

Selected Highlights from the
2024 -25 Funding Year *to date*

This is not everything

inspire



OlympiaTM

Hummingbird Studio

Hummingbird Studio continues to offer accessible art opportunities. We partnered with local schools and colleges, including Olympia Transitions Academy, Capital High School Life Skills, The Evergreen State College, and St. Martin's University. Additionally, we collaborated with community groups and organizations such as Capital City Recovery Center, Quixote Village Olympia, Behavioral Health Resources, Thurston County Developmental Disabilities, Career Quest, and Community Resources to promote art activities for people with disabilities and their allies.

“My internship at Hummingbird Studio has been eye opening. Working with artists of all abilities has deepened my understanding of inclusion and the impact of accessible creative spaces. I've learned so much about adaptability, patience, and the joy that art brings to people's lives.”

~Evergreen student intern



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South Sound Dance Access

This quarter, we concluded our residency at Garfield Elementary, finishing up with 8 weeks of dance class for the second half of the student body and presenting an all -school assembly with families invited for all of the students to share the dances they learned and co -created. Students, teachers, staff, and families totaled between 400 -500 at this event. The principal said it was the most well - attended assembly he had seen at Garfield!

For the majority of students , it was the first time they had ever danced in front of an audience. **It was amazing to watch the kids step into that bravery and really shine!**



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Garden -Raised Urban Bounty (GRuB)

The GRuB Garden Project kicked off our garden -building season! We opened our garden applications in January and selected 35 gardeners. We hosted a gardener orientation for our gardeners to get resources, sign up for a garden build date, and get to meet each other! We did a Garden Planning 101 session during orientation and went over some ways to plan your garden and factors to consider, like what do you like to eat already! Our gardeners left with a garden plan in hand and lots of resources to delve into as they await their garden build.



New ADA path!



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Arbutus

- We officially launched our new registration software that will make programming more accessible through the ease of sliding scale, scholarships, private events for partners like schools, and payment plans.
- We added more classroom space designated for overflow.
- Full-time staff at Arbutus are now receiving health benefits.



"I liked being in your class because we got to make vases and we got to have choice time and I made a bread man. I liked making the hand bowls and the wind chime. That's why I loved being in your class. It was really fun and thank you for letting me be in class."

-Student age 6 who received an Inspire-funded scholarship



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String and Shadow Puppet Theater

- We completed our 2024 summer season, which included 13 free public performances throughout the month of July.
 - 4,119 attendees to the puppet show in Olympia
 - Inspire Olympia funding allowed us to retroactively pay our performers a stipend for their rehearsal time something we have never been able to do before!
- *"Incredible show! Y'all brought me to tears, laughter, wonder, and hope. A reminder and readiness to live fully and stand for what I believe is right. I was so ready to hang onto the end of that rope! So much fun and I'm excited to see what you all create next year."*
- *"This show is pure MAGIC! What a creative bunch of artists that put in so much work to make this truly amazing and mesmerizing."*
- *"Heartwarming, charming, enriching. If you can get yourself to a show this month, do. Perfect way to spend a beautiful evening in Olympia."*



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Ballet Northwest

BNW worked closely with social service s partners to provide free tickets to those in our community who otherwise would not be able to attend. Quotes from Social Service Organization Partner clients:

- "A valuable experience for my young kids – they loved it!!! And sitting behind us was another kinship family with teen boys – they were doing a school paper on the ballet and were talking about how to describe the ballet and the benefits of being there and they seemed to really enjoy it. All the other families were having a wonderful time."
- "Going to the performance was an amazing experience – I am so thankful my kids' world got bigger tonight!"
- "My girls loved dressing up and going to the ballet – now they want to be ballerinas."



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Emerald City Music

In March, we employed three straight days of "ECM in EDU" with the popular WindSync wind quintet, collaborating with Washington Middle School, McKenny and Roosevelt Elementary Schools, and Hands On Children's Museum. **1054 young people were engaged** by the ensemble along with ECM Artistic Director Kristin Lee and new Executive Director Sean Campbell with age -appropriate performances and Q&A sessions. **All of this programming was provided completely free** to both participants and partnered institutions.



