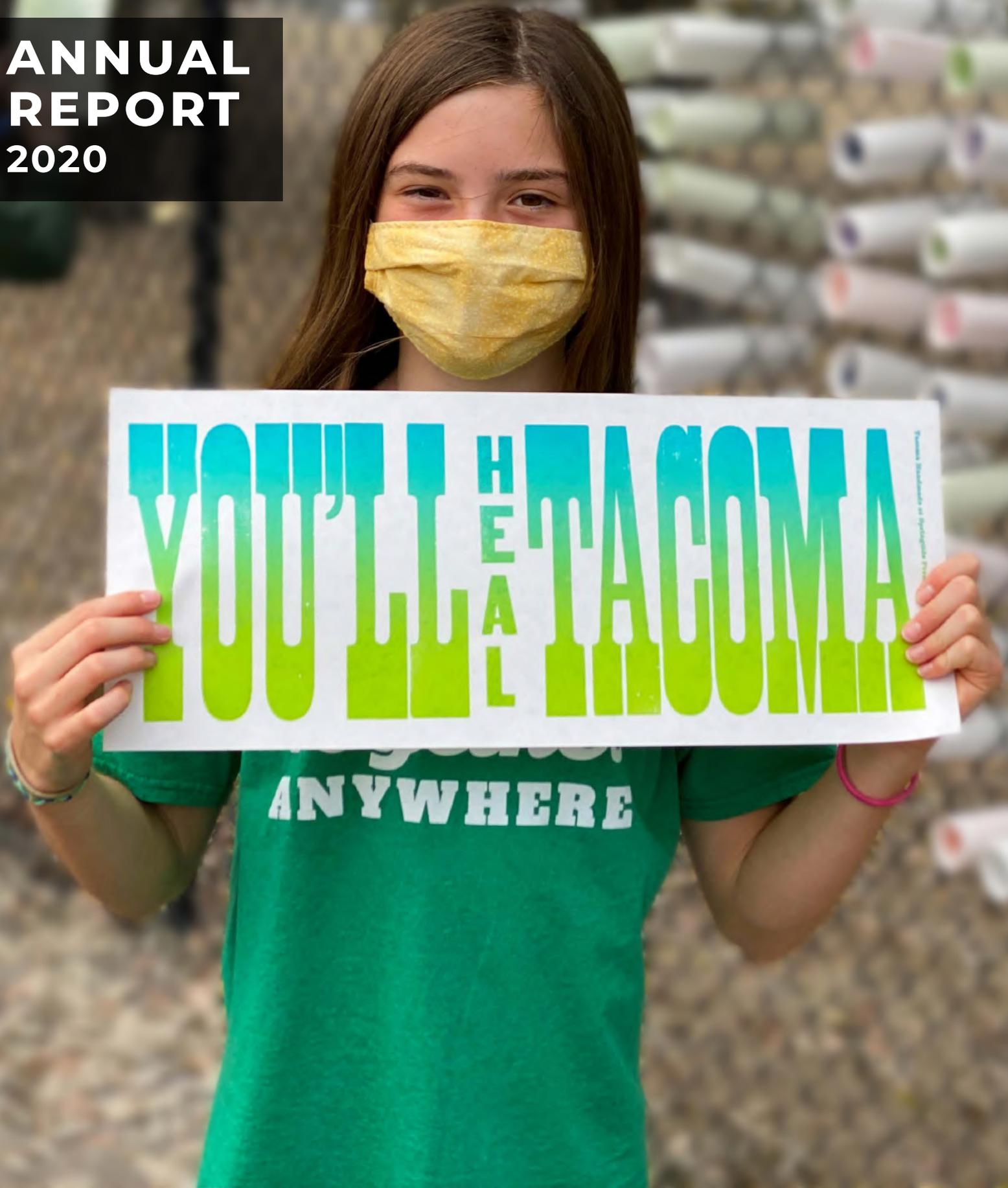




**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2020**



**YOU'LL HEAR TACOMA ANYWHERE**

**ANYWHERE**

# 2020: A YEAR OF CREATIVITY AND CARE

As we reflect back on the challenges faced in 2020 and which continue into this year, we want to express our gratitude to the culture bearers and creatives for showing up with compassion and care in service to our community. The arts and culture sector has been hard hit with the closing of stages and venues early on in the pandemic, affecting a vast sector of performers, gig workers, and all the folks who support this work in myriad ways. However, creativity, passion, and talent cannot be kept under wraps. They are not meant to be relegated solely to the exhibit hall or the stage - although we cannot wait until these venues and gatherings are open and available to us again!

