



ANNUAL REPORT

(July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)

Every Leader is an Artist—"The connection between leadership and art has been made many times over, usually as a way to single out certain properties of the arts that carry over to leadership, such as a jazz musician's ability to create through improvisation. These analogies can be compelling, but my point is more ambitious: leadership is an actual art, not metaphorically an art."

— *Michael O'Malley, Lecturer in the Yale School of Medicine*
(Printed in the *Harvard Business Review*)



Letter from the President

Artful Leadership: Artists Lead the Way—Leadership, much like art, involves crafting something innovative and inspiring, connecting both the heart and mind. It's about viewing the world from fresh perspectives and guiding others to do the same. This leadership style demands vision, creativity, patience, the courage to experiment, and the skill to communicate and connect with people. I am excited about our new leadership team and the work we are doing throughout our community.

SMARTS' arts education leadership allows both hearts and minds to enable our students, families, and partners to engage, interact, and thrive. Together, we have an obligation to connect students with the richness of the arts in our community. We owe our students something that reaches beyond the basics of math, reading, science, and social studies. The arts in schools are one way we can make that possible and SMARTS has an in-depth footprint in the Ohio One Building and in our community. Our *free* Public Classes are especially important for students who do not have equitable access to all of the arts during or after school. We fill the void and provide quality arts teaching and learning in visual art, music, dance, theater and creative writing.

We know that being engaged with the arts is simply good for our students—academically and emotionally. We know that classroom teachers and administrators who engage with SMARTS become strong believers in our work. The arts engage our students. They help students discover new ways of thinking and experiencing the world. They connect our students with community teaching artists, which expands their experiences and shows them that the arts are a way to have a career, make a living, and live a fruitful arts-rich life. The arts strengthen relationships and they bring joy while providing meaning to our lives.

SMARTS teaching and learning starts at the age of 18 months giving students a basis for arts learning when it is most critical to their development. It also helps parents to understand how to include their young children in quality arts experiences. Early SMARTS students build their confidence in critical thinking, make creative play, try new experiences, and solve problems. As they grow, they get sequential arts experiences helping them to build relationships with fellow students and with trusted adults. That's powerful for mental health, for attendance, and for staying on track to graduation. SMARTS helps to guide and nurture students all the way through high school, on to college, and life. Without SMARTS, most students have little or no arts opportunities.

Ohio's focus on high-stakes testing has pushed many districts and schools to narrow what students learn. There just isn't enough time in the school day. And the arts are often part of what is sacrificed; seen expendable beyond the basics. Arts classes are most often the most important time of the day for students with the greatest need and helps them to find out who they are and how they fit into the world.

We believe in the positive impacts of quality arts education and know that others do too. We are grateful for your support while we keep growing to meet the needs of our community.

SMARTS' artists lead the way, guiding students, families, teachers, and partners to learn through the arts.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca L. Keck'.

Rebecca L. Keck, SMARTS President & Founder

SMARTS, Your Community Art School

SMARTS, Students Motivated by the Arts, is a community art school that provides classes in visual arts, music, dance, theater, and creative writing for our region's PK-12 youth with a focus on underserved populations. SMARTS hires and prepares community teaching artists with professional training and oversight so that they can provide quality arts-focused teaching and learning with lesson plans that follow state standards. Since 1997, SMARTS classes have been *free* and open to the public and all students are accepted through a simple application process.

SMARTS classes take place in the historic Ohio One Building in downtown Youngstown and through Virtual SMARTS, after school and on Saturdays. They are offered in the fall, spring, and summer. SMARTS partners with schools, school districts, and youth programs throughout the region both during and after school by providing them with arts classes, workshops, Arts Integration, SMARTS Beats and Empowers for students with special needs, Early SMARTS, and hands-on activities for their students. SMARTS community partnerships allow us to reach deep into the community, engage students who may not have any or enough access to the arts, and to generate revenue in support of future programming.

