

Is The  
Place  
To Be

# ANNUAL REPORT

2022







# EVOLUTION & GROWTH

## PERSEVERANCE AND ADAPTABILITY DURING A TIME OF TRANSITION

During the 2021-22 fiscal year, Storycatchers Theatre continued to navigate the ever-changing environment created by the pandemic while conducting a search for a new leader for our healing-centered creative youth development programs. Following the departure of our remarkable founder, Meade Palidofsky, in August of 2021, we took the time to reconceive the role of artistic director. This required a thorough, thoughtful approach, and I am proud of the result. In August of 2022, we hired Lee Peters as Storycatchers Theatre's first Director of Arts Education Programs. Lee brings a wealth of arts education experience to Storycatchers, and I can't wait to see how our phenomenal teaching artists will flourish under his leadership.

As you will read in the following pages, those exceptional teaching artists have continued their unflagging support of youth at all stages of court involvement. No matter where we meet them in the system, Storycatchers is always ready to provide support while amplifying and elevating the voices of young people who have important stories to tell. And while helping them tell those stories, we also prepare them to envision and pursue futures of their own choosing.

Storycatchers Theatre envisions a system truly dedicated to justice. We work to ensure that every young person impacted by the carceral state has sufficient resources to bloom and grow.



Kendra J. Freeman  
Chair, Storycatchers Board of Directors

# COMMUNITY NEED

**At Storycatchers Theatre, we dedicate all of our resources to meeting the needs of adolescents and young adults who have been impacted by the carceral state.**

We recognize that the carceral state includes but is not limited to formal incarceration. A carceral state encompasses overarching ideologies and practices that lead to tangible and intangible practices that shape and organize society in highly discriminatory ways. The adolescents and young adults with whom we work have predominantly grown up in communities shaped by decades of structural racism, government disinvestment, and generational poverty. They have enormous potential but face numerous, complex obstacles that they should not have to navigate alone.

We first began working with youth in secure facilities in 1990, and our methodology evolved in direct response to their desire to share their stories. In the years since, one thing has remained clear – these are stories that deserve – and demand – to be heard.







# IMPACT ON INCARCERATED YOUTH

During the past year, our access to in-person engagement steadily increased. The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice restored our access to the Illinois Youth Centers in Chicago and Warrenville, and our teaching artists joyfully resumed in-person sessions – barring the occasional Covid-19 outbreak. While the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center remained closed to non-essential personnel, our allies there worked diligently with us to ensure ongoing remote engagement. In the past 12 months, we have been able to resume live performances for small groups at Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice facilities while working with the youth at the Detention Center to generate recordings and written anthologies of youth-created scenes and songs. We share our partners' commitment to the health and well-being of detained and incarcerated youth and anticipate ongoing resumption of in-person activities while exploring digital alternatives as needed.

## AUDIENCES:

**49**  
IN-PERSON

**17**  
DIGITAL

**170**

YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

**221**

SESSIONS

(148 in person, 73 remote)

**9**

LIVE PERFORMANCES

**1**

DIGITAL PERFORMANCES



  
**31**

YOUNG PEOPLE  
EMPLOYED

**131**

SESSIONS  
(88 in person, 43 remote)

**6**

IN-PERSON  
PERFORMANCES

**45**

YOUTH  
AUDIENCE MEMBERS

**65**

ADULT  
AUDIENCE MEMBERS



# IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

Our Changing Voices jobs program employs young people returning home to Chicago in a creative youth development, job readiness curriculum. The program was designed to employ groups of 21 youth for 30 hours per week in eight-month increments. Since March 2020, we have adjusted the enrollment period and reduced the number of youths employed in each cohort to mitigate the limitations imposed by the pandemic.

Each Changing Voices ensemble member commits to the creative process while learning critical life and job skills and leaves our program with individualized action plans to pursue next-step employment and/or education opportunities. During the 2021-22 program year, Changing Voices graduated two separate cohorts, one in September 2021 and the other in June 2022.