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Hands On Children's Museum

One of the most exciting highlights from the past quarter was welcoming OSD kindergarteners, along with chaperones and teachers, from all 12 elementary schools for Inspire Olympia -supported field trips to the museum. During their two -hour visits, they had time to explore the museum's 150+ indoor and outdoor exhibits and got to participate in a 30 -minute interactive science workshop that supports Washington State Science Standards.

A student from Roosevelt exclaimed, "Best day ever! I am a real engineer!" In her field trip evaluation, a teacher from Centennial wrote, "Many kids have never had the opportunity to learn this way with such amazing materials. The real -world experience is so valuable...This would not be possible without a grant due to bus costs and admission."



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Samba Olywa

With the purchase of new drums from Inspire funding this past winter, we have been able to grow our drumming section of the band with more traditional samba percussion. Our Procession practices have had the largest turnout ever with up to 95 participants.

As we gear up for our two performances in April - the Procession of the Species and the Luminary Procession - we also have more gigs in the next quarter including Madison ES, Thurgood Marshall MS, Avanti HS graduation, Tumwater Farmers Market opening, Olympia Pride Parade, and a trip to Seattle for the Fremont Solstice Parade.



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Community Print

- We were very happy to host six new BIPOC & gender nonconforming scholarship recipients over the year. Since January, our current scholarship students (aged 20 to 75!) have received private letterpress and Risograph printing classes. Laika Taddei is working on a graphic novel using their newfound skills on the Risograph printer, Wild Coblentz brought their whole family to Community Print to make letterpress posters for a Women's March, and René Westbrook has been doing gelli printing and gelli transfer techniques in the studio to prepare for an upcoming gallery show.
- For the first time ever, the Advisory Board agreed to pay contractor stipends to Director Kelsey Smith and organizing member Lily Hayhoe. Kelsey has been running Community Print for over 15 years without compensation, and Lily put hundreds of hours into completely revamping our website over the past year. Through Lily's efforts, members can now sign up online for a variety of membership levels and schedule time on specific equipment in the studio. **The ability to pay long-term committed volunteers for their labor as contracted staff is a complete game changer for our small organization .**



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Harlequin Productions

- Inspire funding definitely influenced artistic choices for the Season in progress, and will for our Season 2026 (35th Season!) - it frees us up to do shows we may not be able to consider without stable funding. With 7 shows a year, Inspire provides about 50% as much funding per show as our season subscribers do, which has for decades been our key funding stream.
- Inspire funding allowed us to add 'Bold Voices,' a reading series of shows this year that HAS drawn many subscribers, and is a delight to our core audience.
- In addition, we've been able to partner with local playwrights on a Valentine's show, and will have another Halloween Production this Fall. Without stable and additional funding, these programs would simply not have been within our reach.



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Indigenous Performance Productions

During the development residency of "The Land Has Spoken" we partnered with Hand On Children's Museum to do four readings (with over 30 kiddos/parents reached) with the co-author of the show, Andrea Rogers (Cherokee), who is also the author of the Caldecot winning children's book "Chooch Helped." We also held a special screening for Nova Middle School and reached around 100 middle school-age children.

Inspire Olympia has been critical for the health and stability of IPP. With federal funding for our organization and our partners under fire we have seen hits to our earned and contributed revenue from the direct and indirect impacts of this shift. **The support from Inspire Olympia has helped to sustain key programs while we waited to understand what the shape of the future would look like.**



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The Bridge Music Project

A key highlight during this period was our performance at a foster care advocacy event. Youth artists from The Bridge performed live for an estimated 150 attendees, most of whom had lived experience in the foster care system. These young people traveled from across Washington State to advocate at the Capitol.