In addition to providing opportunities to PK-12 students, **SMARTS** has created a professional development model for teachers with an emphasis on arts integration. Our goal with arts integration is to bring learning to life, to connect core content to the arts, and to provide a new approach with strategies to reach students who are disengaged. Arts Integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process that connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both. SMARTS Arts Integration focus helps teachers to re-imagine the future of teaching and learning.

SMARTS Mission to provide access and equity in arts education reaches across all socio-economic levels while providing access and early training in the arts. Even our most affluent schools in Ohio do not 'teach the whole child' by offering each of the arts disciplines at every grade level.

With their compliance with standardized testing, budget constraints, scheduling conflicts, academic and STEM focus, and numerous other reasons, their students do not have arts learning opportunities during the school day. SMARTS helps to bridge that gap and provide all students with quality arts education during and after school at SMARTS in the Ohio One Building and out in the community.

SMARTS is the backbone and lead arts organization for Any Given Child, Warren, an initiative through the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts that provides students access and equity to quality arts education in the Warren City School District. SMARTS provides leadership, administration, arts integration expertise, and professional development. We have been working with the Warren City School District since 2015 through this initiative. Our teachers can be found in their schools nearly every day throughout the year.



SMARTS Headquarters
Ohio One, 25 East Boardman Street, First Floor
Youngstown, OH 44503

SMARTS Students

In 2023-2024, SMARTS served more than 11,000 students, teachers, administrators, families, and community members. Through a combination of Community and Public Programming, students throughout the region have opportunities to take SMARTS classes 6 days a week: after school and Saturdays at SMARTS through Public Programming, and in schools and youth organizations throughout the community, during the school day, Saturdays, and after-school through Community Programming.

SMARTS *free* Public Programming in the Ohio One Building offered 69 classes with more than 700 'spots' for students to enroll. As of June 30, 2024, we had 2,650 PK-12 student applications in our database—an increase of more than 400 applications since June of 2023! This database grows daily, as students can apply for *free* at any time year-round. SMARTS families come from more than 44 different cities and counties throughout the Valley, and from select counties in PA—driving all the way to our historic Ohio One location downtown for SMARTS *free* Public Programming. Through Virtual SMARTS, students can take classes from anywhere in the world. SMARTS has served thousands of students since its inception in 1997.

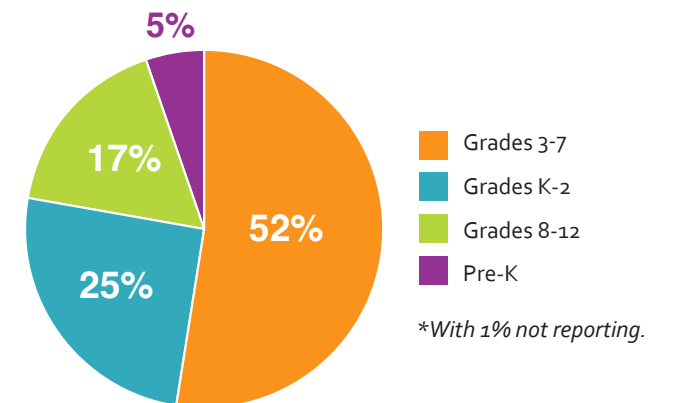
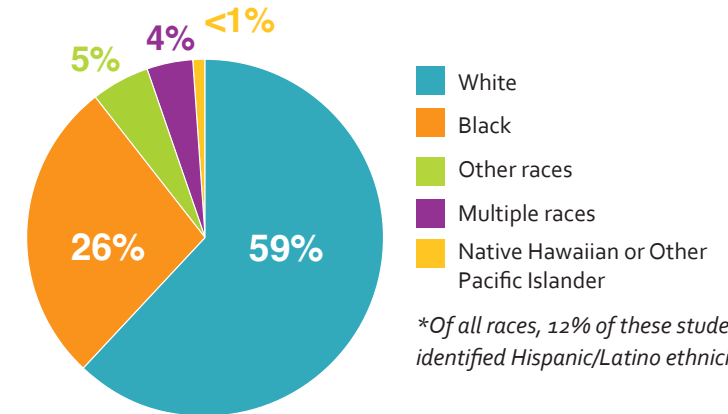
The application for SMARTS *free* Public Programming allows us to identify students' art interests, grade level, and other information that allows us to gather data for grant reporting purposes. Of the 1,961 students who self-reported income data, we know that more than 62% of the students in the SMARTS database live at or below the poverty level. There were 367 students enrolled in SMARTS *free* Public Programming in the 2023-2024 year, and they identified as the following: 59% White, 26% Black or African American, 4% Multiple, 5% Other, and > 1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (with 10% not reporting); 12% of these students identified Hispanic/Latino ethnicity. Further, these 367 students are in the following grades: 52% grades 3-7, 25% grades K-2, 17% grades 8-12, and 5% PK (with 1% not reporting).