**GRADUATED TO NEXT  
STEP OPPORTUNITIES:**

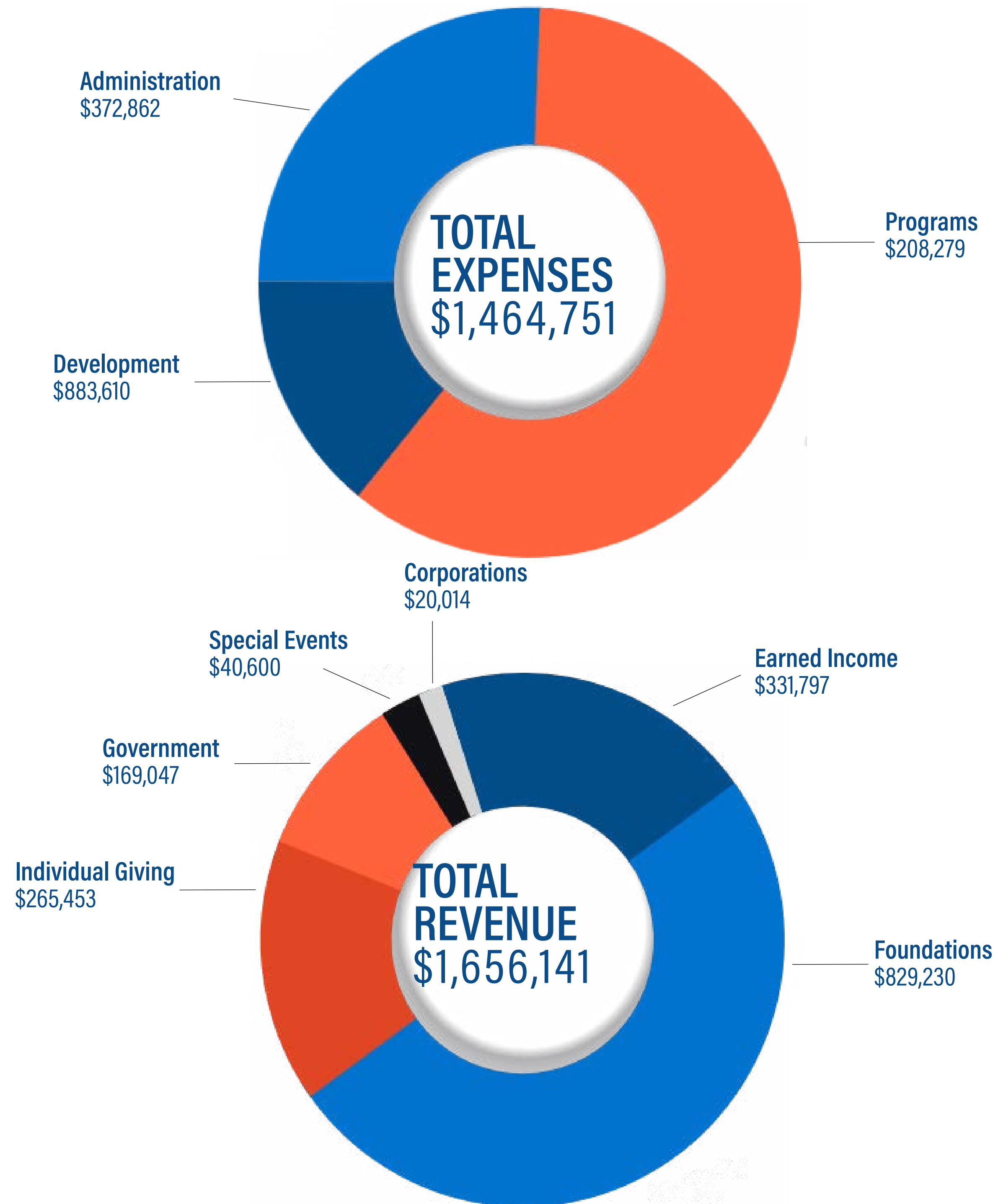
**14**

SEPTEMBER 2021

**7**

JUNE 2022

# 2022 FISCAL YEAR





A person with dark dreadlocks is seen from the back, wearing a bright blue t-shirt. The t-shirt features a logo consisting of two hands cupping a stylized flower or star shape. Below the logo, the words 'Storycatchers Theatre' are printed in a white, sans-serif font. The person is standing in a room with bookshelves visible in the background, which are slightly out of focus. The lighting is warm and soft, coming from the left side of the frame.