2020 is the year that creativity, coupled with care, showed up in incredible ways to uplift our spirits and nourish our beings. Throughout this report are examples of how organizations and artists pivoted, reached out across sectors, cared for community, and continued to innovate and celebrate. As we evolve and change, we look to the creatives and culture bearers to help shine the light on our humanity and our connections, even as we are physically distanced.

Cover: Community member shares a message of hope and healing. Part of Jessica Spring's "You'll Heal Tacoma" project. Photo by Jessica Spring.



Participant in Sophia Munic's "I Am Here For You" temporary project, part of the Public Art Reaching Community training program with Metro Parks Tacoma.

"Art that is meaningful, that touches us and transcends our normal experiences with the world, identifies something or connects with a part of us that almost cannot be explained. Words do not do it justice. The mural, the sculpture, the story, the performance connect with us and reminds us that we are not alone in our world – others share our hopes and our fears, our dreams and our setbacks.

As we have gone through so much as a community this past year, but so often isolated, the arts are desperately needed to foster the connection we need. To express the often inexpressible and to bind up the collective wounds of the moment so that our community can move forward together again."

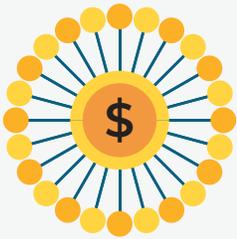
John Hines, Tacoma City Council Member

# OFFICE OF ARTS & CULTURAL VITALITY 2020 OVERVIEW

## ARTS FUNDING

### ARTS PROJECTS

Supporting organization-led arts-focused community projects that are equitable, inclusive, and accessible



**\$81,000** distributed to  
**24** organizations



**70,315** people served



**70,240** people attended for free

### TACOMA ARTISTS INITIATIVE PROGRAM

Supporting Tacoma artists to create new work and produce free public programming



**\$57,500** distributed to **23** artists for the 2019-20 biennium and **6,258** people served, all for free

## PUBLIC ART



**3** permanent  
public art  
projects for City  
of Tacoma



**7** permanent  
public art projects  
managed for  
outside agencies



**1** public art  
training program



**6** temporary  
public art training  
projects



**1** Creative  
Communications  
Roster



**5** artist-designed  
wrap projects

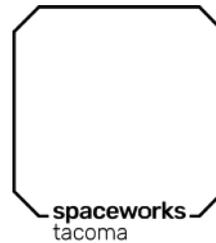


**1** major public  
artwork repaired  
and maintained

# ARTS PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

## SPACEWORKS TACOMA

- 21 businesses participated in training program
- 11 new creative businesses created
- 88% of businesses served are owned by women
- 54% of businesses served are owned by people of color
- 38 installations, murals, and video gallery



## TACOMA ARTS MONTH

- 2,500 art kits distributed to middle and high school students
- 10 Community Engagement Projects
- 96 community-produced events
- 31 artists participated in Artists in Focus

## ARTISTS HIRED

Paid opportunities for 63 artists and creatives



## artTown TV SHOW

Produced 2 re-mixed episodes of artTown, a cultural documentary-style TV show



## TACOMA POET LAUREATE

- 67 events, readings, workshops and presentations
- 5,805 people served

# TACOMA ARTS COMMISSION



15 volunteer arts advocates



390 hours of volunteer service

Find out more about how the Tacoma Arts Commission serves our community at [cityoftacoma.org/arts](http://cityoftacoma.org/arts)

# TACOMA CREATES

## FUNDING



Approximately **\$5 million** allocated to **58** organizations for the funding cycle from April 2020 through June 2021

## EQUITY AND ACCESS



**60** individuals representing **46** organizations participated in **14** hours of equity-related virtual workshops, July-December



**20** hours of direct consulting on equity work provided to Tacoma Creates organizations by Coleman & Associates

## PARTNERSHIPS



**35** Expanded Learning Opportunity classes at **17** Tacoma Public Schools locations, January-March



**22** Virtual events presented in partnership with Tacoma Public Library, July-December

## OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS



- New logo and website created
- Quarterly newsletter launched
- Conducted focus groups to gauge impact of pandemic on cultural organizations

