



# StoryArk

## ANNUAL REPORT

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**2021**  
EDITION

**Contact Us:**

651-417-6223

[www.storyark.org](http://www.storyark.org)

640 Main Street N, Suite 34, Stillwater, MN 55082

# PROGRAMMING

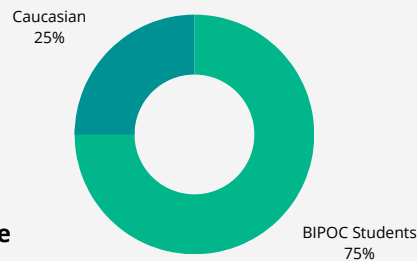
100% of participants surveyed said they felt a part of an artistic team, could be their authentic selves and share their stories.

## Storytelling Camp

## Podcast Camp

## Film Camp

## Creative Writing Intensive



## StoryArk Festivals

We amplified a diversity of student voices and shared those stories during two virtual Festivals – one for South Central Minnesota and the other for the St Croix River Valley. Both Festivals included student and celebrity co-hosts emceeding the event and a local sibling band, NUNNABOVE, playing live from their basement studio. Student podcasts, films, poetry, short stories, graphic novels and visual arts were featured to an online audience.

*"Building impactful relationships, cultivating voice, pride and empowerment, creating an accepting space for self-expression, learning life skills through experiences, unleashing creativity through a student initiated process and failing forward by learning from our challenges...students quickly develop a WE identity as they learn to recognize and incorporate one another's divergent thinking and perspectives, leading to levels of creativity and innovation that I have rarely seen in my 24 years in public education."*

Eric Anderson, equity coordinator, Stillwater Area Public Schools

## Winged Ones Podcast

Stillwater High School

## Boomsite Staff and Submitters

Multi-District and Homeschool  
Newsletter, Magazine and Virtual Gallery

## StoryArk Network Live

An online virtual event that includes all StoryArk participants during the academic school year. The audience wanders around in a virtual gallery as avatars to experience student podcast, poems, stories, visual arts.

## Non Profit Collaborations:

**Family Means:** podcast with Latinx middle schoolers telling a story of COVID, poverty and prejudice

**Youth Advantage:** commercials class with LA professionals to create promotional videos for Youth Advantage

**Valley Friendship Club:** Song Writing Camp with Jeff Dayton, and Short Story Camp

**MN Youth Council:** promotional video to support the "Youth Act Up" education series in support of equity and inclusion

**MN Alliance with Youth:** Youth in Educational Leadership Summit - podcast coverage through the StoryArk Network

## Stillwater Schools "Push-in" Model

### The AVID classroom

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a nonprofit that changes lives by helping schools shift to a more equitable, student-centered approach in order to close the opportunity gap and prepare all students for college, careers, and life. During the 2021-2022 academic school year, Stillwater hired us to provide storytelling, podcast, literary arts and film units to its two AVID 11th grade classes. Next year, Stillwater Schools will offer StoryArk's AVID programming to its 10th and 11th grade classrooms.

## 210 Students Served in 2021

### Absent Narratives Project

Podcast, Film, Literary Arts made available to all students

For the past four years, Stillwater Area Public Schools' Office of Equity and Integration has worked with StoryArk to support storytelling that explores identity and promotes understanding. Through our on-going Absent Narratives Project, we strive to elevate student voice and leadership in order to improve and ensure inclusiveness in our schools and our community. In 2021, the project expanded to include Stillwater Area Public Schools, Hastings, Mankato, St Peter and Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton school districts. In 2022 we are determining how best to strategically align with Equity Alliance MN to serve their member districts and align across core competencies

### My Story, Your Story, Our Story

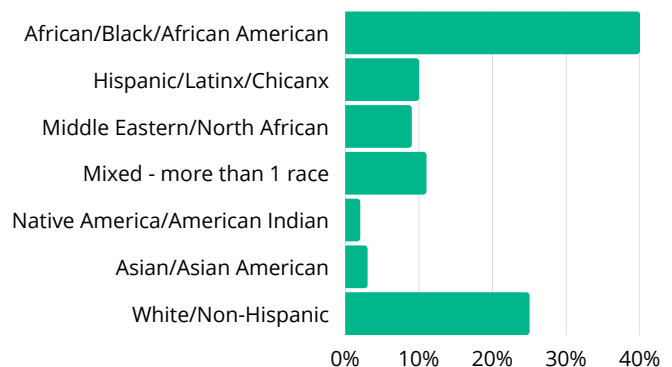
#### Absent Narratives Project - A pilot