SMARTS Community Programming provided as many as 196 classes a week to more than 2,267 students at 27 partner locations. These students saw SMARTS programming at least once a week, and some students had SMARTS classes more than once a week for the entire school year! Our team of 40

SMARTS teachers worked alongside more than 130 classroom teachers at these locations, collaborating on arts-focused teaching and learning. Our community partners have prioritized and invested in SMARTS quality arts education for their students, and we are right alongside them to help bridge the gap in access and equity in arts education.

SMARTS students span all cultural and socio-economic barriers, serving as a true reflection of our diverse community.

Public Programming Students (Fall 2023-Summer 2024)



SMARTS Staff

SMARTS' new leadership team is a group of artists who use their creative skill sets to problem-solve the unique and complex hurdles of SMARTS every day. They are arts professionals and bring unique experiences and expertise to SMARTS. Our current staff includes: Becky Keck, SMARTS President & Founder; Abbie Twyford Wilson, Assistant Director; Barb Saylor, Bookkeeper; Alaina Cornfield, Education Director; DeAudra Edgerson, Program Director; and Sarah Rhodes and Liberty Long, Program Managers.

Becky Keck is an original founder of SMARTS and has a long history in arts education in the Mahoning Valley. She serves on local and state boards and is our connection to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She has fearlessly led our organization from its inception to now including its successful transition to the community in 2014. Abbie Twyford Wilson is the newest team member, joining the staff as Assistant Director after 11 years working in higher education. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a Master of Education - Student Affairs Leadership. Barb Saylor joined our team in October of 2022 as our first full-time Bookkeeper, bringing with her a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and 19 years of office management and bookkeeping experience. Alaina Cornfield holds a Bachelor of Music in Education and a K-12 teaching license and joined

SMARTS as Education Director in June of 2023. She brings 12+ years of classroom teaching experience to the SMARTS team. DeAudra Edgerson has recently been promoted to Program Director and holds an MBA as well as a Bachelor's degree in Fashion Merchandising. Sarah Rhodes re-joined the team as a Community Program Manager in October of 2022, having previously taught for SMARTS 19 years ago. She holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in Theater and Dance. Liberty Long holds a Master's in Education and a Bachelor's degree in Visual Art. She joined SMARTS in August 2024 as a Community Program Manager.

SMARTS Student Assistants and Interns are all community artists who are pursuing arts or education degrees. Our Student Assistants are the backbone of our team and work to support programming both at SMARTS and out in the community. They keep our spaces clean, organized, and often return to SMARTS as teachers when they graduate. Most importantly, all of SMARTS employees are artists.*

SMARTS is always seeking new volunteers for our SMARTIES Moving Forward volunteer program. They help us with operations and programming and always bring new ideas and experiences.



Becky Keck
President



Abbie Twyford Wilson
Assistant Director



Barb Saylor
Bookkeeper



Alaina Cornfield
Education Director



DeAudra Edgerson
Program Director



Sarah Rhodes
Program Manager



Liberty Long
Program Manager

*SMARTS Staff as of November 1, 2024.