Storycatchers  
Theatre





# THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

We have always operated in partnership with others and are committed to helping to build a network of community resources that will lift up these young people as they navigate court involvement and reentry. This page recognizes some of the institutional relationships that we have built to create access to cultural experiences as well as critical resources such as safe housing, counseling, and job placement. We couldn't do it alone. And because we don't have to, neither do the youth.

## **Primary Partners:**

Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center  
Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice

## **Advocacy and Post-Release Resource Partners:**

ACCESS Community Health Network  
Amplify Chicago  
BMO Harris Bank  
Central States SER  
Chicago Beyond  
Chicago CRED  
Cook County Public Defender's Office  
ConTextos  
Legal Aid Chicago  
Lyte Collective  
Nova Driving School  
Port Ministries  
REACT Clinic  
Rise Kit

Safer Foundation  
Tukiendorf Training Institute  
Unity Parenting & Counseling  
Windy City Harvest

## **Cultural Partners:**

Green Star Movement  
Ignition Community Glass  
Mercury Theatre  
Social Works  
Steppenwolf Theatre  
Truth & Documentary

## **Educational Partners:**

College of DuPage  
Communities in Schools of Chicago  
Urban Alliance



# INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

*This list recognizes gifts made by individual donors from 9/1/2021 to 8/31/2022*

If you see any omissions or errors, please contact Rachel Combs at [rhcombs@storycatcherstheatre.org](mailto:rhcombs@storycatcherstheatre.org)

\* indicates members of the Board of Directors

\*\* members of the Board Emeritus

\*\*\* members of the Board Emeritus (deceased)

## **\$50,000 - \$1,000,000**

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## **\$25,000 - \$49,999**

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W. Keren Vishny

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Walter Stearns and Eugene

Dizon

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## **\$1,000 - \$4,999**

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Anonymous via TisBest

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Mary Ann Tuft

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## **\$100 - \$499**

Anonymous (4)

Anonymous via Facebook

Jacqueline Ackerman

Michael Ahern and Karen Coppa

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Steve Baron

Marysue Barrett

Ed Barrish and Sharon

Schneider

Stephen and Sherry Barrish

Eloise Barron

Nancy Bentley

Bruce and Susan Berger

George and Karen Bergstrom

Joan and Hank Bliss

James Block and Ruth Fuerst



# WELCOME!

Storycatchers Theatre  
CHANGING VOICES ENSEMBLE

Storycatchers Theatre  
CHANGING VOICES ENSEMBLE

Choose the prompt  
that's most taking your  
attention! ☺

① Tell the story of a time you felt certain you did the right thing, but it still somehow blew up in your face anyway.

° What made you feel so confident in your decision?

° Did you wish you listened to others or did you still feel you did right thing?

② Tell the story of a time everyone told you that you did the right thing, but it still felt like you made a terrible mistake.

° What made you feel so different than everyone else?

° How did you navigate these emotions?





Richard Block and Marcia Horan	Freda Friedman	Rodney Johnson	Robert and Caryle Perlman
Erin Bloomquist	Andrew and Amy Gelman	Pamela Kaul Gresty	Paulette Petretti
Michael Braun	Robert and Inna Feldman	Neil and Diana Hunt King	Jerry Peven
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Tory Davidson	Katie Hill	Vithika and Virendra Mehrotra	Karen Schneider
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Lilly Eng	John and Molly Hope	Sally Myers	Richard Scott and James
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Pamela Evason	Mary Hungerford	Jane Nollman	Judith Sensibar
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Larry and Susan Fisher Yellen	Fernanda Hopkins	Becca Schwartz	
	Jersen Islan	David Silver	
	Sarah Judd	Elizabeth Sivak	
	Ianna Kachoris	Martha Spalding	



One smart fellow, he felt smart  
Two smart fellows, they felt smart  
Three smart fellows, they all felt smart

Mix a box of mixed biscuits  
With a boxed biscuit mixer.

