

November 14, 2022

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Eleanor Allen; Pam Brown; Kim Coates-Schofield; Matt DiGilio, Lisa Gaffney; Sari Hornstein; Molly Myers, Darlene Richeson, Irene Stephens, Jonathan Tepper; Sonia Trask

RE: Strategic Plan Goal Proposal

Background:

Using a \$35,000 grant from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC), ArtStream contracted with Penn Creative Strategies (PCS) to create our strategic plan. PCS is a women-owned consulting firm with a diverse team of arts and disability consultants.

PCS and ArtStream formed a Strategic Planning Committee that included Board, staff, and Teaching Artists. PCS led family focus groups and interviewed peer organizations and local partners and stakeholders. The Phase II Report contains the results of the data gathering.

At the September 28, 2022 Board meeting, members approved the set of values developed by the Strategic Planning Committee. These values are described on our website: <https://www.art-stream.org/our-story/mission/>

At a Strategic Planning Retreat on November 3, 2022, Board members began revising and clarifying the Goals recommended by the Strategic Planning Committee. The following assumptions guided the review:

ArtStream believes that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) and autism deserve the opportunity to experience creativity through the performing arts. At ArtStream, the performing arts enhance each person's life.

ArtStream's values of inclusion, collaboration, community and belonging, respect and dignity, self-expression, and trust create a safe space where people with IDDs participate as equals in the performance development process.

Proposal:

Review and approve the following Goals. Potential strategies are included to guide staff as they create measurable objectives that will be approved by the Board at the January 30, 2023 meeting.

Goal 1:

ArtStream will offer performing arts opportunities which engage participants through enjoyable, embodied, and motivating experiences that inspire creativity, imagination, flexibility, self-confidence, and independence. Other skills developed through the arts include the abilities to improvise, listen carefully, self-advocate, and problem-solve, along with growth in self-discipline and improved communication and social skills.

Potential Strategies:

Classes, workshops, Performing Companies, master classes, Traveling Troupe, leadership opportunities

ArtStream will deliver best-in-class programming and ensure that all who want to participate have the means and opportunity to do so

Goal 2:

ArtStream will attract, develop, and inspire a corps of Teaching Artists who believe in ArtStream's values and goals; Teaching Artists who understand, appreciate, and embody the performing arts; who can collaborate well; and who demonstrate a talent for engaging students by building relationships that earn their trust, create a safe space, support their curiosity, and encourage them to explore new paths.

Potential Strategies:

Master Teachers offer coaching and training

Build resource "bank"

Offer regular training opportunities to "fill the tool box" and build relationships

Implement standards of practice or some type of document explaining expectations for TAs and what they can expect from us as an organization, and clarify logistics re locations...what do they need to perform their jobs?

Diversify training not just to arts but for preparation for the ArtStream population (seizures, behavior management, etc.)

Recruitment: word of mouth, their focus, dedication, excitement for what they do is great recruitment tool (offer referral reward for bringing in a new TA?)

Cultivate a strong internal employee/TA culture, particularly in a virtual environment.

Goal 3:

ArtStream will offer opportunities for family engagement to create connections to ArtStream and each other and strengthen the ArtStream community.

Potential Strategies:

New parent sessions led by experienced parents

Cast parties to celebrate performances

Create opportunities to feel part of the creative community that is ArtStream

Goal 4:

ArtStream will affirm the transformative power of performance by increasing reach, visibility, and enrollment for ArtStream programs and performances. ArtStream will reach out to communities that have been marginalized or underserved by the arts, to encourage them to join in to ArtStream's programs and performances.

Potential Strategies:

Describe plan to reach out and build relationships with new partners, identify communities to reach out to

Engage Spanish-language interpreters and provide Spanish-language materials

Provide sign language interpretation at performances

Forge intentional partnerships to ensure a diversity of participants

List of organizations that could help and broaden relationships, partnerships...increase participants and funding

Government entities pertinent to the people we serve – county councils, legislators, congress (Van Hollen, Leggett)

Media, Chambers of Commerce, Rotary

Developmental Disability organizations in each county

Hispanic organizations in counties – need to be working toward this

Local advocacy groups

Faith-based organizations and churches

American Legion, Fraternal organizations (% of slot machine funding has to go to charities)

Arts organizations

MoCo media

Radio

Emphasize scholarship availability

Goal V:

ArtStream will encourage and foster strong organizational capacity to maximize revenue streams for long term sustainability.

Potential Strategies:

ArtStream should establish competitive program fees to strengthen and grow operations.

ArtStream should create a culture a culture of philanthropy where all constituencies (Board, staff, Teaching Artists, families and supporters) feel supported to grow the base of individual, corporate, foundation and government donors.

ArtStream will grow its base of contributed income from families, individuals, corporations/private sector, and foundations to ensure it can keep its program fees affordable

Give/get/look for opportunities.

Define giving opportunities to inspire support.

Identify new ideas for fundraising.

Goal VI:

ArtStream will foster strong organizational capacity by developing a collaborative work environment for staff that leverages their talents and expertise.

Potential Strategies:

ArtStream will use best business practices to attract and maintain highly qualified staff.

Additional suggestions/topics for further discussion:

- Create a formal staff orientation process/handbooks, etc.
- Keep programs accessible and financially affordable.
- ArtStream needs a stronger focus on marketing to raise the visibility of the tremendous impact it has on participants' lives, which will help attract new families to its work.
- Scholarships – what is our policy? How are they awarded?
- Keep staff morale high, keep organization strong and well-funded.

Highlights from the Phase II Report:

Feedback from Data Gathering

January 18, 2021



Systems That Affect Those You Serve

Many people with an I/DD diagnosis participate in **respite programs, day habilitation programs** and/or **residential facilities**. These programs represent untapped potential partnerships for ArtStream, given its unique focus on this population.