SMARTS Teachers

SMARTS Community Teaching Artists come to SMARTS as artists first. These artists bring their knowledge of and extensive backgrounds in visual art, music, dance, theater, and creative writing, which provides unique teaching and learning opportunities to students and teachers every day. SMARTS has more than 50 teaching artists on staff and is always on the lookout for new artists to bring new mediums and perspectives to our team. SMARTS hires artists and trains them how to teach their art form by providing onboarding, professional development opportunities, and professional oversight.

SMARTS Teachers are members of our community. They are your neighbors, friends, and family—and they are loaded with talent! SMARTS teachers are founders of local galleries, animators, recording artists, opera singers, classical musicians, international soloists, Broadway actors, and dancers, skilled in tap or contemporary movement. They are directors, playwrights, photographers, designers, storytellers, poets, and journalists. SMARTS teachers are creatives in every way and SMARTS is grateful to have them!



SMARTS Community Partners in 2023-2024

DURING THE SCHOOL DAY PARTNERS

SMARTS arts teaching and learning takes place in the following organizations:

- ACLD School & Learning Center
- AGC, Warren City Schools PK-8
 - ◊ *Jefferson PK-8*
 - ◊ *Lincoln PK-8*
 - ◊ *McGuffey PK-8*
 - ◊ *Willard PK-8*
- Akiva Academy
- Austintown Elementary School
- Autism Society of the Mahoning Valley
- Canfield United Methodist Preschool
- Girard City Schools
 - ◊ *Prospect Elementary*
- Liberty Local Schools
 - ◊ *Blott Guy PK-6*
 - ◊ *Liberty Jr. Sr. High School (7-12)*
- Leonard Kirtz
- Potential Development
 - ◊ *Elementary & Middle School*
 - ◊ *High School*
- The Rich Center for Autism
- South Side Academy
- St. Christine School
- Youngstown City Schools
 - ◊ *Taft Elementary*
 - ◊ *Wilson Alternative*
 - ◊ *STEAM PD*

AFTER-SCHOOL PARTNERS

SMARTS collaborates with the following after-school programs to provide arts education classes for youth and adults, both in-person and through Virtual SMARTS.

- AGC Warren PK-8
 - ◊ *Monroe After School Program*
 - ◊ *21st Century After School Program*
- Akiva Academy
- Ashtabula Arts Center
- Austintown Middle School
- Community Day Camp of North Lima
- Kent State Rising Scholars
- Liberty Local Schools
 - ◊ *Liberty Jr. Sr. High School*
- McKinley Memorial Library
- Montessori School of the Mahoning Valley
- OCCHA
- St. Christine Summer Program
- Warren Trumbull County Public Library
- Youngstown Promise Community Hub
- YSU Academic Achievers
- YSU Explore
 - ◊ *Brookfield*
 - ◊ *Girard Intermediate*
 - ◊ *Girard Jr/Sr High School*

SMARTS BEATS & EMPOWERS PARTNERS

SMARTS Beats and Empowers follows the same programming model, using the knowledge and curriculum established in 2010. They take place during our partners' school day for the entire academic year and in partnership with community organizations after school and for special events. SMARTS Beats and Empowers gives students with special needs the opportunity to learn in the arts with curriculum created specifically for them and their specialties. Additionally, it helps their teachers to see new capabilities with extensive arts supplies and curriculum specifically designed for connection and growth.

SMARTS Beats is a percussion-based learning program for PK-12 (and up to the age of 21) students with developmental and behavioral challenges. SMARTS Beats uses hand drums and other percussion instruments to engage students by promoting academic learning, increasing musical knowledge, fostering a sense of community, and developing pride, confidence, and satisfaction.

SMARTS Empowers serves the same students and integrates arts education into their daily classroom activities using visual art, theater, and dance. The goal of this program is to empower students through art forms and connect their learning to these positive experiences.

