



# StoryArk

Fiscal Year 2024

# ANNUAL REPORT

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[WWW.STORYARK.ORG](http://WWW.STORYARK.ORG)

## OUR VISION AND PURPOSE

At StoryArk, we envision a world where every story is not only welcomed but also cherished and amplified as a vital part of our collective narrative. Since becoming a nonprofit in 2016, StoryArk has empowered youth in grades five through twelve to form creative teams where they engage in communication, collaboration, and connection to produce original stories. Our focus is on the transformative power of the creative process.

StoryArk serves as a bridge between assumption and authenticity. Through storytelling, we foster genuine connections across diverse communities, schools, cultures, and lived experiences. This process enables students, educators, administrators, and community members to discover what truly matters to each other, recognizing both their differences and commonalities.

We believe in empowering students to take control of their own narratives, shaping both their self-perception and how they are understood by others. By sharing their stories—regardless of the medium—students gain a sense of agency, which in turn fosters empathy and understanding within the community. In doing so, we fulfill our mission to empower, uplift, and amplify youth voices.



## WHO WE ARE

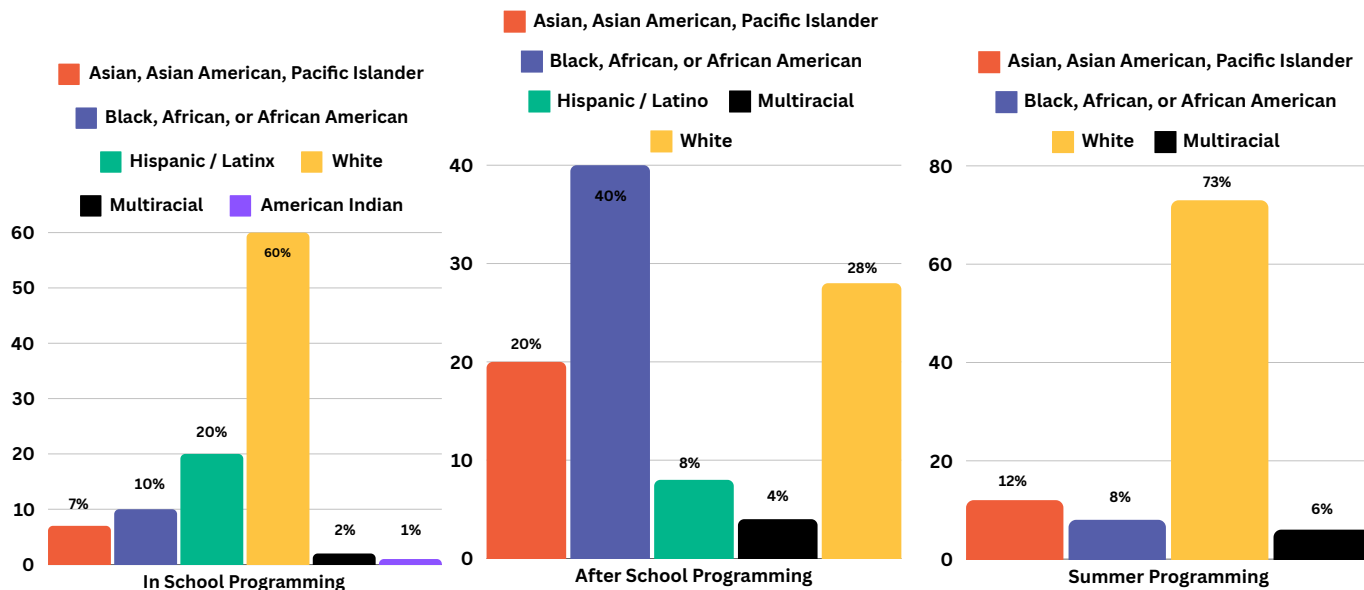
Our programs are student-initiated and student-led, centering on the creative process to cultivate collaborative and innovative skills. Through a shared passion for storytelling and a desire for meaningful connections, participants engage in experiences that foster both personal and collective growth.

We hire our high school and college-aged alumni as Emerging Professionals (EPs), who play a pivotal role in planning, implementing, and facilitating our programs. StoryArk has established a career ladder that allows these EPs to advance, with the most experienced among them promoted to Program Directors (PDs). Our PDs lead our initiatives under the guidance and mentorship of StoryArk's full-time staff and board of directors. As they continue to grow, they may be hired as full-time staff or join to serve on our board of directors.