Additionally, **transportation** is a persistent issue for families of people with I/DD – often requiring a parent or family member to be available to transport the participant to and from enrichment or vocational programs.

Family Member Focus Group Questions

What global or societal trends or issues at play today do you think affect people with I/DD and in what ways?

What is your most important need or objective and how can ArtStream help you realize it?

If ArtStream were able to change two things in its mission in the next 6 months, what two things would create the most value for you?

Which of those issues might affect ArtStream and in what ways?

What criteria will you use to assess whether ArtStream's contribution to your work or life has been successful?

What if any systemic barriers have made it difficult for ArtStream to fulfill your needs and expectations?

Feedback from Family Focus Groups

“Art can give them an opportunity to explore their dreams, creativity and their metaphors. In a sense, while it's recreation and arts participation it's also a way for them to explore meaning through metaphor.”

“Artstream is an essential part of our son's life. It's almost as if they are part of his family.”

“It would be nice if there were more theater companies drawing from smaller geographic areas so that travel times were reduced and there was an opportunity to socialize with theater participants nearby”

Preliminary Findings - Strengths

ArtStream is in a strong financial position, especially because unlike many of its colleagues, it does not have its own space weighing down the financial model.

Families feel ArtStream's programs have a huge impact on their family members, increasing social skills, self-confidence and providing a sense of belonging.

Colleagues noted ArtStream's rapid shift to digital to keep the community together – they “didn't miss a beat.”

They also praised that ArtStream combines people with I/DD with people who do not have I/DD in some of their programs. That is a benefit to everyone.

Preliminary Findings - Opportunities

- Program expansion – hybrid/virtual positions
ArtStream well to expand programming (possibly in conjunction with partner organizations that serve those with I/DD in different ways). This could also provide an opportunity to diversify ArtStream's fee structure.
- Parents want to get more involved and expressed a desire to be more connected to each other through ArtStream's programs
- Parents want to commit to longer term registrations for ArtStream's programs

Parent Focus Groups:

What is your/your family member's most important need and how can ArtStream help you realize it?

- Build more social skills / socialization.
- Build more community.
- Belonging.
- Improve listening skills.
- Inclusion and self esteem.
 - Working as a team - overcoming challenges together.
 - Extending programs beyond acting and cabaret. Adding workshops to learn other elements of theatre such as; set building, costumes, stage management, lighting, sound, singing, vocal projection etc.

Parent Focus Groups:

If ArtStream were able to change two things with its programs within the next six months, what two things would create the most value and benefit for you?

Program Expansion:

- More depth in summer programs.
- Meld acting and cabaret - so singing and acting could be taught together.
- Maybe offer a winter show.
- Ability to rehearse in person. Having a social Saturday in more locations. More depth in Fall programs also.
- Dance class (+2) - teaching a type of dance, learning choreography
- They were doing social programming with role play - that was really good - bring that back!
- A chorus or additional singing class or dancing class.
- Expand programs into upper Montgomery county.
- Add another social group during the week.

Parent Focus Groups:

**If ArtStream were able to change two things with its programs within the next six months, what two things would create the most value and benefit for you?
(Continued)**

Opportunities to participate:

- Making sure everyone gets to participate when they rehearse.
- Other performance opportunities.
- Encourage actors to participate in different programs/troupes, rather than staying in the same one for years on-end.

Parent / Family Involvement:

- Have the directors meet occasionally with the participant's parents/guardian to learn of the parents' concerns.

Ease Sign Up Process:

- Improve the signup process so that you do not have to do it monthly (or keep a credit card on file so it can roll through the months)
- **Fix communication problems.**
- **Redo Website**

Parent Focus Groups:

Are there longer term changes that ArtStream should consider?

“It would be nice if there were more theater companies drawing from smaller geographic areas so that travel times were reduced and there was an opportunity to socialize with theater participants nearby”

Program Expansion:

- Add companies in order to keep size ‘doable’ (small enough to promote greater participation).
- More advertising in Arlington/Falls Church/DC to gain participation. ● Engage or beef up communications with the Arlington PEP program and the Fairfax program to advertise more to those young adults “coming of age” to join - 18.
- Rather than have two companies meet in Alexandria, consider having each company meet separately in different parts of N.Va. This would reduce travel and allow friendships developed to extend beyond rehearsals.

Parent Focus Groups:

Are there longer term changes that ArtStream should consider? (continued)

Opportunities to participate:

- Geographic distance makes it hard to participate in more programs.
 - Love to have a Cabaret group in Fairfax.
- Figure out how to mix up the casts/troupes so that there is more variety and challenge in working with new people.
- More acting troupes, so that the wait is not years for some. More publicity.
- Same people get the leads year after year
 - Theatre Company very expensive, but also becomes the same after a while. Figure out how to mix those up more.

Financial Conclusions:

ArtStream had a strong fiscal performance in 2020 and is building on those strengths for future years. Among its peers, it has more assets and a more flexible expense composition, positioning it well for growth and future investments. It is recommended that ArtStream continue to increase and protect its financial health along with its growth objectives.

This is supported by:

1. Continue managing to a surplus budget position. Creating 1-3 months of liquidity each year will help protect ArtStream when unforeseen challenges occur.
2. Manage the Reserve's use and replenishment.
3. Continue diversifying its revenue strategies through efficient program expansion (program fees), collaborations, and alignment with foundation strategies (e.g., Inclusion in the Arts, Independent Living Skills achieved through Arts programming.)
4. Prioritize replacing its fully depreciated equipment by referencing the depreciation schedule and using surveys, and then incorporate those costs into future budgets.