We are always in search of connecting to underserved communities and students with special needs receive very little or no arts education at school without SMARTS. Through bridging this gap, we have found many of these students to be incredible artists. SMARTS Beats and Empowers has grown immensely with support from the Youngstown Foundation, other funders, and many community partners.

SMARTS Beats and Empowers

1. Promotes academic learning through unconventional/alternative techniques.
2. Increases knowledge, understanding, and appreciation in visual arts, music, dance, theater, and creative writing.
3. Fosters a sense of teamwork and community.
4. Develops students' sense of pride, confidence and satisfaction.

- ACLD School & Learning Center
- AGC, Warren City Schools
 - ◊ *Jefferson PK-8*
 - ◊ *Lincoln PK-8*
 - ◊ *McGuffey PK-8*
 - ◊ *Willard PK-8*
- Austintown Elementary School
- Jackson-Milton Elementary School
- Leonard Kirtz
- Potential Development Schools
 - ◊ *Elementary & Middle School*
 - ◊ *High School*
- The Rich Center for Autism
- TCESC at Liberty Local Schools
- Youngstown City Schools
 - ◊ *Wilson Alternative*

SMARTS Administrative Leadership

Rebecca L. Keck, President & Founder
Abbie Twyford Wilson, Assistant Director
Barbara Saylor, Bookkeeper
Alaina Cornfield, Education Director
DeAudra Edgeron, Program Director
Sarah Rhodes, Program Manager
Liberty Long, Program Manager

SMARTS Circle 2023-2024

Myra Vitto, President
Paul Garchar, Vice President
Chris Gabrick, Treasurer
Misty Hazy, Secretary
Denise Holt
Bergen Giordani
Jonathan Fauvie
John A. McNally, IV
John Orsini
Megan Jones
Stacia Erdos
Nick Chretien

Past SMARTS Circle Members

Denise Glinatsis Bayer, Robert G. Bindas, Nikki Carter, Dan DeSalvo, Laura Dewberry, Ronald C. Faniro, Angela McCoy, Heather McMahan, Larry Mohn III, Genna Petrolla, Nicole Ramson, Christine Rhoades, Linda Vasconi, Alura Webb, and Joy White.

Any Given Child, Warren

We have led Any Given Child, Warren as the backbone organization with Becky Keck as the Liaison to the John F. Kennedy Center since 2015. Becky Keck, Alaina Cornfield, and Sarah Rhodes along with Wendy Hartzell, Dani Burns, Regina Rees, and Steve Chiaro are the leadership team. SMARTS provides administration, professional development, the connection to the Kennedy Center, community engagement, and arts teaching/learning including our five Premier Programs.

The goal of Any Given Child is to assist communities in developing and implementing a plan for expanded arts education while ensuring access and equity for all students. AGC, Warren is among 28 communities across the country; Warren is the smallest district and the only community in Ohio. We follow the Collective Impact Model and have two oversight committees, including 30 leaders that meet monthly during the school year.

We created a customized program for PK-8 students in Arts Integration, Beats & Empowers, Early SMARTS, Arts in Non-Arts Spaces, and pilots for Steel Band and Gifted Programming. SMARTS paired 7 of our teachers with 33 classroom teachers, providing direct instruction to >550 students and 3,460 students participated through Arts in Non-Arts Spaces.

Alaina Cornfield, Sarah Rhodes, Dani Burns, and Krista Kohut, presented at the AGC Convening in Washington D.C. with two sessions on building and maintaining strong partner relationships, collaboration, and tailoring programming to fit educational needs entitled "AGC Warren; Making the Connection by building and maintaining strong partner relationships."



SMARTS Fundraisers

SMARTS' two biggest fundraisers of the year are the SMARTS Family Dinner, happening in the fall, and the Joy of SMARTS, which takes place in the summer. These two signature events seek to engage the community at large, providing a glimpse into what happens at SMARTS and out in the community throughout the year while supporting future programming.