Our programming is informed, led, and evaluated by those who are most impacted—our community of alumni. This ensures that the voices shaping our work are those with the deepest understanding of its value and potential.

Racial groups served across all programming: (Pie charts for in-school, after-school, and summer program demographics)

In FY24, StoryArk served 1,378 students, reaching an additional 327 students from the 1,051 in our previous year. Our students come from districts across the state, including both large and small towns, with 80% of our students from large towns/urban areas, most of them from the Twin Cities East Metro, and 20% from rural areas in South Central Minnesota. Our students represent a variety of identities from across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic categories.



## WHAT WE DO

StoryArk provides diverse opportunities for students to engage in creative storytelling through in-school, after-school, and summer programs, all of which are planned, implemented, facilitated, and evaluated by our StoryArk alumni, who are hired as Emerging Professionals (EPs) and Program Directors (PDs).



### In-Classroom

~**Culturally Responsive Student Leadership:** 5th + 6th graders create stories to learn about self and others (419 - 5th graders in Forest Lake Area Schools - 24% BIPOC; 188 - 5th graders in Stillwater Area Public Schools - 42% BIPOC; 190 - 6th graders in South St. Paul Public Schools, 26% BIPOC; 278 - Culturally Responsive Student Leadership Retreat: 5th graders in St James, Madelia, Lake Crystal-Wellcome-Memorial, Maple River - 48% BIPOC)

~**My Story, Your Story, Our Story:** High school students consider their own roles and identities and create original characters, themes, and stories (176 - 9th and 10th-grade students from Stillwater Area High School - 58% BIPOC)

~**Multilingual Language Arts Podcasting:** Middle and High school EL students work in collaborative teams to create original narrative podcasts as a means to unpack life experiences and identities and leverage language strengths and skills (11 6th-8th grade students from Stillwater's Oakland Middle School - 100% BIPOC; 46 9th-12th grade students from Stillwater Area High School; 91% BIPOC)

### After-School:

~**Youth Executive Board:** high school leadership group that uses stories to advocate for self and others (16 students - 100% BIPOC from Stillwater, Roseville, and Forest Lake School Districts)

~**After-School Podcasting:** students join together to work in collaborative teams to create podcasts, from narrative to roundtable, focusing on issues and topics important to them. 10th-12th grade students from Hastings, Forest Lake, Woodbury, & Stillwater. (10 students 30% BIPOC)

~**Boomsite Magazine:** multimedia magazine that features student stories and includes prose, poetry, film podcast, and visual arts from our participants across districts

### Summer Programming

~**HS Storytelling Camps:** podcast, film, music, lit arts (49 students - 26% BIPOC, with students from Hastings, Forest Lake, Stillwater, Roseville, and Mankato School Districts)

~**StoryArk Festival:** celebrates student stories as shared across all mediums

~**Arts Administration Teams** for South Central Minnesota and Twin Cities camps: EPs and PD's plan, promote and implement camps (14 students - 36% BIPOC)

### Evaluation

Evaluation is key in our programming and measuring success. We conduct daily feedback after each session through "Fist-to-Five" evaluation (a 5-point Likert scale indicated by fingers) completed after every meeting by all participants. Our Fist-to-Five captures students' immediate reactions to the programming and gives StoryArk staff the ability to responsively adapt to the needs of the students, ensuring students co-facilitate developing the best possible experience in programming. Ripple Effect Mapping evaluation of StoryArk programming completed by the University of MN Extension Center noted StoryArk programming built impactful relationships, cultivated voice, pride, empowerment, created an accepting space for self-expression, taught life skills through experiences, unleashed creativity through a student initiated process, and taught students how to learn from each other.