## ADVISORY BOARD

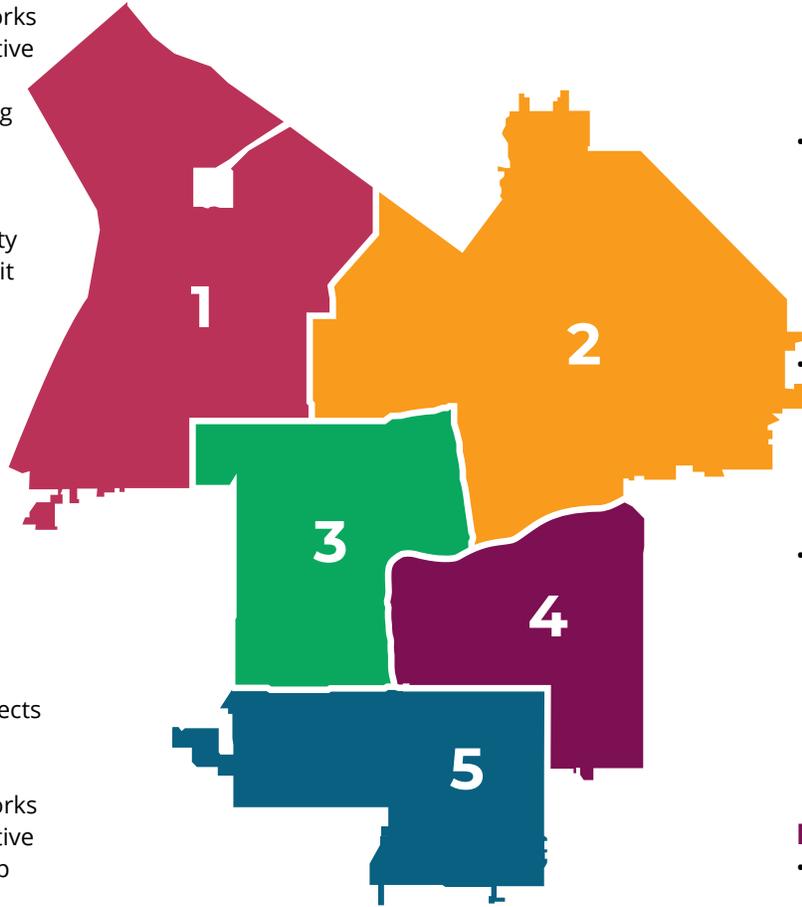


**12** community volunteers appointed to inaugural advisory board, representing all 5 council districts

# IMPACT BY COUNCIL DISTRICTS

## District 1

- Arts Funding – 19 Arts Projects programs, 7 TAIP artists
- Creative Economy – Whipsmart study, Spaceworks incubator training for creative entrepreneurs
- Public Art – 1 glass recycling center art wrap
- Arts Programming - Tacoma Arts Month virtual programming, 5 Community Engagement Projects, art kit distribution, Tacoma Poet Laureate, artTown
- Tacoma Creates Funding – Impact Funding and Comprehensive Organizational Support



## District 3

- Arts Funding – 20 Arts Projects programs, 8 TAIP artists
- Creative Economy – Whipsmart study; Spaceworks incubator training for creative entrepreneurs, 1120 Hilltop coworking space, rapid murals, Artscapes
- Public Art – Series of 7 permanent artworks for LINK extension, 1 permanent artwork for The Rise at 19th, 1 glass recycling center art wrap, 5 temporary public art installations for PARC training
- Arts Programming - Tacoma Arts Month virtual programming, 6 Community Engagement Projects, art kit distribution, Tacoma Poet Laureate, artTown
- Tacoma Creates Funding – Impact Funding and Comprehensive Organizational Support

## District 5

- Arts Funding – 19 Arts Projects programs, 1 TAIP artist
- Creative Economy – Whipsmart study, Spaceworks incubator training for creative entrepreneurs
- Public Art – 1 site-integrated project for East 64th Street, 3 recycling center art wraps, 1 temporary public art installation for PARC training
- Arts Programming - Tacoma Arts Month virtual programming, 5 Community Engagement Projects, art kit distribution, Tacoma Poet Laureate, artTown
- Tacoma Creates Funding – Impact Funding and Comprehensive Organizational Support

## District 2

- Arts Funding – 21 Arts Projects programs, 2 TAIP artists
- Creative Economy – Whipsmart study; Spaceworks incubator training for creative entrepreneurs, 1120 Downtown coworking space, rapid murals, Artscapes, Tollbooth video gallery
- Public Art – 1 permanent artwork for Ruston Way Waterfront, 1 permanent artwork for Fireman's Park, 1 glass recycling center art wrap, 2 temporary public art installations for PARC training
- Arts Programming - Tacoma Arts Month virtual programming, 6 Community Engagement Projects, art kit distribution, Tacoma Poet Laureate, artTown
- Tacoma Creates Funding – Impact Funding and Comprehensive Organizational Support

