

2024 Urban Arts Yearbook



Game
changers
start
here.



The whole enchilada.

SEE THIS  CLICK THE LINK

Urban Arts teaches digital game design as a pathway to college and career for underrepresented students.

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We teach the art and technology of game development through computer science, coding, animation, music, and storytelling.

We provide top tier college-access services and ensure our students earn the maximum in scholarships.

We connect our students and alumni to mentorships and internships at leading media and technology companies, generating a new and diverse talent pipeline.

Because a quality education shouldn't depend on a child's zip code.

THE DIVERSE TALENT PIPELINE



Middle School with Minecraft Education



High School with our College-Board Endorsed Curriculum



College Access Program with over \$25M in scholarships



Career Access with Mentorships and Internships



Self-determined Futures

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN



In-School Programs Nationwide

Through Game On, our custom Advanced Placement Computer Science Principles program, and Creative Coders, teaching middle school Computer Science through Game Design



After-School Programs at our NYC Learning Lab

Intensive Game Design Series
Game Development Studios
Spring Break Game Design Lab
Game Design Summer Camp
College Access
Pop Up Masterclasses
Mentorships and Internships



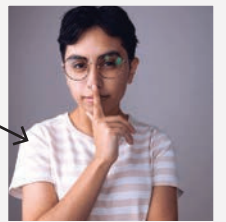
Community Schools throughout NYC

Community Schools are neighborhood hubs, centers of opportunity where academics, social services, and supports are integrated, resulting in improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities.

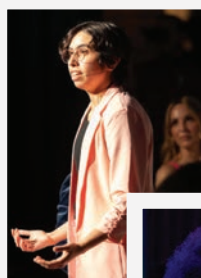
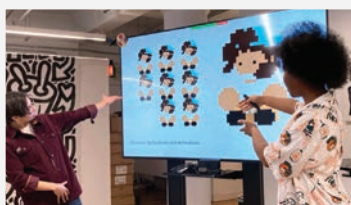
Welcome.



KIMARI



SARAH



Urban Arts teaches digital game design as a pathway to college and career for underrepresented students, generating a new and diverse talent pipeline. We're also pretty great at creating lasting friendships and networks.

In 2018, Kimari Rennis discovered Urban Arts and fully immersed herself in everything our program had to offer. She participated in after-school classes, weekend workshops, and summer programs. She joined field trips, lectures, and career fairs, seizing every opportunity for growth.

Sarah Applebaum did the same. She immersed herself fully in all things Urban Arts, eventually becoming a talented and popular Teaching Assistant to the next gen of students.

When creative, committed types like Kimari and Sarah meet, they become supportive and productive friends, spending transformative years together building games, collaborating on projects, and even appearing on stage at our Color Ball. (Save the date! April 10, 2025.)

Kimari matriculated to NYU's Game Center, while Sarah studied Information Technology at Rutgers (with *two* minors—Business Administration and Music Technology). Even as alumni, both remained actively involved with Urban Arts and each other, attending their college graduations. They tirelessly promoted our mission to students, partners, and donors as paid Ambassadors, advocating for what they know works.

In the blink of an eye, three years of high school and four years of college passed. This past summer, both Kimari and Sarah graduated and embarked on exciting new adventures—each aligned perfectly with their goals. Sarah was hired as a full-time content producer at **Unity Technologies**, and Kimari joined Lucasfilm's Game Division. Unity, one of our foundational partners, is renowned both for its leading game engine, as well as its commitment to educational equity. Gaming remains the dominant form of entertainment

media, greater than movies and music combined, and Lucasfilm is an industry leader.

These jobs—high-tech, game-based—historically went to men who were traditionally encouraged in STEM and had broad access to the tools and the education. The industry remains uniform. Until now. Thanks to the preparation and support Kimari and Sarah have received, both are thriving in careers that are breaking new ground for underrepresented students.

At Urban Arts, we focus on preparing students for the jobs of the future—jobs that will emerge in the next five to ten years. Kimari and Sarah are just two examples of our graduates. Others have found success in places like Activision Blizzard, Rockstar Games, Warner Bros. Games, Sony Immersive Music Studios, Salesforce, 100 Thieves, Second Dinner, the NY Mets, IAC, Roku, iHeart Media, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Seaver Center for Autism Research, Wicked Saints Studios, and Oscar de la Renta.

