

VIBE^{ARTS}

Spark creativity. Spark potential.



2021 Annual Report



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VIBE ARTS

230 - 401 RICHMOND ST W
TORONTO, ON M5T 2N9
416 - 929 - 9314

VIBE

About VIBE



VIBE Arts operates at the intersection of arts and belonging. We know that not everyone has access to the arts; this is felt especially by people who live outside of the urban core. Members of equity-seeking groups including newcomer Canadians, racialized young people, Indigenous youth, the LGBTQ+ community and individuals living in poverty face complex barriers. VIBE works directly within these communities to involve thousands of people each year in free arts experiences.

We bring young people together to collaborate in safe and accessible spaces and tap into the creative potential that lies in every corner of our province. VIBE programs develop life-long skills, nurture community connections and spark creativity. Together, we work to realize a future where every young person is equipped to contribute creatively to society.

MISSION

To work collaboratively with partners in under-resourced communities to create a lasting impact on the lives of young people through arts education programming.

VISION

Vibrant communities where young people express themselves artistically and use their creativity and leadership to engage fully in community.

MANDATE

Bring the power of community and creativity to the children and youth of the GTA.

Stay in touch

@VIBEArtsTO
vibearts.ca

ARTS



Welcome to our 2021 Annual Report

A year that was supposed to be a year of recovery, continued to be a year of perseverance. Despite this, VIBE Arts' vision of vibrant communities where young people express themselves artistically and use their creativity and leadership to engage fully in their community has never wavered. A big part of this was thinking about how we defined community. Traditionally it can be looked at in a purely geographical sense, but at VIBE it has grown to be full of meaning, solidarity, and hope.

We work with communities of people who are living on the margins, those who may face systemic barriers, racialized communities, newcomer communities, hospital communities, school communities and more. We know these communities were hit harder by COVID-19 than others. So we deliberately worked to connect with people who couldn't be close in proximity but who share our definition of community.

In a time of need, programs shifted to online, whether that meant VIBE Bloom sessions facilitated by our talented and ready roster of artists, or streaming directly into the place these participants are through the set up of a projector and iPads. Our determination to provide the same level of arts programming never changed during these times of uncertainty. This same determination was the driving force to ensure

support to our emerging artists was not disrupted.

Mentorship programs like NEXt, Desire Lines, and our newly added LaunchPAD have seen great support from our community of supporters, such as yourself and have built a foundation for young diverse artists to be the next generation of artistic and creative leaders.

The team at VIBE Arts witnessed first-hand the value of finding your community in a particularly dark time. It is what has held us together and what will bring us through as we all navigate a new normal. As Ontario begins to open up, we will take these lessons and continue to apply them to our work. Ensuring that those who may not find a community close to home can be connected through arts and creativity to a community they see themselves in. Using the arts as a vehicle to connect people, tell stories, break down barriers and envision new futures is what we are all about and we are excited to see in what ways this next year will allow us to do just that.

We thank you again for your continued support on this journey. We are comforted knowing that we are all in this together.

Katie & *Onika*

Katie Hutchinson,
Executive Director

Onika Powell,
Artistic Director



A word from our Board of Directors

Hello Friends,

What a year it's been for us all and especially here at VIBE! Just when we thought 2020 was hard enough we got hit with more lockdowns and more waves of COVID-19 across the country. More than ever we've all come to realize the importance of connections and community. That's why the arts are so important, not just now but always. The arts have the unique power to bring people together even when we have to be physically distant.

This past year VIBE has found a way to continue to make programming exciting, rewarding and accessible to children, youth, and emerging artists across the GTA. In fact, 2020/21 actually saw an increase in the number of participants, sessions, and program types across VIBE. This year participants took part in hundreds of hours of live Bloom sessions, created murals across the city, danced in their homes, received mentorship opportunities from professionals, and so much more. This is an incredible achievement which cannot be overstated.

As a Board of Directors it's our job to set the strategic direction for the organization, provide oversight, and ensure that the organization is complying with both its stated goals and its fiduciary responsibilities. And it should be said that the team at VIBE makes it easy for us. The team's commitment to the organization and the power of art to transform lives is palpable - even through a zoom screen.

Thank you for an amazing 2020/21.

Clare Hacksel,
Board Chair

Board of Directors

The VIBE Arts Board of Directors fundraise, advise, govern, oversee policy and strategic direction and assist with the leadership and promotion of VIBE Arts.

Each board member brings unique experience to assist VIBE in achieving our goals.



