

*ArtStream, Inc.*  
*Perform Your Art Out*  
Strategic Plan, 2015-2020

## **Mission**

To create artistic opportunities for individuals traditionally underserved by the arts, particularly adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, neurological disorders, health and physical limitations, or other challenges, that include theatre, puppetry, visual arts, multimedia, music, storytelling and dance.

## **Vision**

To expand the programs we have developed over ten years - listed below - in order to meet the strong and growing demand for creative opportunities by individuals with disabilities, for whom there are low expectations, little support, and few opportunities to be engaged and stimulated - once they exit the school system.

*ArtStream's* mission is to engage this large and growing population of young adults and buoy them at this new juncture in life: We aim to challenge them to grow and develop as individuals, and to inspire them to embrace the possibilities of lifelong learning - precisely what we hope for for *all* our children, whether they have a disability or not - by enlisting the magic of the arts. Through acting and performance in supportive and collaborative settings, individuals with disabilities develop the capacities to lessen their social anxiety, to build empathy, to sharpen their communication skills, **and to advocate for themselves.**

1. Each of *ArtStream's* seven Inclusive Theatre Companies (ITCs) engages actors in a communal process, creating original plays that are staged and performed for the public. Professional and amateur actors and musicians collaborate to write scripts based on themes that emerge from the interplay of each participant's ideas, and the talents of directors who hone and shape those ideas into a cohesive story that builds on the particular talents of each actor. This process demands a great deal of the whole ensemble - demonstrating their talents and *abilities*, rather than *disabilities* - and affirms the power of inclusive theatre: not merely for individuals with disabilities, but for the mentors who volunteer their time and energy as well as the artists who assist in shaping and directing the story. What results is more than an engaging piece of theatre. The process itself creates close, nurturing, and novel communities as well.

There is considerable evidence that performance is a very successful means to help people - with and without disabilities - go well beyond their perceived limitations, by engaging, stimulating, and inspiring individuals to undertake challenges they might never have considered at all. Inclusive theatre supports their ongoing development *and* their capacity to see possibilities and act upon them.

2. *ArtStream* also offers leadership programs for adults that, like the ITCs, challenge, encourage and support individuals to expand their own horizons, and in so doing, become more confident as they navigate the social, professional, and personal challenges that are part of independent living. These programs also include community outreach work that encourages students to participate actively in their own communities. Classes include, among others, *Directing and Design*, *Scene and Monologue*, and *Improvisation*. This past year, *ArtStream* introduced new classes that engage and teach individuals social skills, in instructional and party settings.

3. *ArtStream* is also contracted by many organizations in the metro Washington, DC area, as well as on Maryland's Eastern Shore, to provide during- and after-school programs for children and teens; for adults with Down syndrome; for those with Autism Spectrum Disorders, as well as other intellectual disabilities. These community partnerships reach hundreds of children, teens, and adults with disabilities each year through visual arts, drama, music, puppetry, movement, storytelling and advocacy classes. *ArtStream* also offers a combination of ongoing and one-time workshops and classes to these clients throughout the year.

4. In 2010, *ArtStream* began a partnership with the US military that created opportunities for servicemembers rehabilitating at *Walter Reed National Military Medical Center*. *ArtStream* developed therapeutic outlets to help them heal from trauma, and, in many cases, to finesse disabilities acquired in service to our country. Through music, storytelling, visual arts, and creative writing, participants begin to make sense of their war experiences and visualize a new life going forward. In a hospital setting, art sessions can be the only time patients are free to make their own choices. *Allies in the Arts* has since become an invaluable and increasingly *prescribed* intervention for patients by both medical doctors and nurses at *Walter Reed*. *ArtStream's You Are a Work of Art* program, now in its third year, uses similar arts-based activities to improve the coping skills and morale of more than 1,500 nursing personnel, technicians, and medics employed across the *Walter Reed* campus. These programs were natural extensions of *ArtStream's* original *Arts in Healthcare*

program initiated 10 years ago, that includes bedside storytelling sessions for critically ill children in hospital settings.

**Values - This segment is lifted, verbatim, from the SP 2013-18 - Does this belong in a strategic plan? Or elsewhere - as a separate statement of values?**

We believe that people with disabilities have assets that are valuable in the community, senior citizens have important stories to tell, young people want to be valued, and children in hospitals settings benefit from using art to express very grown up experiences. We also believe that creativity is the glue that connects everyone. Our programs honor the full expression of each person's humanity.