This year, we welcomed new partners like **Google** and **KeyBank**, both committed to advancing educational equity and investing in a creatively confident, technically skilled workforce. Recognizing the need to reach students earlier, we also launched a national middle school program that introduces computer science through game design using **Minecraft**.

If you've been following our journey, you'll know that we shifted our focus to game design seven years ago. Now, we're witnessing the full lifecycle of our impact, and we couldn't be prouder. We are deeply grateful to each of you who has supported us along the way. With your continued support, we look forward to preparing many more students like Kimari and Sarah for the jobs of tomorrow.

Urban Arts. *Game changers start here.*
Thank you for being part of our journey.



Elyse Dreyer
Board Chair



Philip Courtney
CEO

2024 by the Numbers



3,000 students served across Urban Arts programs

IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

1,750 students impacted through national programs.

13 states have partnered with Urban Arts.

97% of teachers agree our curriculum effectively teaches computer science.

750 students served in Urban Arts' Community Schools. Plus, we're recognized for our service and dedication with an award from District 6!



\$4M received a **third** highly competitive \$4M Education Innovation & Research (EIR) grant from the U.S. DoE for our new Creative Coders initiative for Middle School (see p.7).



Our custom Game On AP CSP curriculum is endorsed by **College Board!** Game On is offered freely to eligible Title 1 schools nationally.



AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

500 students served through direct-to-student game design programming.

90.5% of students felt highly skilled in collaborative coding following our after-school game design program.

31% more students leveled up to the advanced program compared to last year.

100% of seniors accepted to college.

\$7,892,652 in scholarships this year.

\$25M scholarships earned since 2017.

3 full rides—Yale, MIT, NYU.

440 hours 110 students received 440 hours of mentoring.

2  **New!** programs. Our first ever **Spring Break Game Design Lab**, a short intensive. Students finished the program with two games—a text-based interactive story & a simple Unity platformer remixed with original effects. **Senior XP** is a comprehensive program tailored for rising seniors, combining college access with immersive game design classes. Students emerge with polished portfolios suitable for applications & future media/technology careers.

Our Students

90% Low-Income Households, 92% of Color, 50% Identify as Female, 10% Gender Nonconforming

2024 Exposure & Access

OUT & ABOUT

Games for Change 2023
NYC CEO Philip Courtney

Advanced Placement Annual Conference Seattle Chief Program Officer Dr. Amy Patterson

Games for Change 2024
NYC Chief Program Officer Dr. Amy Patterson, Alum & Faculty Educator Darcy Gutierrez

Nita M. Lowey 21st C. Summer Symposium SanFran Chief Program Officer Dr. Amy Patterson, Director of National Programs Shannon Moran

ISTELive Denver Professional Learning Specialist Matthew Taylor, Alum & Program Coordinator Wynta Carter

Minecraft Education Battle of the Boroughs Brooklyn CEO Philip Courtney, Alia Jones-Harvey from the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment

Southern University Law Center game design pop-up Faculty Savannah Chapman and Danny Christie

EdUp Podcast CEO Philip Courtney, Cynthia Williams, President, Hasbro's Wizards of the Coast and Hasbro Gaming



BESPOKE FIELD TRIPS

Inside the rooms where it happens.



[Nintendo of America, Seattle](#)



"Visiting Nintendo of America has been a childhood dream of mine & thanks to Urban Arts, I've made so many connections with the staff, interns & feel more confident in continuing to work hard in my career to be a part of the gaming industry."



[Wizards of the Coast, Seattle](#)



"Wizards of the Coast had the most informative talk about networking that I've ever received. Networking was always taught to me in such a cold manner, but they made it so friendly & gave me the courage to get out there & put it to work."

Made possible by our partner **Hasbro**.



Unity "This was cool. I totally want to work here."



WPP Creative Transformation Company



Take-Two Interactive

NBCUniversal

NBCUniversal



Brooklyn studio **Gumbo Collective**



Xbox Tour



THE PALEY
CENTER
FOR MEDIA

Paley Center for Media

CCNY private Admissions talk and tour
The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) National College Fair
Harlem Gallery of Science Video Games: The Great Connector
Unreleased Games Arcade

EXCLUSIVES WORKSHOPS

In animation, college admissions, business, recruitment, founding your studio, game dev and more.