CLARE HACKSEL,
CHAIR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF CHOICE IN
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NISH SHAH,
VICE-CHAIR

VICE PRESIDENT,
STRATEGY AT
INITIATIVE
MARKETING



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**FATIMA
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OF MAZAVA



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COO AT KNIX



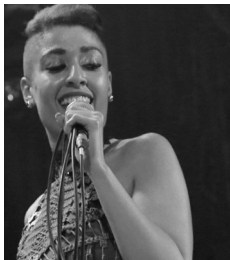
**JOHN
ARMSTRONG,**
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CEO AND FOUNDER
OF ARMSTRONG
PARTNERSHIP LP



**DWAYNE
MORGAN,**
DIRECTOR

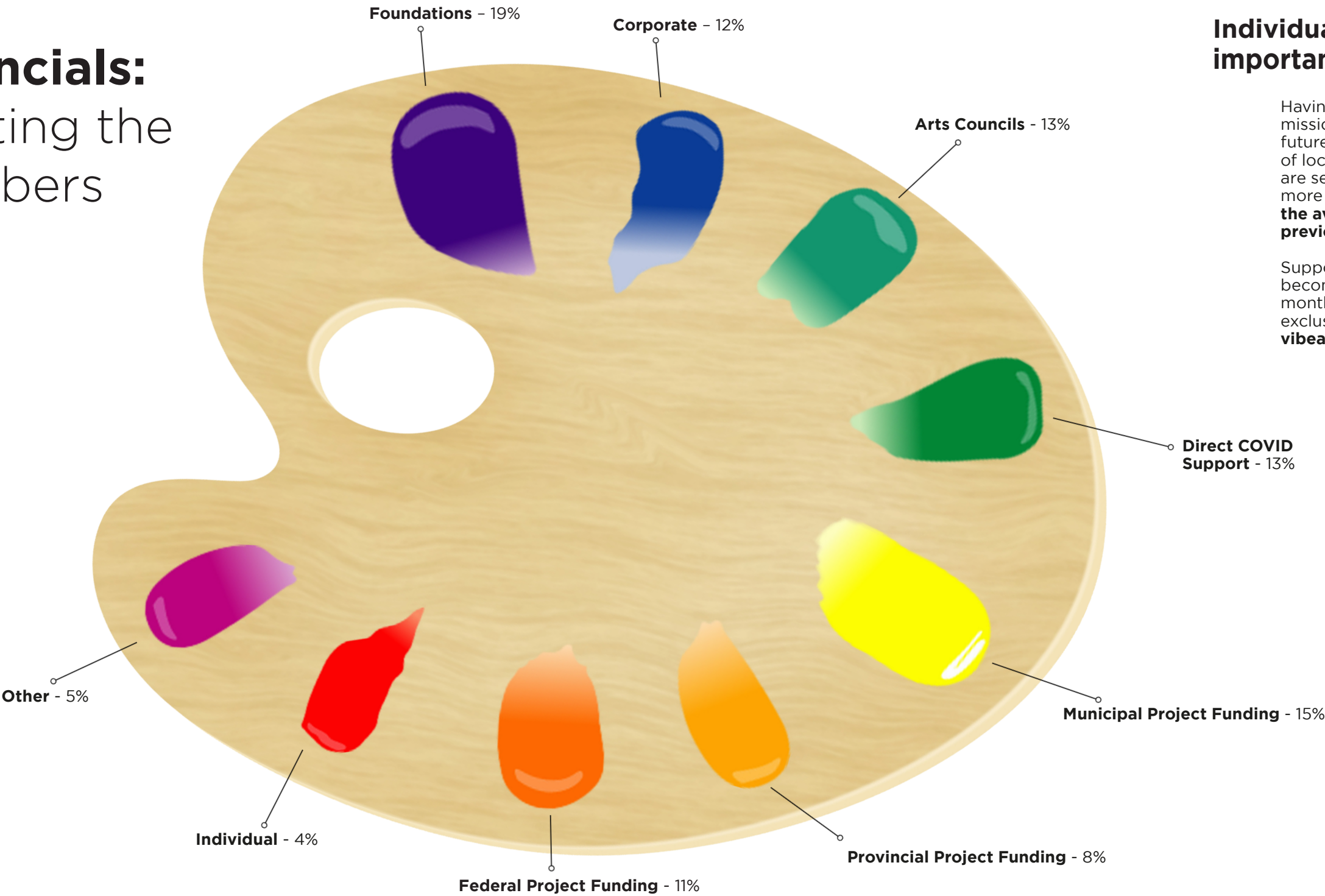
WRITER, PERFORMER,
AND AUTHOR



TESSA GOODEN,
DIRECTOR

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY
ARTIST AND
FUNDRAISING GURU