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Nisqually Reach Nature Center

- We were able to start a field trip pilot program with OSD that brought an additional 247 first -graders and 84 adults to the nature center for outdoor experiential learning.
- “ *We appreciate the opportunity and think it's critical to get kids (and chaperones) out in nature for hands -on science exploration. It's awesome and important. Thank you !*”
- “ *I had never been to the Nisqually Reach Center and neither had my students. We enjoyed learning about it! Thank you for having us!* ”
- “ *The trip was easy and accessible for all levels of learners .*”
- “ *We loved it and would do it again .*”



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Washington Center for the Performing Arts

Field trip feedback:

" We are very grateful for the funding provided by Inspire Olympia! This helped to remove barriers for many of our students. It is so important for ALL students to have the opportunity to experience the arts and be engaged in community events. Thank you, and please keep funding these educational opportunities for our kids!

"The best comment I received as a teacher: " For the first time ever, I'm proud to be Black! " My students felt seen, loved, and connected with who they were themselves, and with each other because of music. "



WEDNESDAY
JAN 15
10:00AM

**THE PACK
DRUMLINE**

MONDAY
APR 14
10:00AM

STEP

Ignite your students' creativity and collaboration with an electrifying experience featuring The Pack Drumline! This high-energy ensemble of musicians and dancers delivers an unforgettable performance in music rhythm.

Step Afrika! incorporates traditional African dance styles practiced in South Africa. This performance is a celebration of African fraternities and the power of dance.



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Thurston County Museum of Fine Art TCMoFA

From April 25th through May 24th TCMoFA hosted the best attended exhibition in its organization's history, "Labyrinths ." Featuring visual art by 27 artists and performances by 21 performing artists , the Labyrinths exhibition hosted 1820 visitors over the course of 29 days.



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- Olympia Junior Programs hosted 2,158 OSD students with Low -cost admission and FREE transportation.
- Olympia Lamplighters created regular opportunities for artists to share and sell their work.
- **Olympia Historical Society & Bigelow House Museum hired its first staff member!**
- IO funding enabled Pacific Shellfish Institute staff to attend the SoundToxins annual meeting & Pacific Northwest Crab Research Groups annual meeting. Both are integral to our curricula and a great opportunity to learn about current research regarding plankton communities in Puget Sound.
- **In April, SOGO joined the Washington Center to present an Instrument Petting Zoo during Olympia Arts Walk. More than 300 curious kids of all ages tried out the string instruments of the orchestra. With Inspire Olympia's support, we were able to update our well -loved booth decorations and fairly compensate staff, ensuring a fun, welcoming experience for all.**
- Olympia Artspace Alliance hired its first staff member!
- **Team Tomorrow: Thanks to this funding, we were also able to pay out early stipends, retainers, and deposits — a game -changer for local artists, techs, and freelancers who often wait until peak season for payment. This helped us strengthen relationships, stabilize our planning timeline, and model a more sustainable and respectful way of working in the independent event space.**
- The Inspire Grant has helped TCMedia be able to expand our field trip catalog offerings and allows us to offer a wider range and improved education curriculum served to the students.



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Olympia Arts + Heritage Alliance

In June 2025, Olympia Arts & Heritage Alliance opened a new museum in our leased interim space at 203 Columbia, where we have a one -year lease!



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Olympia Family Theater

- With the Inspire Olympia grant we were able to provide 220 tickets completely free of charge to make our productions accessible to all patrons regardless of ability to pay.
- We were also able to provide one performance on a sliding scale, starting at free of charge, which allows 102 community members to access our production regardless of ability to pay for a ticket.
- The Inspire Olympia grant also allows us to offer Kokua Services up to 20 free tickets to each production.



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Olympia Symphony Orchestra

We were proud to present our second -ever Link Up education concert, with the majority of 4th -grade students in the Olympia School District participating.

Inspire Olympia's funds are critical to the delivery of our *Link Up* program, both in funding the orchestra personnel and venue costs, and the busing of students to the Washington Center. This program is our single strongest impact the Symphony makes in local classical music education, and the school music teachers have told us they are already seeing increased interest by 5th-grade students in studying an instrument when the opportunity is presented.



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More to come with Year-End
reporting from Funded
Organizations due in late July!