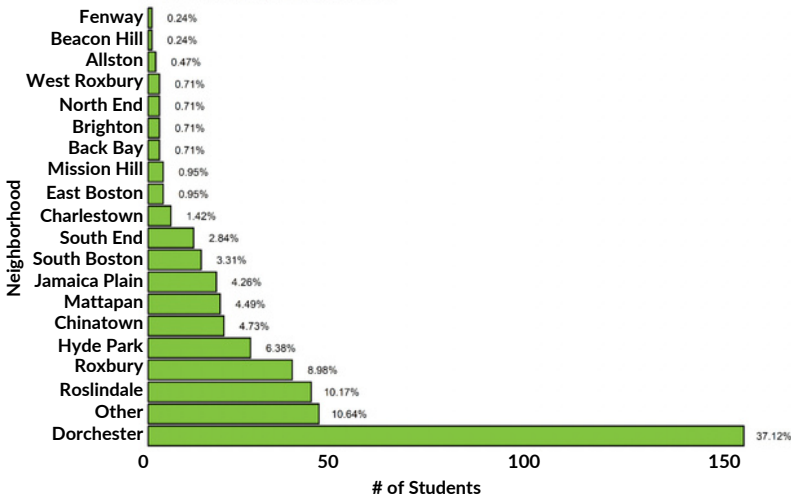
### % of Students per Grade Level



### % of Students per Race/Ethnicity



### % of Students per Neighborhood



# Evaluating Our Impact

Our programs are evaluated internally and by our partners at Boston After School and Beyond (BASB), using frameworks developed by the National Institute on Out-of-School-Time (NIOST). Below are highlights and significant findings from our internal evaluations of our Urban Improv School Residencies and the BASB report on Youth Unscripted.

After one year of Urban Improv programming...

**83%** of teachers agree that their class showed increased stress management skills

**91%** of teachers agree that their class showed increased empathy skills

**91%** of teachers agree that their class showed increased self-confidence

**100%** of teachers would recommend Urban Improv

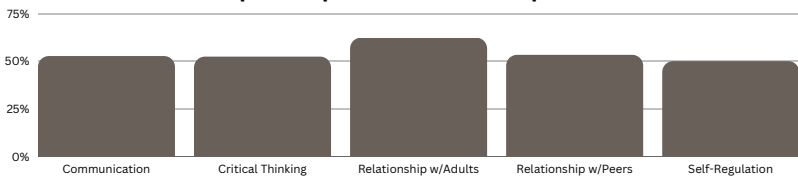
“ I feel nervous when I have to talk in front of a lot of people because of my stutter, but doing this gives you more confidence and it feels easier.

-Urban Improv 4th grader

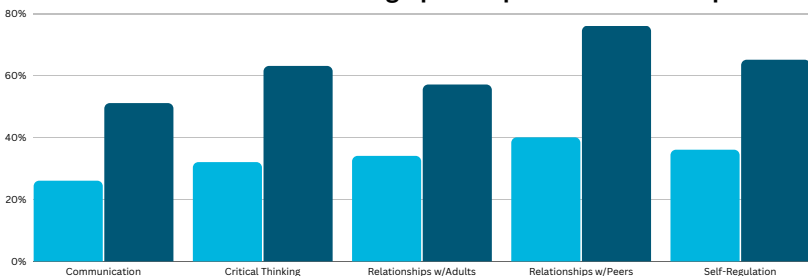
”



% of students who achieved meaningful growth pre-to-post Youth Unscripted



% of students who scored high pre-to-post Youth Unscripted



“ A lot of people don't have supportive 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.

-Youth Unscripted student

”

# Kippy Dewey Service Award: Collin Knight & Sean Fitzgerald

“

*This award is about Kippy Dewey, the Dewey family and where this all started, but it's also about how it's still going because of you all.*

-Collin Knight

”



This year, the RFL board of directors and staff honored FLP alum and former Urban Improv Teaching Artist Collin Knight, as well as Richard J. Murphy School 5th grade teacher Sean Fitzgerald, with Kippy Dewey Service Awards. Collin and Sean have both positively impacted thousands of young people over their years of educational service and partnership with Rehearsal for Life, inspiring creativity and community in the Rehearsal for Life orbit and beyond. Thank you, Collin and Sean (aka Mr.Fitz)!