Financials: Painting the Numbers



Individual donors—an important part of the picture

Having individuals who support and invest in our mission helps VIBE create a foundation for the future of our organization. This year in the face of lockdowns and isolation, individual donors are seeing how accessible arts programing is more important than ever before. With their help, **the average gift increased by 47% from our previous fiscal year.**

Support our work by making a donation or by becoming an VIBE Arts Advocate – a committed monthly donor who champions our work. Receive exclusive news, VIBE swag and event invites! vibearts.ca/donate

Thank you to our Arts Advocates:

Clare Hacksel
Colleen Hayman
John Armstrong
Katie Saunoris
Lianne Doucet
Olivia Marshman
Tessa Gooden

Thank you to our outstanding supporters:

Chistopher Southam
Danny Cappe
Kyung Min Son
Lauren Bates
Natasha Tacchi
Penny Fine
Ron Lebi
Serena Richardson and Kurt Weinheimer



5,000+
Program participants

Since the onset of COVID-19, VIBE has pivoted to engage people of all ages through direct-to-community digital programming

107
Artists engaged

107 artists were given employment opportunities through our programming

980
Art-Making Workshops

This year we offered 980 arts education workshops to children, youth and seniors to keep them creative, connected and engaged

140
Mentorship & Professional Development Workshops

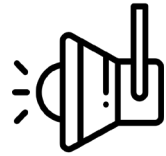
Emerging artists recieved 140 mentorship and professional development sessions to expand their skills and artistic practice

80+
Community Partners

We worked with over 80 community partners across Ontario to deliver high-quality digital programming

Artist Spotlight:

Desiree Mckenzie



VIBE: Tell us about yourself!

DM: I'm Desiree Mckenzie, an Indo-Caribbean and Black spoken word poet, photographer and teaching artist from Brampton, now based in Toronto!

I've been performing and writing spoken word poetry for the last 6 years. I was heavily involved in slam poetry for a while, and in 2019 I won the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word. In 2020, I represented Toronto at the Women of the World Poetry Slam in Dallas, Texas.

Through the pandemic, I've been able to get involved with organizations like VIBE as a teaching artist bringing spoken word to different youth and communities. Most recently, I've taken my spoken word to commissioned work with clients like Clearbanc Financial, CBC, and Home Depot.

In March of 2021, with the help of VIBE, I released my first EP of spoken word called Wet Hair, now available on all streaming platforms!

VIBE: When did you join the VIBE roster of Emerging Artists?

DM: I joined the VIBE roster in 2020. I was super excited to be part of such an incredible group of artists making an impact.

VIBE came into my life at a super uncertain, scary time during the pandemic where I wasn't sure what my future as an artist would look like, and I'm so grateful for that.

I heard of VIBE from ads and callouts for artists for the NExT program, and the rest is history!

VIBE: You were part of the NExT program, and you're now an artist in our Desire Lines program, too. In your own words, how would you best describe both programs?

DM: The NExT program is a place for Black youth artists to grow with the help of mentors, and gain valuable experience bringing their work to life in a gallery format. Through various artist development workshops, we learned the tools to better speak to our work, and express our ideas in a professional and authentic manner.

Desire Lines gives artists a chance to not only showcase their work on a large scale (on the TTC) with the help of established artists and development workshops; but also take their learnings as an artist and give back to their community through creating a their own program of workshops to help others in a given artform.

Both programs are an incredible opportunity to realize our full potential as artists, and through mentorship and guidance from the VIBE staff and mentors, we can see the full scope of where our gifts can take us.

VIBE: In what ways do you feel you have grown from participating in these programs?

DM: NExT helped me to work on my ability to coordinate, plan and execute a project from start to finish. I had also never experimented with photography or music before NExT but the program challenged me to find ways to incorporate that into my poetry, and use them in tandem to tell the story I did through my



EP, *Wet Hair*.

Through my mentorship with Tony Gebrehiwot, I was able to not only learn how to use a camera, but how to really capture the images I had in my mind and make them real for others to see. Tony's guidance was key in this and I'm so grateful for the mentorship I received as it still impacts my photography now.