Mankato, Hastings, St. Peter and Janesville-Waldorf Pemberton school districts joined Stillwater Schools in this endeavor. Twenty-six students from the five school districts joined each other online via zoom to collaborate with each other to create stories through podcast, film and the literary arts while learning to work with a diverse group of peers.

### Bridging the Digital Divide

StoryArk is committed to bridging the digital divide so that all students have access to the tools they need to tell the stories they want to share. In the last year, we have given (to keep) 74 iPads and keyboards to students who otherwise would not have access to digital devices that effectively served their needs.

### Student Race/Ethnicity



# OUR MISSION

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StoryArk empowers student voices and equips young artists to thrive

## Organizational Overview

StoryArk helps students in middle school and high school initiate creative teams in which they communicate, collaborate and connect with each other to imagine and produce narrative podcasts, short films, and a literary magazine that publishes prose, poetry and visual arts. We ask youth, "What's your story? How do you want to tell it?" They respond in ways that transform not only themselves, but also the audience who gains empathy and understanding of the student experience.

## The Heart

Student initiated, student led, our creative process focuses on building life skills through a passion for storytelling and the desire to communicate and be in relationship with each other. In our creative process, students lead students and professional writers, actors, directors, filmmakers and editors serve as mentors who share their skills and wisdom as needed with youth. As we work together and support each other individually as artists, quality content naturally emerges. Ultimately, our artistic success is determined by how well we develop students as individuals and as team members.

# PROFESSIONALS

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**Stephani Atkins**  
Executive Director

**Jenna Yaron**  
Content & Web Manager,  
Recording Engineer and Editor

**Crista Walsh**  
Director of Operations

**Cassidy Hall**  
Boomsite Advisor

**Mark Felton,**  
Contracted CFO

# EMERGING PROFESSIONALS

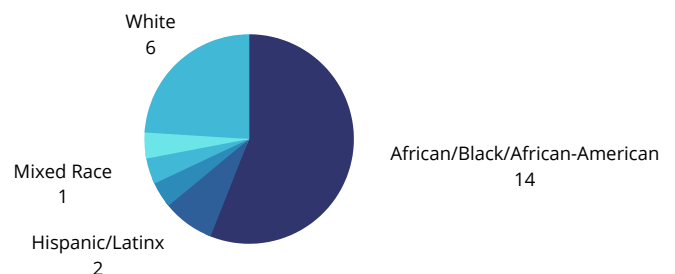
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Cadence Nunn (Programming Director - Literary Arts)  
Mattie Nunn (Programming Director - Film)  
Peyton Zigneo (Programming Director - Podcast)  
Cadence Nunn (Editor-in-Chief, Boomsite Magazine/ Newsletter)  
Leslee Menjivar  
Emily Tamrat  
Fatima Menwa  
Flora Sherr-Nelson  
Margaret Odumuyiwa  
Lee Menzel  
Bennett Nunn  
Sommerdai Kier  
Chinwenwa Anyamele  
Hailey Schmidt  
Daniella Embu  
Davitta Embu  
Mason Borhardt  
Shahd Abouhekel

# GUEST ARTIST

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Charles Carpenter (Film/Novel)  
Ski-ter Jones (Film/Novel)  
Ken Levine (TV, Film, Podcast, Novel)  
Ryan North (Novel, Graphic novel)  
Jennifer Mathieu (Novel)  
Jaqueline West (Novel, Poetry)  
Todd Boss (Poetry)  
Jonathan Sims (Podcast)  
Sophie Takagi Kaner (Podcast)  
Kevin Vibert (Podcast)  
Austere Van (Actor, Playwright)  
Kevin Hearne (Novel)  
Adam Levy (Film)  
Cassidy Hall (Mentor)