## Banned in Boston: The Funderdome



“

*The clarity of our mission, the love we bring to our work, our effectiveness and our execution was all on display on a huge stage at Banned in Boston!*

-James Benenson, Chair,  
Board of Directors

”

A creative tour de force came together at one of Boston's newest venues, Roadrunner, on April 27th as more than 400 friends of Rehearsal for Life—including educators, luminaries, chefs, and crew—returned to the stage for the first time since 2019 to put on the high-wire act that is Banned in Boston. A star-studded cast of local luminaries, including Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey, joined the cast and lent their talents to raise \$425,336 in support of our creative youth development programs and in celebration of 30 years of Urban Improv. Our continued gratitude goes to Faith Soloway for telling a story with heart and humor and for crafting the music, script and lyrics, as well as Funderdome Director, Ian Brownell, who went above and beyond in order to make Banned in Boston a smash success!

# Financials

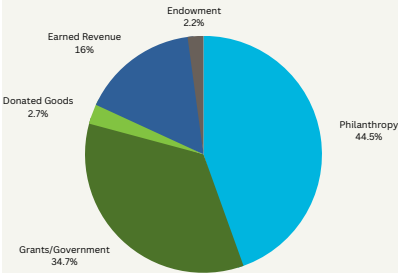
Thank you to the many individuals, organizations, and institutions that contributed to Rehearsal for Life in the 2022-2023 academic year. It is because of your continued support that Urban Improv celebrated 30 years of serving and spurring on integral social and emotional learning with our innovative youth programming in 2023 and why Freelance Players will mark 50 years of service in 2024!

Rehearsal for Life had a deficit year. However, thanks to three years of cash surpluses, government funding, and conservative spending, Rehearsal for Life was able to respond to overwhelming demand for its services in 2022-2023.

## Revenues

Philanthropy: \$580,068  
Grants/Government: \$419,219  
Donated Goods & Services: \$42,340  
Earned Revenue: \$207,406

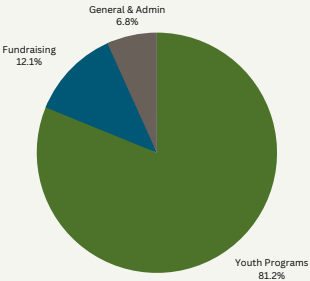
**FY23: \$1,249,033**



## Expenses

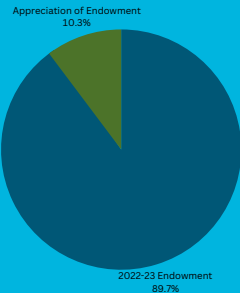
Youth Programs: \$1,133,171  
Fundraising: \$196,837  
General & Admin: \$356,496

**FY23: \$1,686,504**  
**Deficit: \$437,471**



## Endowment (restricted), Freelance Players

2022-2023 Endowment (beginning balance): \$247,021  
Appreciation of Endowment: \$28,221  
**Total Endowment Amount (ending balance): \$275,242**



## Thank You!

The generosity of our supporters has allowed Rehearsal for Life to continue to deliver our programs to over 2,000 youth as we bound back to deliver our programming in classrooms and community spaces across Boston and beyond. Thank you to all of our supporters who contributed between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

### **\$50,000+**

Fiona & James Benenson  
Massachusetts Cultural Council  
Massachusetts Department  
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### **\$10,000 - \$24,999**

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### **\$5,000 - \$9,999**

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### **\$1,000 - \$4,999**

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#### **Gifts in Kind**

Foley Hoag  
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Thank you supporters at all level. Every gift counts! With this in mind, we apologize for any errors or omissions, we request that you kindly let us know at [office@rehearsalforlife.org](mailto:office@rehearsalforlife.org).

## STAFF 2022-2023

Robert Kordenbrock, Executive Director  
Lisa McColgan, Manager of Data & Operations  
Kristen Sherman, Head of Development & Finance  
Faith Soloway, Interim Artistic Director, Urban Improv  
Kelsey Tidball, Marketing & Development Associate  
Mary Torpey, Head of Program & Creative Director, Freelance Players  
Jamie Ullrich, Head of Urban Improv & Community Partnerships

## REHEARSAL FOR LIFE TEACHING ARTISTS 2022-2023

Julian Arroyo, Urban Improv  
Jimmy Bonilla, Urban Improv  
Sally Campbell, Freelance Players  
Mike Casey, Urban Improv  
IJ Chan, Urban Improv  
Alissa Darsa, Freelance Players  
CJ Donohoe, Freelance Players  
Cooper Evello, Urban Improv/Freelance Players (Music & Program Associate Director)  
Tessa Fleetwood, Intern  
Lillian Gomes, Urban Improv (Program Manager)  
Mike Healey, Freelance Players  
Madeline Hurley, Freelance Players  
Elle Jansen, Freelance Players  
Jackson Jirard, Urban Improv (Associate Director)  
Ian Lao, Freelance Players/Urban Improv  
Amy Mastrangelo, Freelance Players  
Merle Perkins, Urban Improv  
Trinity Perry, Urban Improv  
Holly Tarnower, Urban Improv

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.....  
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