The Desire Lines program has only confirmed and helped me continue practicing what I learned from NExT. I was able to take a poem that I had, and translate it through photography, and (another new exploration of mine) painting! I worked with mentors Britta B and Anique Jordan, who are artists I've always admired and got amazing advice from. I had never tried to use those two mediums together, but pushed what I could do with my first love, poetry, into new realms to hopefully reach even more people. Both programs have really challenged me to extend how I use poetry to express myself, and have opened so many new possibilities to express myself.

VIBE: What was your greatest achievement or favourite part of the programs?

DM: I would say for both the NExT Program and Desire Lines, my greatest achievement would be experimenting with different artforms like photography. I had always sort of been intimidated by it and didn't know how to go about it along with my poetry. In terms of my art, I always felt like I couldn't be a visual person...I was just a 'words' person. But both programs have shown me how I'm both, and can explore anything that can push those words further and give them life beyond the page and my voice.

VIBE: You're coming back to the NExT program as a Mentor for the new cohort of artists. What are you most looking forward to in the Mentor role?

DM: The opportunity to mentor the new cohort of artists is such an honour and so exciting.

I would not be where I am without the help of the mentors in my life, who invested in me and wanted to see me succeed.

Being a mentor means you get to help guide them to accomplishing their goals, and ones they haven't even realized are possible yet. Also, especially for Black artists this is huge as we continue to seek and

carve out our own spaces of representation where our stories are told.

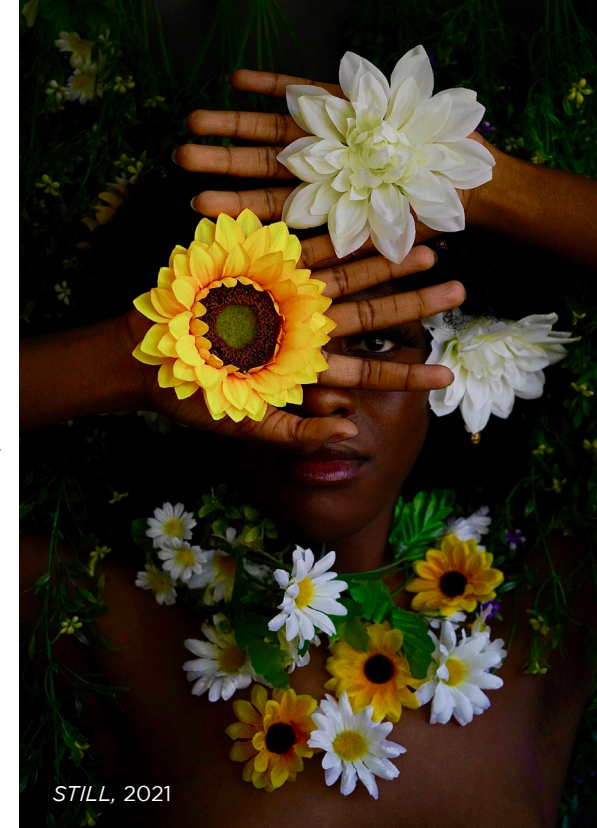
VIBE: What other programs or projects have you been involved with while being part of the VIBE roster?

DM: I've participated in ResilienTOgether's 2021 online exhibit and the Queen West Art Crawl. These are both really awesome opportunities where I got to showcase my work to audiences who may not have seen it or come across it otherwise.

VIBE: What importance has arts education had on your life?

DM: Arts education is so important, and I can say that my love of the arts came from what I learned in drama class, music class and art class. From there, that education helped shape who I am, and what I believed I was capable of. I think that's a huge part of why it's key for the communities VIBE serves - our education system is not one size fits all, and the arts gives youth a chance to express themselves in the way they feel compelled to, not told to.

Even if a student doesn't become a professional artist- they still have the background to know how to express themselves as a tool for healthy coping, and mental health.



STILL, 2021

VIBE: What's next for you?

DM: I'm currently in the process of finalizing my Desire Lines artwork, and accompanying poem called "Coping In Colour" which speaks to my struggle with mental health stigma as a person of colour.

I'm also working on developing my Desire Lines workshop, which will be an artist development program for folks over 25, who want to learn how to execute their artistic dreams who haven't had a chance to.

I've also recently completed a program of workshops for frontline workers on poetry as a healing tool for trauma, and hope to continue this in 2022.

VIBE: Is there anything you would like to say to an artist or VIBE supporter who is reading this?