Fresh french fried fly fritters

Susie sits shinning silver shoes

The cat catchers can't catch caught cats.

The boot black  
brought the black  
boot back

Irish wrist watch

I slit the sheet,  
The sheet I slit,  
and on the slitted  
sheet I sit.

Unique New York  
Unique New York  
You know you need unique New York

I am a mother pheasant plucker  
I pluck mother pheasants  
I am the most pleasant mother  
pheasant plucker who has ever  
plucked a mother pheasant

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

The skunk sat on the stump  
The stump thunk the skunk  
stunk, but the skunk  
thunk the stump stunk

Toy Boat (x5)





# VOICE

AKA The substance of the writing you'll do in program. It characterizes who you are on paper.

B m E

° Vocabulary

+  
Tone (writer's attitude toward subject matter)

+  
Point of View (Perspective from where narrator conveys story from)

+  
Syntax (Arrangement of words + phrases that form sentences)

voice in literature

SHOULD REVEAL IDENTITY

"Let me know when the party starts."  
"Hey can you help me with this real quick?"  
"If you have a problem - say something!"



## TRIBUTE LISTING

### **In Honor Of Alexa Frenn and Ben deLong Wedding**

Tanner Davis

Pamela Evason

Recia Frenn

Lynn Hauser and Karl  
Wuesthoff

### **In Honor Of Andrew and Amy Bluhm**

Linda Kenny

### **In Honor Of Barbara Blumenthal**

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Ethel and Bill Gofen

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Alice Schreyer

Pamela Sheffield

Elizabeth Sonnenschein

Susan Stein

Larry and Susan Fisher Yellen

### **In Honor Of Janet Myers**

Adrian Bennett

Danielle Maihofer

Sally Myers

### **In Honor Of John Lawler**

Maggie Lawler

### **In Honor Of Kendra Freeman**

Marysue Barrett

### **In Honor Of Meade Palidofsky**

Janet Myers

Anonymous

### **In Honor Of Melanie Munsey**

Matt Athanasiou

### **In Honor Of Rhoda Reeling**

N.J. Blumenstein

Mary Kay Conley

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Lehman

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Abby Lorber

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Neal and Kathleen Kulick

Melinda Tippet Munson

Steve and Helene Walsey

### **In Honor Of The Chris and Linda Marder Family**

Chris and Linda Marder

### **In Honor Of Yvonne Lange**

Cliff and Sharon Hollander

Robert and Caryle Perlman

### **In Memory Of Carol Jackson**

Marty Behn and Diane Paserba

### **In Memory Of Jerry Braun**

Michael Yellen and Audrey

Pam

### **In Memory Of Joy and Paul Ransdell**

Beth Vinkler

### **In Memory Of Lael Johnson**

Jill Heppenheimer

Rodney Johnson

Alec Lawler

Jan Petry

### **In Memory Of Sally Prager, John Mouflouzelis, Jay Kirby, Hernan Llerena, and Richard Heidkamp**

Donald Sprague and Ray Grant

### **In Memory Of Richard Coons**

Elizabeth Sivak



# INSTITUTIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

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institutional donors from 9/1/2021  
to 8/31/2022*

If you see any omissions or errors, please  
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rhcombs@storycatcherstheatre.org