ROKU



NBCUniversal



2024 Financials

(\$ IN THOUSANDS)	FY23 AUDITED	FY24 UNAUDITED
REVENUE		
GOVERNMENT	\$3,828	\$3,462
CORPORATIONS	714	1,218
FOUNDATIONS	760	1,174
INDIVIDUALS	184	176
EARNED REVENUE	1,262	1,156
TOTAL REVENUE	\$6,748	\$7,186
EXPENSES		
PROGRAM	\$4,584	\$4,570
MANAGEMENT	1,035	763
FUNDRAISING	664	1,330
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,283	\$6,663
NET INCOME	\$465	\$523

In FY24, we grew our revenues to \$7.2M (unaudited) representing a growth of 6% over FY23. We increased our Corporate and Foundation support by \$504K and \$414K respectively. This growth reflects ongoing strategic efforts to strengthen relationships and expand the organization’s donor base, especially with strategic partnerships.

Of the total funds raised, 48% were from public sources and 52% from private sources. We achieved a surplus of \$523K which will be invested in future programming.

We spent 74% of our budget on programs, and a combined 26% on fundraising and management. In 2024 we expanded our fundraising and development team to strengthen our efforts and support the growth of our program initiatives.

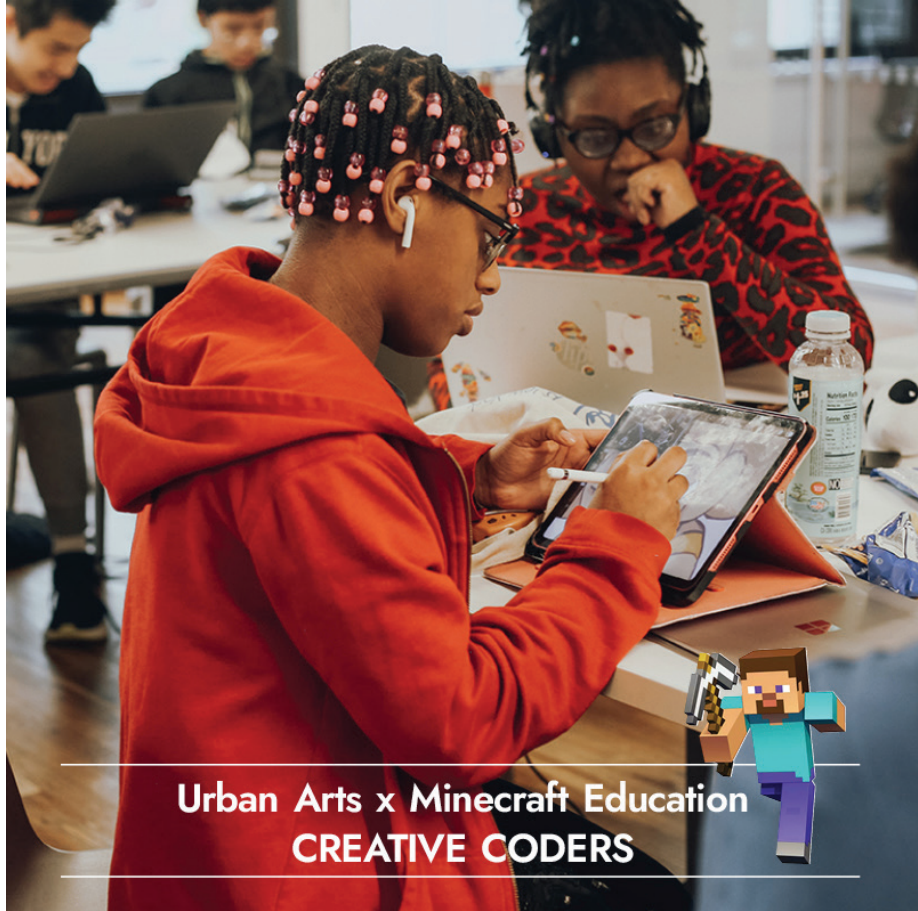
As of June 30, 2024, our Total Net Assets were \$6.6M, with \$6.1M in retained earnings and \$453K in temporarily restricted assets. Our continued financial growth enables us to reach more communities, expand our program offerings, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Urban Arts.



2024 News

Sprint, Spawn, Educate!

Urban Arts is expanding into middle schools with Creative Coders, a rigorous curriculum in partnership with Minecraft Education. Supported by a highly competitive \$4M Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Urban Arts will partner with 70+ schools and 3,450 students over the next four years, encouraging confidence—and futures—in STEAM for diverse students from low-income communities.