The SMARTS Family Dinner was celebrated at the Basilica of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel on November 21, 2023. SMARTS staff and teachers, students, families, partners, sponsors, and community members all gathered to see nearly 50 students demonstrate what they learned this year through SMARTS. They represented both our *free* Public Programming as well as the work we do in the community at schools and youth organizations. Attendees enjoyed a spaghetti dinner, raffle items, and our group Keynote theme, "Seeds for the Future," asking "How do the Arts help you grow?" It was a beautiful evening, connecting us all as a family and raising \$15,000.

This year, the Joy of SMARTS was held on June 21, 2024 in our facility at the Historic Ohio One Building with more than 260 attendees and 204 pieces of art available for bidding, raising a total of \$41,000. We would not be able to hold this event without the generosity of our supporters and most importantly, the artists who donate their work.

The Joy of SMARTS was renamed in 2022 to honor our friend and past SMARTS Circle member, Joy White. Joy was a lifetime resident and local artist who created this event to help us raise funds while we were transitioning to the community as a stand-alone 501(C)(3). The first event was held in the fall of 2015 before we renovated our new home in the Ohio One Building. Joy created all of the marketing and event materials including the logo, and she nearly single-handedly put the event together because she believed in

our Mission. We are grateful for her vision and are proud to continue her legacy with The Joy of SMARTS event.

We hosted several *free* community outreach events at SMARTS including the Fall Kick-Off on September 12, the Holiday Open House on December 5, SMARTS String Recital on March 27, and Art You Can See and Hear on April 2 and 3. These events brought 513 adults and children to SMARTS enabling them to see what we are all about and enjoy live student demonstrations representing what they learned throughout the year.

SMARTS is always seeking to connect to new students and families reaching deep into the community to find those with the least access to quality arts education. We participated in 19 different community events from the Summer Festival of the Arts, the Irish Festival, Silly Science Sunday, Hola Fest, the Mahoning Valley Pizza Cook-off, to Simply Slavic, and more. We interacted with 2,690 adults and students and always provided hands-on arts activities specific to the event for children of all ages. Students can apply to SMARTS at any time, so these events enable us to continue to connect with new students and their families. They also allow us to tell our story and engage new friends. We are an active arts education leader in our community.





SMARTS Mission

SMARTS community art school provides access and early training in the arts for our region's PK-12 youth with a focus on underserved populations. SMARTS engages public and private organizations, schools, and artists in cooperative projects designed to enrich our community, promote student achievement, inspire self-discovery, and impact cultural and academic literacy through fine and performing arts.

SMARTS Vision

SMARTS community art school will continue to be the leader in quality arts education in our region, state, and nation by serving our community's youth. SMARTS will provide quality arts education, and promote our region's arts and culture by establishing partnerships, working with public and private organizations, and representing the diversity of our community.



SMARTS Education Philosophy

SMARTS...

- believes every person is an artist, an individual who creates, innately possessing a creative mind and personal voice, a desire to express their perspective and experiences, a need to be inspired or have purpose, and a need to have enjoyment in life.
- aims to develop student artists by teaching them to think, create, and view their world from the perspective of an artist.
- believes that teaching, itself, is an art form, and SMARTS supports teaching artists to be lifelong learners.
- believes effective teaching for the arts must be inclusive, effectively taught, and supportive to the student's holistic growth.
- believes the arts are necessary to 'teach the whole child.'

To learn more about SMARTS Education Philosophy, our belief in the importance of integrating art into all educational subjects and disciplines, and how we provide quality arts education to students, visit our website: SMARTSArtschool.org/about-us/

“ I see little of more importance to the future of our country and our civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist. If art is to nourish the root of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him. ”

– John F. Kennedy
U.S. President, 1961-1963

SMARTS Premier Programming

Our partnerships with schools and organizations expand our reach. They contract us for our services generating revenue to support our mission. We work in partnership with classroom and arts teachers during and after school.