## District 4

- Arts Funding – 19 Arts Projects programs, 5 TAIP artists
- Creative Economy – Whipsmart study; Spaceworks incubator training for creative entrepreneurs, rapid murals
- Public Art – 2 permanent artworks for Eastside Community Center, 1 temporary installation for East 40th Street, 1 temporary public art installation for PARC training
- Arts Programming - Tacoma Arts Month virtual programming, 6 Community Engagement Projects, art kit distribution, Tacoma Poet Laureate, artTown
- Tacoma Creates Funding – Impact Funding and Comprehensive Organizational Support

## ARTS PROJECTS

Supports organizations and groups producing arts-focused community projects that are equitable, inclusive, and accessible

### 2020

- \$81,000 distributed to 24 organizations
- 291 programs presented
- 70,315 people served
- 70,240 people attended for free
- 1,414 artists involved in producing projects
- Funded organizations: Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Barefoot Collective, Bates Technical College/KBTC, Centro Latino, Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation, Colemon and Associates, Destiny City Film Festival, Greentrike, Hilltop Artists, King's Bookstore, KnownFor Solutions, Latinx Unidos Del South Sound, Metropolitan Glass, Pierce County AIDS Foundation, Puget Sound Book Artists, Queer Life, Refugee Choir Project, Tacoma Arts Live, Tacoma Ocean Fest, Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center, Tacoma Youth Symphony Association, Ted Brown Music Outreach, Washington State Historical Society, Write253
- 24 of 27 organizations originally selected for funding were able to pivot projects and complete public programming during pandemic
- \$276,000 in total funding requests from 48 applicants

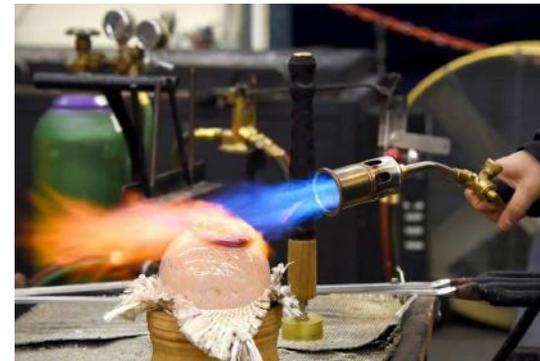
### 2021

- \$114,000 contracted to 27 organizations
- \$225,000 in total funding requests from 40 applicants

*"Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association. We are privileged to be able to continue our work for our students and community although with a distance learning approach. We are pursuing every effort to keep our young musicians engaged, learning and hopeful for the time when we can assemble as a team once again."*  
- Dr. Loma L. Cobbs



Saiyare Refaei carving a printing plate at Wayzgoose. Photo courtesy of King's Bookstore.



Artist crafts a glass float to distribute to the community as part of Monkeyshines community scavenger hunt event. Photo courtesy of Hilltop Artists.

*"The virtual version of Tacoma Moon Festival was a wonderful learning experience for all of us. We were lucky to be able to work with many professionals to get the job done beautifully. On behalf of board of Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation, I want to thank you and Tacoma Arts Commission for the support to make this project possible."*  
- Theresa Pan Hosley



## PANDEMIC PIVOT

Greentrike was able to pivot their plans while still producing experiences for young children focused on access and exposure to high-quality art and authentic tools and materials. Their original plan was to commission an artist to design and produce artwork and hands-on programming at the museum's studio space and three off-site locations. But, due to the pandemic, they pivoted programming and created and distributed almost 400 free art therapy kits that supplied materials and a guide for caregivers to engage children in arts-based activities to help surface their worries and concerns, by exploring big feelings through creative, visual, and verbal methods.

## TACOMA ARTISTS INITIATIVE PROGRAM

Supports the creation of high quality work by Tacoma artists working in all disciplines; artists share their talents with the community through free public programming

- \$57,500 distributed to 23 artists for the 2019-20 biennium
- 45 programs presented
- 6,258 people served, all for free
- Council Districts of funded artists: 7 from District 1, 2 from District 2, 8 from District 3, 5 from District 4, 1 from District 5
- Funded artists: Kristina Batiste, Dionne Bonner, Gabriel Brown, Sarah A. Chavez, Kim Davenport, Alice Di Certo, Kyle Dillehay, Ryan Feddersen, Erin Guinup, Chad Hagedorn, Lucia Harrison, Fumiko Kimura, Nori Kimura, Sasha LaPointe, Melinda Raebyne, Elizabeth Reeves, Brian Robinson, Jeanette Sanchez-Izenman, Jamika Scott, Kenya Shakoor, Sharon Styer, Wendy Wahman, Anique Zimmer
- 23 of 24 artists originally selected for funding were able to pivot and complete projects during pandemic
- \$112,500 in total funding requests from 45 applicants

“Support from the Tacoma Arts Commission has been incredibly meaningful to me and helped provide motivation with a sense of community to this project. Getting to meet local writers during the public events was lovely, especially with everything being remote, there are less chances for new meetings. This year has been hard for everyone in a myriad of ways, but I feel lucky to have had this experience.”

