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# SPARC

Discover your shine.

## Gratitude Report

2021 - 2022



## Discover Your Shine.

Through a variety of programs, productions, classes and camps, SPARC provides an atmosphere where creative expression flourishes, meaningful connections are built, and individuality is celebrated.



Photo by Tom Topinka

## Letter From Our Director

When I was 13 years old, a teacher held me after class and said, “You’re going to be a great public speaker.” Her name was Pat Watson, and she was the drama teacher in my middle school in North Carolina. She asked me to write a speech for a state contest. She taught me about projecting my voice, she worked with me on using gesture, and she showed me that speech could join with emotion to forge connections between a speaker and strangers sitting in an audience. I had never been noticed before, much less won anything. Within a year I was the state champion.

That experience changed the trajectory of my life and gave me confidence to attempt even greater challenges again and again. Those subsequent accomplishments came full circle last year when I accepted the role as SPARC’s fifth Executive Director in its storied 42-year history. I am proud to say that SPARC continues to honor a legacy that stretches back decades while also addressing the needs of young people today.

This past year, I have been overwhelmed by SPARC’s depth of impact, scope of programming, and our truly inspiring staff and faculty who work tirelessly to change the lives of the young people we serve. I have been humbled by the kindness and generosity from our families, our supporters, and our board of directors. Most gratifyingly, I have experienced the creative work of our young artists and been astounded by what they build in collaboration with our faculty.

There is a community that has been built within the walls of our campus—one that I know you cherish as much as we do. Our organization has emerged from the unprecedented challenges of the past three years with a renewed focus and optimism for the future. The coming years will see growth in the number of our offerings, new innovations in the delivery of our programs, and a continuing dedication to ensuring SPARC is accessible to every child.

We are excited for our Next Act, and we are grateful you will be part of it with us.

John Tong  
Executive Director





## Our Mission

To profoundly influence young people's lives through exceptional performing arts education.



## Our Vision

To inspire the creativity, confidence, and character of every young person in our community.

# Leadership

### 2021-2022 Board of Directors

#### Officers

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Heather Falks

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*Programs Assistant*  
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# Our Programs

SPARC viewed the last year as an opportunity to closely examine our history and intentionally build our future. Faculty, staff, youth, and the larger community have expressed unique and evolving needs, especially those related to the early pandemic. We have prioritized effective responses to those needs through our programming while building a sustainable model for our work, grounded in best practices for the field of youth arts education.

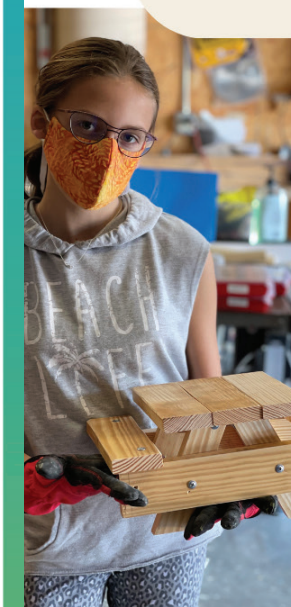
SPARC restored full-time employment for our previously downsized staff, and expanded programming from the previous two years with a priority to provide as many in-person opportunities as possible. Through our **Training Program and Camps**, we offered a multitude of artistic experiences for youth of all ages with new options in devising and technical theater. **Live Art Youth Program** created a new work with original songs, puppetry, movement, and devising, which culminated in a film by Martin Montgomery and his team. The youth even enjoyed a red-carpet premiere of their film at the Byrd Theater! **Live Art Leaders** developed work skills and selected Leaders piloted the first year of the **Live Art Teaching Artist Training Program**. The **Spectrum** ensemble wrote and staged an original one-act play which debuted at Richmond Triangle Players. We also relaunched the in-school **Stages** program, in-person **Mainstage Productions**, and a virtual **New Voices for the Theater Festival of New Works**. The school year culminated with a new initiative, **Final Bow: A Senior Celebration**, which included an open mic and special honors ceremony for graduating seniors.

We heard recommendations from the **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Commission** which were based on a six-month community-led research and survey process. SPARC also received a list of recommendations from the **Igniting Youth Leadership (IYL) of SPARC**. This youth-led research group centered its work on expanding leadership by and representation of young people at SPARC. Finally, the **Curation Committee**, comprised of faculty and staff, developed a list of criteria for show selection, all informed by the EDI Committee and IYL of SPARC recommendations.

SPARC builds programs rooted in foundational arts education principles like **Creative Youth Development, Virginia Arts Learning Standards, and Universal Design for the Performing Arts** to provide an inclusive, supportive, artistically rigorous educational environment for young artists to learn, lead, and grow. We look forward to working with you as we unveil the Next Act of SPARC!

## During the past year SPARC...

Served **1,302** youth  
 Provided **\$117,000+** in scholarship funding  
 Reached **3,565** in-person audience members  
 Provided **2,669** hours of instruction  
**57%** of the operating budget came from donations





# Financials

Statement of financial position year ending August 31, 2022.

## Liabilities & Net Assets

Accounts Payable	\$11,121
Accrued Expenses	\$26,805
Deferred Revenue	\$25,201
Term Loan Payable	\$12,963
Long-Term Debt	\$230,980

**Total Liabilities** **\$307,070**

## Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$3,627,193
Donor Restricted	\$1,054,035

**Total Liabilities & Net Assets** **\$4,988,298**

## Assets

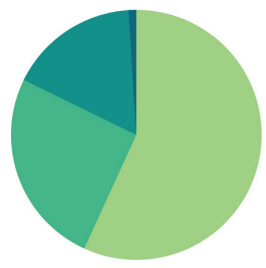
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$11,121
Government Grant Receivable	\$26,805
Pledges Receivable	\$25,201
Prepaid Expenses	\$12,963
Investments, current	\$230,980

**Current Assets** **\$834,743**

## Long-Term Assets

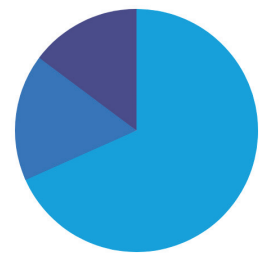
Pledge Receivables	\$929,196
Property & Equipment, net	\$3,224,359

**Total Assets** **\$4,988,298**



## FY22 Revenue Distribution

Grants & Contributions	<b>\$1,118,761</b>
Program Tuition & Other Revenue	<b>\$500,535</b>
Government COVID Relief	<b>\$330,075</b>
Ticket Sales & Other Revenue	<b>\$19,657</b>



## FY22 Expenses Distribution

Program Expenses	<b>\$1,209,904</b>
Administrative Expenses	<b>\$299,216</b>
Fundraising Expenses	<b>\$261,853</b>

SPARC is grateful for generous donations from our community. Over half of SPARC's operating budget is funded by your contributions. Thank you for helping our students shine!

Photo by Tom Topinka



# Thank You

We acknowledge donors who made contributions to SPARC from September 1, 2021 - August 31, 2022.

We make every effort for accuracy; if you find a mistake or omission, kindly contact SPARC's development office.

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## RYAN T. RIPPERTON ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FUND

*In honor of Ryan Ripperton's 12 years of service to SPARC as Executive Director, the following donors founded the Ryan T. Ripperton Endowed Scholarship Fund to provide access to quality performing arts education for youth in the Greater Richmond area.*

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# Community Partners



SPARC programming is greatly enhanced by collaboration with the following community partners:

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Derbyshire Baptist Church  
Epiphany Lutheran Church  
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Photos by Amy Almond



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# Get in Touch

2106 North Hamilton Street  
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