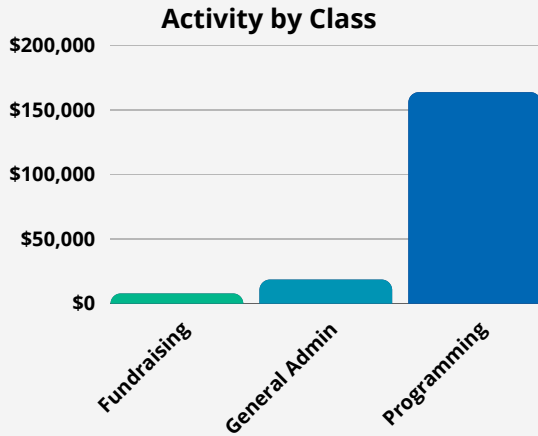


# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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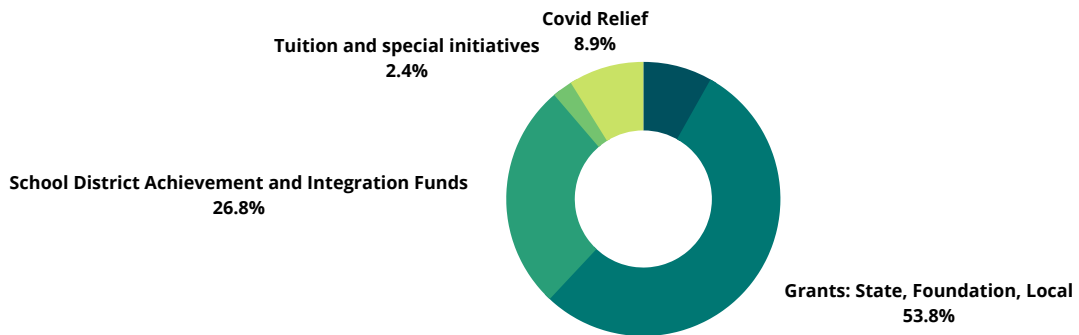
**Dan Ajak**, actor and writer (Chair)  
**Maria-Renée Grigsby**, equity trainer and consultant  
**Kim Gualtierri**, certified public accountant (Treasurer)  
**E. Nahkala**, StoryArk alumni and college student studying TESOL (Secretary)  
**Leslee Menjivar**, StoryArk alumni and college student and evaluator  
**Cornelius Rish**, equity specialist  
**Latwanna Williams**, artist and Equity Specialist

# FUNDING



Activity by Class	Expenses	Percentage
Fundraising	\$ 7,658.00	4%
General Admin.	\$ 18,407.00	10%
Programming	\$ 163,328.00	86%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$189,393.00</b>	

\*86 cents of every dollar goes to programming



## Revenue Mix Income Percentage

Grants: State, Foundation, Local	\$ 118,578.00	54%
School District Achievement and Integration Funds	\$ 58,945.00	27%
Contributed Revenue: Business/Civic, Individuals	\$ 17,961.00	8%
Tuition and special initiatives	\$ 5,274	2%
Covid Relief	\$ 19,573.00	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$220,331.00</b>	

## Braided Funding

We want all students regardless of background, socio-economic status, political leanings, and religious views to have their stories uplifted, amplified and heard. To that end, we use a “braided” funding approach where each “strand” allows us to weave a strong fabric from which to support youth. This funding includes:

- Government grants including Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Minnesota State Arts Board, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, Nonprofit Infrastructure Program grant administered through Propel
- Private grants including Hugh J Andersen Foundation, Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen Foundation, St. Croix Valley Foundation (SCVF), Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), Kemp Foundation, Youthprise
- School District Achievement and Integration Dollars
- Individual Contributions (this year it included donations to help bridge digital divide and provide iPads for students who lacked technology)
- Misc. Income: Ticket sales (StoryArk Festival), tuition, and sponsorship

Each strand of our braided funding approach supports different constituencies. School districts, through integration and achievement dollars as well as transportation funds, can help us reach underrepresented youth whose stories are absent from the mainstream narrative. StoryArk, through donations and grants, can support students that do not meet the school district’s criteria including homeschooling, out of district and more affluent mainstream youth. By uplifting all student stories, we can interconnect diverse youth to each other and within the broader community.