The following values will guide all aspects of ArtStream, including Board and staff activities, partnerships and programs:

- ArtStream is an inclusive organization that values diversity, accessibility and cultural sensitivity in all of its endeavors.
- ArtStream practices accountability and acts with integrity. Internally, staff is accountable to the Executive Director who reports to the Board. The Board is accountable to fulfill its fiduciary duty. Externally, staff and Board members are accountable to constituents to deliver on our goals and live by our values.
- ArtStream acts with transparency in all organizational matters.
- ArtStream is open to new ideas and new solutions. Programs aim to be empowering and inspire creativity.
- ArtStream honors the community partnerships it has and seeks to foster relationships with other organizations.
- ArtStream promotes quality and excellence. Programs and products will be practical and relevant, and we will have high standards for our work.

## Strategic Goals - **This is also verbatim from the 2013-18 SP**

**1. To improve and expand ArtStream's communications to attract more attention to the organization and its goals. ArtStream will become known as a national leader in innovative, creative theater and art programs for artists and audiences with and without disabilities.**

### *Objectives*

- a. Redesign the website to include more stories and videos about the actors, mentors, parents, programs, processes and community responses to ArtStream's work. This includes reaching new audiences through reciprocal links and optimizing search engine content.
- b. Strengthen brand recognition for ArtStream, Inc® and Perform Your Art Out®.
- c. Explore new online communication opportunities such as blogging, vlogging and linking to important research or program news from other sources.
- d. Become nationally recognized as a resource in arts education, inclusive theater and hospital work through conference speeches, media, books and workshops.
- e. Create a documentary film about the process of developing an ArtStream Inclusive Original Musical to make this work available to other communities. ArtStream has found a wealth of talent and engaging stories to tell in our work of including people with disabilities in community theater projects.
- f. Start the ArtStream Leadership Institute, a nationally known leadership and communication skills development program, to teach self-advocacy for individuals as well as effective strategies for any group to include people with diverse needs.

**2. To increase and diversify revenue to support ArtStream programs and organizational development.**

### *Objectives*

- a. Develop a 5-year Fundraising Plan to increase and diversify revenue to support ArtStream programs and organizational development.
  - Increase individual contributions.
  - Hire a full time Director of Development to identify and solicit private (foundation) and public sources of grants.
  - Cultivate more corporate sponsorships, some dedicated to specific programs, including sponsors for each inclusive company.
  - Increase earned revenue such as fees for workshops, merchandise sales and licensing of scripts/music to other organizations.

b. Build the capacity of ArtStream to engage in fundraising.

- Identify roles of board, staff and volunteers in fundraising
- Cultivate donors who give every year and encourage planned giving.
- Increase estate giving and gifts of stock.

**3. Strengthen Board, staff, systems and facilities to sustain growth and advance ArtStream goals and programs.**

***Objectives***

- a. Governance: Develop the board's capacity for fundraising, foster greater diversity on the board, increase board's level of engagement and knowledge.
- b. The Board will be made up of 13 – 17 diverse professionals, artists, community leaders and educators.
- c. Increase Advisory Board members to include 15 – 30 individuals providing professional guidance, volunteer support and financial assistance.
- d. Develop Friends of ArtStream, a well-organized volunteer support system for programs, events and trainings.
- e. Increase staff (all with comparable pay and benefits) to include:
  - Executive/Artistic Director
  - Managing Director
  - Director of Development
  - Production/Volunteer Coordinator
  - PR and Marketing Manager
  - Office Manager
  - Director of Community Events
- f. Operations: Improve technology, ensure software is up to date, expand financial management systems, ensure systems are in place to track grant opportunities and reports and purchase camera and editing equipment.

**4. Develop internal programs to ensure ArtStream's growing staff has comprehensive and consistent training.**

***Objectives***

- a. Create comprehensive training programs for all ArtStream, Inc. staff and artists.
- b. Provide opportunities for professional development and support.
- c. Develop comprehensive procedures in areas such as HR, procurement, program evaluations, staff assessments and governance.

**5. Formalize a program evaluation process for existing programs and develop new programs and tools to support ArtStream's mission.**

***Objectives***

- a. Earn Seal of the Standards for Excellence from the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations.
- b. Have an assistant teacher and teacher-in-training for every program so expansion is seamless.
- c. Expand current work with veterans and military personnel at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.
- d. Create a DVD and curriculum manual to teach the process of the Inclusive Companies to set national standards and recognition for the program.
- e. Create a touring troupe made up of Inclusive Company members to raise awareness and educate others about the ArtStream process.
- f. Create a Playwright's initiative model program that shows others how to write for inclusive companies.