Arts Integration is a co-teaching, project-based method of teaching the arts and core subject areas. A SMARTS teacher and classroom teacher work together so that students engage in a creative process connecting an art form and a subject area to meet their objectives. This process combats learning loss, increases long-term retention of knowledge, and engages alternative and underachieving learners.

Early SMARTS classes are for children ages 18 months – 5 years old and their parents. Our youngest creatives develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and a strong sense of imagination. We follow the Reggio Emilia Philosophy of early childhood education by embracing that children learn by experiences through creative play using their environment.

Arts in Non-Arts Spaces allows students exposure to all five arts disciplines without taking a field trip. It brings the artist to them in unexpected times and places. While artists work, students watch, interact, ask questions, and even participate.

Beats & Empowers is for PK-12 (and up to the age of 21) students with special needs. It emphasizes social-emotional learning, fine motor development, and arts integration approaches. It promotes academic learning through alternative techniques, increases knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the arts, and fosters a sense of teamwork and community.

SMARTS Steel Band brings a new sound to musical learning. Originating in Trinidad and Tobago, the steelpan drum was born from musicians playing instruments like bamboo, biscuit tins, and oil drums. We partner with music teachers and provide a full set of professional steelpans and JumbieJams for younger students. Students learn how to read music, improvisation, percussion techniques, and much more through this exciting instrument family.

Donors and Grantors

(July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024)

\$100,000+

Roberta M Hannay
The Youngstown Foundation

\$25,000-\$99,999

John S. and Doris M. Andrews Memorial Fund
Ward Beecher Foundation

\$5,000-\$24,999

#1 Cochran
The Arnett Family Fund
City of Youngstown - CDBG
The Community Foundation of the Mahoning Valley
The Kennedy Family Fund
Lara Mahoney
PNC Foundation
White Glove Payroll LLC
Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber

\$500-\$4,999

Alex Downie & Sons, Co.
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Christopher & Kimberly Urig
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The Youngstown Rotary Foundation

\$250 to \$499

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Carol Chamberlain

Dom's Ice House
Charles E Dunlap, Attorney at Law
Al & Suzanne Fleming
David Grayson
Denise Lancaster
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Ohio One Corp
Elise Robbins
Ben & Heather Rostan
Ted Schmidt
Michelle Tarka
York Mahoning, Inc.

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Mia Mondora
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Tony Nicholas
Lisa Nicklash
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Jill Rogers
Gregg Rossi
Frank Rulli Jr
Charles Rumberg
Bill & Linda Russell
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Scott Schulick
Lee & Janet Shapiro
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Fred Shepherd
Alyssa Smith
Marilyn Sniderman
Standard Clay Company
Sandra Stephan
Judith Szabo Lepore
Bruce & Kelly Tamarkin
Jeffery Terlecki
Kristina Terlecki
The Thomas Brick Company
Tolmiros Financial Designs
Gail Trunick
Cheryl & Collin Tubic
Lynn Valentino
Darryl & Jan Vaughn
Kelly & Peter Verostko
Jessica Whitacre
Sarah Wilschek
Suzanne "Samie" Winick
Matthew & Natalie Wright

SMARTS Revenue

(July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024)

Our unique revenue generating model uses our mission to reach deep into the community so that we are not solely reliant on grant funding. It also helps us connect to more students and teachers, extending our capacity beyond our facility at the Ohio One Building. We had another incredible year at SMARTS! Our overall revenue was consistent with the prior year with our funding coming from these sources: 43% Community Programming Revenue, 42% Foundations and Grants, 7% Special Events, 5% Individuals and Businesses, and 3% coming from Government Grants and other Income.