DM: VIBE is amazing! The people, the initiatives... when you don't believe in yourself, they believe in you, and that means the world. Thank you VIBE for letting me make dope stuff.

@desireemckenzie
desireemckenziepoetry.com



I KNOW, 2021

Program Highlights:

Bringing Digital Programming to Care Settings

Throughout the pandemic, VIBE has been called on to assist front-line organizations by delivering arts programming to bring joy and combat isolation to Ontario's most vulnerable children, youth, and seniors including those living in long-term care, shelters, correction centres and hospitals. We continue to keep these populations engaged, connected and creative.



Emily's House, Toronto

Though the program was originally scheduled in person, we pivoted to actualize our first ever remotely created mosaic mural. This meant that the children and families who use Emily's House services were able to create the works from the comfort and safety of their homes. These families found themselves even more isolated due to the risk COVID held for their critically ill children. This project was a light in a dark time.

Emily's House is Toronto's only hospice for children and families facing life-threatening illnesses. Featuring a home-like, comforting environment, it is a place of compassion, care, comfort, laughter, learning and play.

VIBE artist Cristina Delago guided participants through five mosaic-making workshops over Zoom. Each of the 23 participants received an art-making kit including a 12" x 12" wooden board and a rainbow of 1" glass tiles in order to create their designs.

The theme for the project was "A Special Place for Kids". This project allowed the children to think about Emily's House and what made it special to them. The individual pieces they created have been installed as a collaborative work and will live on in the lobby of Emily's House, leaving a physical representation of them in the space for other children and families to experience.

"A Special Place for Kids" is made possible by the generous support of the Ralph M. Barford Foundation.



Kipling Acres Long Term Care, Etobicoke

Seniors have been experiencing a high level of isolation and anxiety during the pandemic. Relegated to their room in a long term care home or their own home, they are cut from the community, and the lack of movement jeopardizes their mental and physical health. Many of these seniors also have low levels of comfort using digital technology, further limiting their access to the outside world.

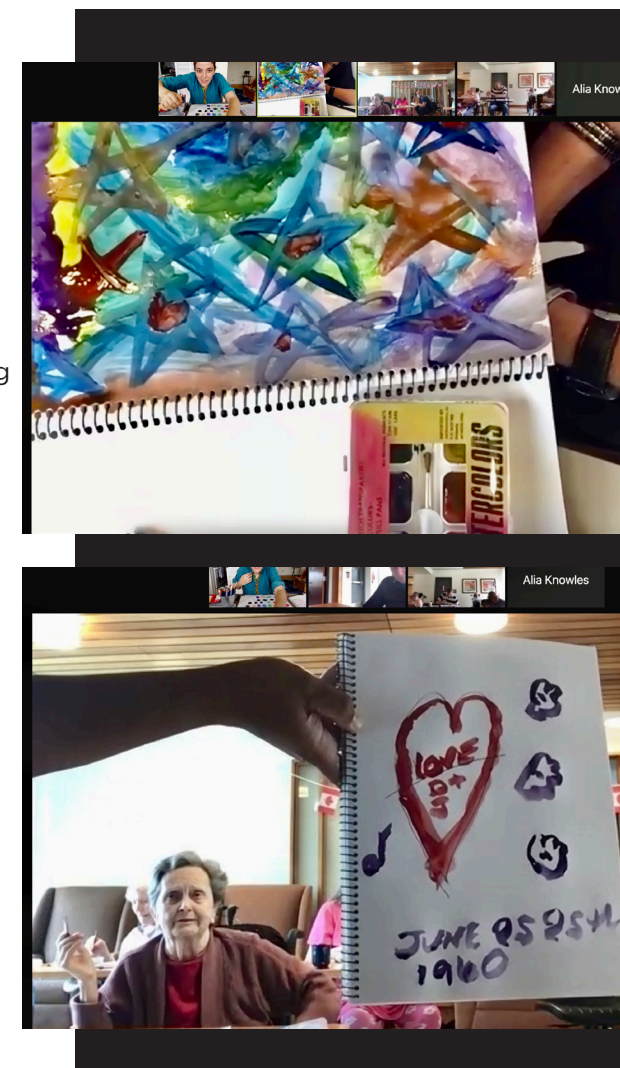
Tackling this problem, VIBE Arts brought a cost-free digital arts program to where the need was most acute:

Kipling Acres, a long term care home in Rexdale, a neighbourhood experiencing high levels of poverty.

All together, 130 seniors living in care and out-patients at Kipling Acres participated in Adaptive Movement, Drawing & Painting and African Drumming programs.