Urban Arts x Minecraft Education
CREATIVE CODERS

Creative Coders adapts Urban Arts’ highly successful high school computer science (CS) curriculum to a middle school setting. “Yes, we teach our students to make video games,” says Philip Courtney, CEO of Urban Arts. “Why? Because it’s super-fun, and students are more likely to persist while they learn challenging tech if they get to create a game at the end.” Urban Arts teaches digital game design as a pathway to college and career for underrepresented students.

Minecraft isn’t just a game—it’s a classroom in disguise. States are beginning to introduce mandatory CS programming in schools. Yet effective STEAM initiatives are not widely available, accessible, or engaging, and are particularly limited for underrepresented students from low-income backgrounds. A recent study stressed the importance of expanding CS instruction to middle schoolers before traditionally underserved populations begin to self-select out. Urban Arts bridges that opportunity gap.

“Thinking creatively goes hand in hand with play,” says Dr. Amy Patterson, Chief Program Officer at Urban Arts. “For our students, there’s a great trajectory from playing video games, to modding their favorites, to creating their own through playful programming, artistic design, and strategic storytelling.” Patterson points to the Harvard Business Review, which says games “have an important place in cultivating good strategists” (Reeves & Wittenburg, 2015).

Creative Coders students will design and program their original video games in Minecraft Education as they learn programming basics and skills aligned with CSTA Standards. Laylah Bulman,

Senior Program Manager and Executive Producer at Minecraft Education, says, “Minecraft Education is proud to be the cornerstone of the Creative Coders initiative. By harnessing the immersive power of Minecraft, we’re not just engaging students in coding through video game design, we’re also inspiring them to imagine, design and create their futures. This program empowers teachers and students, fostering a generation of problem solvers equipped with the skills to navigate and shape the digital world.”

**CREATIVE CODERS—
AN ENGAGING,
EFFECTIVE,
AFFORDABLE,
AND SCALABLE PATH
FORWARD FOR
MIDDLE SCHOOL
CS PROGRAMS.**

Creative Coders is accessible to all students and educators licensed to use Minecraft Education, which is included in most Microsoft 365 software subscriptions for schools. Any school that owns these subscriptions has access at no additional charge. “This provides an unprecedented

opportunity for Urban Arts to reach a huge market. For good,” says Philip.

This is Urban Arts’ third EIR grant from the US DOE. Annually, the USDOE receives hundreds of applications and only a fraction get funded. “I love how Urban Arts is leveraging EIR funding to test how game design can be used to expand access to and participation in quality computer science education for all students.” Dr. Sonji Jones-Manson, Management and Program Analyst, US DOE. Teaching historically-underrepresented students digital game development allows them to become creatively and technically confident while they acquire critical career skills like collaboration, project management, and leadership. Through this programming, they get a front row seat to the future economy.

[Download the PDF release here.](#)





NBCU Academy storyteller Maya Brown covered our 2024 Summer Camp [here](#).



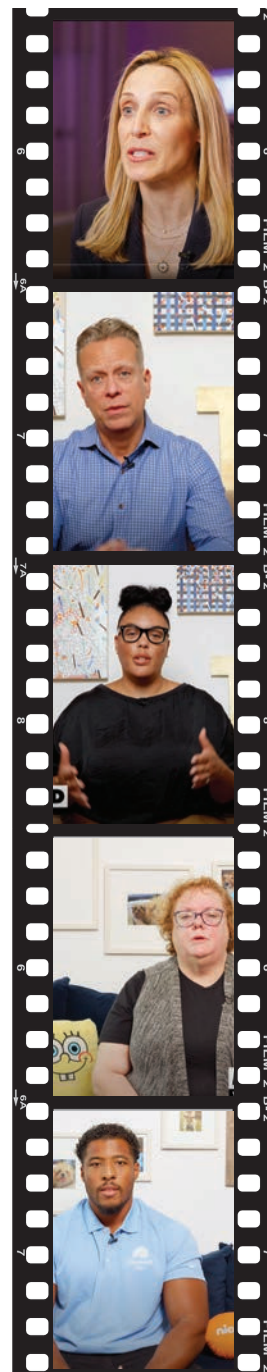
The College Series with CEO Philip Courtney and Director of Post-Secondary Success Joelle Blackstock



Why video games? with Board Member Ellen Flaherty, Director of Learning at Unity Technologies



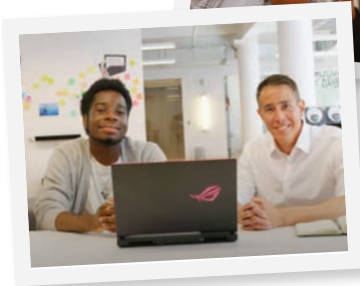
Game Changers! Collab with Wide Angle Youth Media, a media nonprofit in Baltimore. Creative Impact Lab, made possible by Hilary Smith and her team at NBCUniversal, is a signature, award-winning initiative of NBCUnites.