Community Programming revenue comes from our work with local schools and youth organizations to integrate arts into their school day curriculum and after school programming, and often to rebuild their arts programming overall. Foundations and Grants support for our Public and Community programming grew 12% from the prior year. We appealed to donors in a fall letter and spring infographic campaign, raising over \$22,000. We are very thankful for the support of our community which allows us continue to provide *free* classes at Ohio One.

SMARTS hosted two very successful fundraisers: The SMARTS Family Dinner in November 2023 generated \$14,940 in profit, and The Joy of SMARTS art auction took place in June 2023 with more donors and artists than ever! This event honors our friend and past SMARTS Circle Member, Joy White, and brought in \$41,000 in profit. We are grateful for everyone's support for these events!

SMARTS Expenses

(July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024)

SMARTS' expenses decreased by 5% during the fiscal year and due to the significant investments in our facility and equipment in the prior year, we saw a decrease in computer expenses of 37% and a decrease in repairs and maintenance of 63%.

Personnel costs, which consistently make up 80% of our expenses, increased by nearly \$62,000 as we added staff employing 8 full-time staff and nearly 45 contracted teachers. We continue to invest in our amazing team by providing competitive pay, offering benefits such as a retirement plan, supporting our staff as artists, and providing cutting edge arts education training to all employees. The ability to attract and retain top talent ensures the quality of our future programming.

We appreciate the support of the Ohio One Corporation, securing SMARTS' home in our historic and easily accessible location in downtown Youngstown. Facilities and equipment made up approximately 10% of our total costs and at the same time, as with most businesses, SMARTS experienced inflation. With the investments that we made in our facility in the prior year, we were able to avoid increasing utility costs. Despite the economic challenges, SMARTS costs across the board remain well-controlled with Administrative operating costs representing only 2% of our budget.

SMARTS Organizational Stability

(July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024)

Since 2014, SMARTS has raised nearly \$6.5 million to support our programming and invested more than \$5.2 million of that back into the community. We maintain net assets of \$454,000 as of June 30, 2024 much of which comprises property, equipment, and funds restricted for programming.

In spite of some of the obstacles we've faced in our 27-year history, we have maintained financial stability. SMARTS' budget for the fiscal year 2025 is the largest ever and is approaching \$1 million, including growth expectations of 18%. SMARTS will seek to fundraise in the coming years in order to further expand our programming and carry out capital projects. The needs of our community, and especially that of our children, require additional attention to the arts. We are poised to fulfill those needs, and are able to do so through the generosity of our supporters along with our own hard work.

Please support us at SMARTSArtSchool.org/donate.



SMARTS Circle President's Letter



My journey with SMARTS began almost twenty years ago when my daughter Dagmar became a student there. I remember the excitement we shared when the SMARTS Class Catalog came out and she saw the new classes being offered. SMARTS was special because it provided arts education in disciplines that were not available through Dagmar's school. She loved every class she took at SMARTS, and as a parent, I saw the positive impact of the classes offered by SMARTS. Dagmar's confidence in herself grew as she took classes like opera performance that helped her step outside of her comfort zone. Her critical thinking and problem-solving skills grew through drawing and painting classes, and through SMARTS, she developed a life-long appreciation and passion for arts and culture.

Today, I continue to see the transformative power of arts education through SMARTS. SMARTS' classes, community programming, and arts integration programs continue to increase SMARTS' reach in our community, creating arts programming that is accessible to all. SMARTS' staff and community teaching artists work collaboratively to bring innovative ideas like the STEAM educational model to our programming. The STEAM model integrates the arts into science, technology, engineering, and math; developing students' ability to innovate and problem solve by engaging both the right (creative) brain and left (logical) sides of the brain. SMARTS is leading the way in STEAM education to ensure that it fully integrates the arts into the creative problem-solving process through programming, professional development, and arts integration.

**Thank you for your ongoing support for SMARTS
as we continue to grow our reach in the community.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diane R. Palmer".

Diane R. Palmer
SMARTS Circle President





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Youngstown, OH 44503, 330-574-2787
www.SMARTSArtSchool.org