Sari's thoughts:

In my opinion, the strategic objectives RIGHT NOW ought to be

1. Targeting grants that would give us funds to:

hire an assistant to Leah so that she can recruit and train MANY new artists to teach ArtStream's varied classes. We cannot meet the demand or dissolve the wait lists BECAUSE WE HAVE A DEARTH OF TEACHING ARTISTS WHO UNDERSTAND THE ARTSTREAM MODEL.

2. expand Super Social Saturday to VA and other MD sites, to build interest in our programs, with a view then to building up the improv, and then the inclusive theatre companies.

3. continue to collaborate with ASP, so that the metrics ASP is developing with Southern Methodist University's Education School, can be adapted and used as metrics for ArtStream's programs. This collaboration is explicit in our proposal to present, with ASP at the VSA meeting in 2016 in Pittsburgh.

4. try out the ArtStream model with the All Stars Project (our VSA partner at the Kennedy Center in 2013; we've applied to present with ASP again in 2016) to see how well our approach generalises to a non ID/DD population.

Such a collaboration - that I would expect to be hugely successful - would make it possible for ArtStream to publicise our model as one that can be emulated elsewhere - whether through a manual (based on Sally Bailey's groundbreaking work - she taught Patti) or ArtStream affiliates elsewhere in the county. This would involve developing a training module, and a marketing strategy to broaden the *ArtStream* brand beyond the DC metro area and Sally's NC operation.

This is a longer term goal that this plan envisages, but the steps would require us to hone and articulate what we do more fully. I imagine this would also involve our applying for education grants, in addition to our arts-based ones.

5. In 5 years, I would want to see greatly expanded offerings of the ITCs in the metro DC area - including Fairfax, and other VA locations, as well as other locations in MD.

I would LOVE to see several ArtStream ITCs in DC as well. None of this is possible without creating the demand for ArtStream through out Super Social Saturdays... and then improv classes... and then, finally, into fully fledged companies.

6. One important fact that probably should appear in the Strategic Plan: the numbers of people with ID/DD/Autism exiting the school system is growing VERY FAST, and the demand for ArtStream's programs is unlikely to diminish. I think figures should be included: special education budgets in the DC metro area - and some indication of the cliff that adults with disabilities face as they exit the school system.

At the rate they are exiting school now, we will likely have a demand for our services even greater than we presently do, but without the capacity to accommodate them.

All the more reason to hone our message to raise the funds, to train and hire the artists, to attract the volunteers and mentors to support the individuals who are interested in what *ArtStream* has to offer.

Please revise the plan I attach as you see fit.

## LEAH'S THOUGHTS 12/22/15

After two years without permanent leadership, the organization should focus on re-stabilizing and building infrastructure which, for many years, has been essentially ignored. We need:

- A clearly defined organizational structure including staff positions, responsibilities and their relationship to one another.
- Expanded staff positions - permanent program assistant; director level positions?; other? - TBD
- Board development
- Committee development
- HR policies
- New website, new database and new registration system
- Computer and phone network
- Volunteer program - recruitment, management, training, manuals, expanded volunteer opportunities, etc.
- Program manual - program models, history of programs, menu of services, curriculum standards and guidelines, program and teacher evaluation tools - with Leah's expected departure in summer 2015, the programs will suffer if we do not have a more formalized structure for program management or a succession plan in place (i.e. program assistant training to take over program manager position)
- Artist training model - 2<sup>nd</sup> assistant teacher and / or assistant in training in every class - requires additional funding - we cannot expand programs without having a teacher training model.
- Arts Administration internship program - interns can work in office and choose a focus - marketing, development, program, etc.
- Artistic vision and an artistic consultant/director who can guide and/or design curriculum for all programs. - We do not currently have anyone on staff that can do this.

Expansion of our programs is important, but we cannot support more or continue to fully support existing programs without building infrastructure. The current day-to-day management of programs is complicated and often involves "putting out fires". The internal systems, or lack thereof, are not sustainable, and it is unrealistic to expand programs over the next five years without first developing legitimate systems for program management, marketing, production, development and overall organizational management. Over the next five years, I firmly believe ArtStream should focus its efforts internally, or the programs and the organization will suffer.