The Partnership Series with NBCUniversal Hilary Smith, Take-Two Alan Lewis, Take-Two Chanel Ward, Paramount Madlyn DelMonte, Paramount Tyler Butler



Mentor Series with Chad Rooco, Jennifer Ashiru, Scott Starrett



Arcade 2024!

The Color Ball 2024

With
Google



NO SLEEP TIL ZIEGFELD!

Join the annual Color Ball to meet our dynamic students IRL and hear their stories directly from them. This high-energy evening is unlike other galas—dinner, drinks, dancing—and no tux needed, just *gucci vibes*.

In 2024, we had another grand slam, raising \$850,000 to support the young people within our programs. Thank you **Google** and Honoree **Reginald McKnight, Global Head of Social Impact at Google**. Thank you lifetime changemakers **The Alfano Freiberg Family** and their son and **Board Member Greg Freiberg**. Thank you Artistic Honoree **Durand Jones**. Congratulations **Irene Leung, Nagler Scholar**. Thank you **Urban Arts Board** who always go far above and far beyond—and the **Creative Professionals Board** who are total pros. We're grateful for the advocacy of such good people.

We're full STEAM ahead for April 10, 2025. Questions? Notes? Jokes? Genevieve King, Director of Philanthropy, at genevieve@urbanarts.org 

Save the Date!

April 10, 2025

The Urban Arts Golf Classic 2024

Sponsored by
PACOA



GOLF FOR GOOD!

Long Island native, local business owner, and all around gem of a guy, Steve Geismar held his annual Urban Arts Golf Classic at Old Westbury Golf and Country Club to benefit our efforts. Steve is a long-time Board Member and his family-owned **PACOA** of Port Washington is the leading wholesaler of building supplies, established in 1969, and sustaining dozens of local employees.

Steve always hits a figurative hole-in-one at The Classic, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to bring critical initiatives to underserved students.

If you've never been, *hit. that. link.* An epic lunch and dinner—lobster tails, tomahawk steaks, cocktails—plus raffles, prizes, student presentations, good cheer—all on the most spectacular greens.

Steve's dedications to leveling the playing field for all is legendary. He has never had a case of the yips.



Join us! June 4, 2025 



Thank You to our Supporters 2024

\$1 MILLION+

US Department of Education
New York City Department of Education

\$250K+

AT&T
Google
KeyBank
New York State Education Department
Unity Technologies

\$100K+

Charles Hayden Foundation
Endless Network
Google Play
William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust
MacMillan Family Foundation
NBCUniversal
NYC Mayor's Office of Media & Entertainment
Pasculano Foundation
Pinkerton Foundation
Riot Games

\$50K+

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PACOA
Paramount Global
Siegel Family Endowment

\$25K+

Booz Allen Hamilton
Elyse & Anthony Dreyer
Global Speedrunning Association
Keith Haring Foundation
Nicholas B. Ottaway Foundation
New York State Council on The Arts
PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers)
Roku
Take-Two Interactive

\$10K+

AEO Foundation
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\$1K+

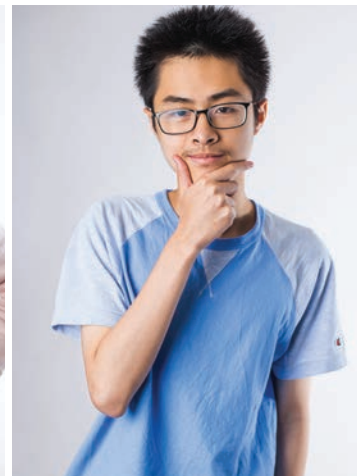
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*Every gift is meaningful.
Urban Arts thanks the many
individuals who gave at every
level benefiting our mission.*



Leadership 2024

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