These programs created safe and accessible spaces for seniors to connect with others, spark creativity and joy, and increase social and communal connectedness.

Made possible by:



Healthcare has been at the front of everyone's mind. What has been overlooked however are those who are in healthcare facilities for long-term stays unrelated to COVID-19. This year VIBE Arts worked closely with mental health inpatient units to bring colour and opportunities for self-expression, confidence building and creative

connection to those who were even further isolated as a result of COVID-19.

Youth at **Humber River Hospital** took part in an online beatmaking program, mixed-media and watercolour program and created a collaborative mural that brightens up their common room.

The young women at **North York General Hospital's** Eating Disorder Clinic received engaging painting and drawing classes multiple times a week. These programs were seen as a highlight of their week and a break from isolation.

Community Arts from East to West

This year, with support from The City of Toronto, we were able to create art-making opportunities for communities in Scarborough and Etobicoke that resulted in two large-scale public art pieces.



The Wishing Garden

This summer, VIBE Arts employed five youth artists and involved the local community to create a permanent mural at East Scarborough Storefront. “The Wishing Garden” was led by artist Frannie Potts. Leo Dean, Jade Kent, Sylvie Stojanovski and Joaquin Varela worked alongside Frannie and the East Scarborough Storefront community to create this colourful mural.

See “The Wishing Garden” for yourself on the west side of the East Scarborough Storefront building at 4040 Lawrence Avenue East.

This project is presented in partnership with StreetARToronto.

StreetARToronto 

 **East Scarborough Storefront,**
Scarborough



The Heart of the Nest

In July, VIBE Arts engaged community members in Etobicoke through a series of art-making and story-telling workshops in The Heart of the Nest.

Through a series of free, online art-making and story-telling workshops this July led by professional VIBE artist, arts educator and Etobicoke resident, Akshata Naik, with assistance from VIBE Emerging Artist Natalie ‘Rare’ Chattargoon, community members in Eatonville and Rexdale shared over 100 stories of community and made art. These birdhouses reflect what home means to them, and how this meaning has evolved in a pandemic, migration and memories of one’s journey home.

The birdhouses were brought together by Akshata in a culminating piece, which was on display throughout September and October at Montgomery’s Inn in Etobicoke, to share the participants’ stories in conversation with one another in a colourful collaborative sculpture.

The Heart of the Nest is a City of Toronto Cultural Hotspot Signature Project.

 **TORONTO**

 **Montgomery’s Inn,**
Etobicoke



2022

Strategic
Focus



Empowerment



Supporting BIPOC Emerging Artists



Adaptability to Digital

Creating connection,
connecting creativity

01. Empowerment

Using art as the vehicle, we will create opportunities for young people to find their voice, share their stories and find empowerment in the arts. Whether that's a kindergartener able to express themselves with paint or a 23 year old emerging hip hop artist, we are dedicated to creating opportunities to empower young people to be their most authentic selves.

02. Supporting BIPOC Emerging Artists

Using our learned experiences through our focused mentorship programs, we have built an understanding of the barriers that are facing young BIPOC artists. We will focus our mentorship and emerging artist training programs on these young people and address, remove and challenge these sectoral and systemic barriers along the way.

03. Adaptability to Digital

During the COVID-19 pandemic, VIBE quickly changed the delivery model of programs and internal work structures to ensure our team could continue working and our programs continued to reach the people we seek to serve. We now know that digital programming and remote work will be part of our ongoing model. We will continue to develop ways to reach those near and far digitally, while continuing to leverage our vast partner networks to deliver programs directly to and in communities that need it most.

to our donors, funders, sponsors, volunteers, community and corporate partners for their continued, meaningful support.



**Thank you to our
Impact Partners:**

Carnival of Artists
Daydream x RAD
Little Tweet Apparel
May Flowers
NOGU
Peaceful Painters
Sip & Sketch Night
The Nomadic Pine
Quartz & Canary

These small businesses and organizations are making a difference by donating part of their proceeds to VIBE.

Interested in becoming an Impact Partner?
Visit **vibearts.ca/fundraise**



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VIBE Arts

2021 Impact Report



For inquiries, please contact:

Katie Hutchinson, Executive Director

katie@vibearts.ca

416-929-9314 x109

230-401 Richmond St. W.

Toronto, ON M5V 3A8

vibearts.ca

info@vibearts.ca

[@VIBEArtsTO](https://www.instagram.com/VIBEArtsTO)

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