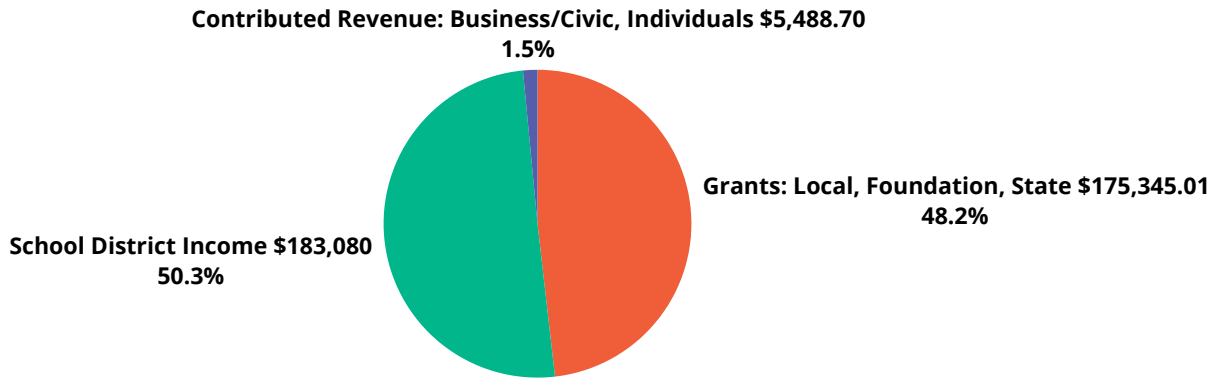


## HOW WE DO IT: OUR BRAIDED FUNDING APPROACH

StoryArk empowers, uplifts, and amplifies youth voices with the belief that all students, regardless of background, socio-economic status, political leanings, and religious views, deserve to have their stories heard and validated. 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:

- 1) Grants** including government grants (Minnesota State Arts Board, Metropolitan Regional Arts Councils, Nonprofit Infrastructure Program) and private grants (Hugh J Andersen Foundation, Fred C. and Kathryn B Andersen Foundation, St. Croix Valley Foundation, St. Paul & Minnesota Foundation and more)
- 2) School District Achievement and Integration dollars** (Stillwater, Roseville, South St Paul, Forest Lake, Mankato, St James, Madelia, Lake Crystal-Welcome-Memorial, Maple River)
- 3) Individual contributions through fundraisers and direct donations**

## FY24 Funding Mix:



Each strand of our funding model weaves together to create a strong foundation that supports all students. School districts contribute through achievement and integration dollars and transportation funds, allowing us to reach underrepresented youth whose stories are often missing from the mainstream narrative. Through donations and grants, StoryArk can further support programming in the districts, and extend our reach to students beyond the school district’s reach, including homeschooled and out-of-district youth. Individual contributions further enhance our capacity to address specific student needs, providing essential resources like technology and leadership development opportunities that might otherwise be inaccessible. Our funding model enables us to foster connections among youth and within the broader community, enriching both individual lives and the collective narrative.

StoryArk  
Statement of Financial Position  
As of June 30, 2024

	Total
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Checking	32,424.60
Savings	50,122.57
Accounts Receivable	30,925.00
Prepaid Expense	1,271.36
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 114,743.53</b>
Intellectual Property & Equipment	
Equipment, Net	965.50
Intellectual Property, Net	1,239.83
<b>Total Intellectual Property &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>\$ 2,205.33</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 116,948.86</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	1,872.40
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 1,872.40</b>
Equity	
Temp Restricted Net Assets	69,036.59
Unrestricted Net Assets	3,806.52
Year-to-Date Earnings	42,233.35
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$ 115,076.46</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$ 116,948.86</b>

StoryArk  
Statement of Activity  
July 2023 - June 2024

	Total FY24
<b>Support &amp; Revenue:</b>	
Foundations	115,345.01
Government Funds	60,000.00
Business Donations	2,000.00
Individual Donations	3,488.70
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>180,833.71</b>
School District Fees	183,080.00
Interest Income	32.57
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>183,112.57</b>
<b>Total Support &amp; Revenue</b>	<b>363,946.28</b>
<b>Operating Expenses:</b>	
Wages	226,082.35
Benefits	32,040.97
<b>Total Personnel &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>258,123.32</b>
Technology	1,927.31
Dues/Subscriptions	6,654.94
Equip/Furniture	636.00
Office Supplies	1,365.48
Accounting Fees	19,697.09
Artists & Consultants	7,545.00
Payroll Processing Fees	2,044.15
Legal Fees	680.00
Digital Platform	1,953.47
Food	5,346.01
Program Supplies	3,656.94
Site Rental	1,595.88
Mileage	7,756.05
Conferences and Meetings	1,505.29
Depr. and Amort. Expense	1,226.00
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>321,712.93</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) Operations</b>	<b>42,233.35</b>