## **\$100,000 +**

Anonymous (1)  
Caerus Foundation

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Illinois Humanities Council  
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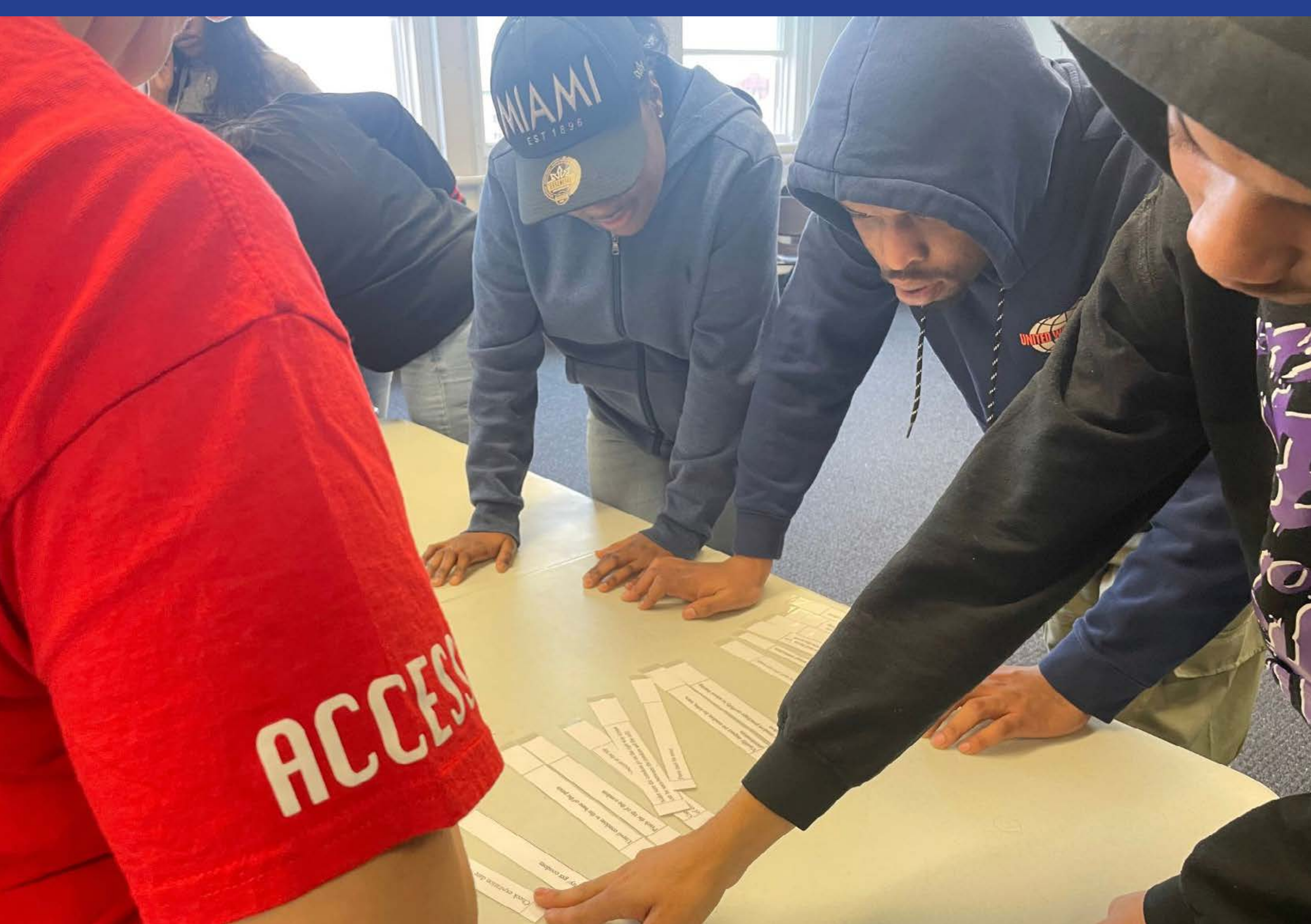
Alliance Bernstein  
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Stan Barrish  
Iris Witkowsky



Storycatchers Theatre was founded by Meade Palidofsky in 1984 and has served youth involved in the justice system since 1990. The company has received numerous honors and awards, including the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities in 2013.