- Sarah A. Chavez



## PANDEMIC PIVOT

Dionne Bonner's original plan was to create and exhibit a series of paintings exploring her roots in the Hilltop neighborhood. The project would include audio and video recordings of community interviews and a hands-on workshop for youth. Due to the pandemic, Dionne pivoted and, in partnership with Tacoma Public Library, hosted a virtual exhibit and series of virtual artist talks and interactive discussion panels with people who have roots in the Hilltop community.



Portrait of Silong Chhun by Alice Di Certo. Part of “Home Away From Home- Immigrants, Refugees, and Undocumented Citizens” project.



Dionne Bonner's painting “Sister I (Teetah and Great Grandma)”. Part of “Hilltop Stories” project.



Poetry reading by Sasha LaPointe. Photo courtesy of Sasha LaPointe.

## MUNICIPAL ART PROGRAM

### Prairie Line Trail Spur

- Susan Zoccola. Completed installation of *Thea*. Partnership with Foss Waterway Development Authority  
East 40th Street

- Write253. Completed installation of *Invisible Poetry*. Poems by students at Roosevelt and Lister Elementary Schools in East Tacoma were applied to the sidewalk at E. 40th and the Pipeline Trail, using a temporary rain-activated material  
East 64th Street

- Elisheba Johnson and Kristen Ramirez. Fabrication of *East Tacoma Textiles* for site-integrated artwork as part of streetscape improvement project

### Five Recycling Wraps

- Jasmine Brown, Mark Monlux, Chandler O'Leary, Paige Pettibon, Stan Shaw. Selected 5 local artists to create custom art wraps for new glass recycling containers placed around the city

### Public Art Maintenance

- Ongoing routine maintenance of pieces in Municipal Art Collection
- Tacoma Dome Neon – major repair

“Poetry means happiness to me”  
Ca'Ssi Bushnell-Mustin, Roosevelt  
Elementary student and participant  
in *Invisible Poetry* project



## PANDEMIC PIVOT

Permanent public artworks are big undertakings that usually take years to complete and dozens of collaborators. In pre-pandemic times, we celebrated each new piece of public art with an in-person dedication ceremony. Due to the pandemic, we pivoted and created videos for several projects, including *Swell*, *The Jewels*, and *Invisible Poetry* that not only celebrate the artworks, but can be enjoyed and shared for years to come.



Artwork by Jasmine Brown, Mark Monlux, Chandler O'Leary, Paige Pettibon, and Stan Shaw wrap new glass recycling bins as part of the updated recycling program launched by the City of Tacoma's Environmental Services department. Photo courtesy of City of Tacoma.



Write253 installs *Invisible Poetry* - poems by Tacoma students - to the sidewalk at E. 40th and the Pipeline Trail. Photo courtesy of Write253.



Community members create artwork as part of public outreach for *East Tacoma Textiles*. Photo courtesy of Kristen Ramirez and Elisheba Johnson.



*Thea* by Susan Zoccola welcomes people to the Thea Foss Esplanade. Photo courtesy of Susan Zoccola.

## PUBLIC ART CONSULTING

### Waterwall (on contract with Pierce Transit)

- RYAN! Feddersen. Completed artist selection, final design, and partial fabrication of *Mini Tahoma*, a large-scale integrated artwork for Pierce Transit's main bus turnaround on Commerce, between S. 9th & S. 11th Streets

### The Rise at 19th building (on contract with Tacoma Housing Authority)

- Diane Hansen. Completed installation of *The Jewels* for new housing development at S. 19th & G Streets

### Port of Tacoma

- Rotator. Completed installation of *Swell* at Fireman's Park, celebrating the Port of Tacoma's Centennial

### LINK Extension (on contract with Sound Transit)

- Kenji Stoll. Research and design development to create artwork for 7 new LINK light rail stations

### Dickman Mill (On contract with Metro Parks Tacoma)

- Mary Coss. Completed fabrication of *Ghost Log*, large scale signature piece for park along the Ruston Way Waterfront

### Eastside Community Center (on contract with Metro Parks Tacoma)

- Billy Ray Memorial – Jasmine Brown. Partial fabrication of sculpture honoring the life of Billy Ray Shirley, III and the work of Team Billy Ray
- Youth Memorial – Dionne Bonner. Partial install of mural acknowledging the loss of young people to gun violence on the Eastside

### Metro Parks Tacoma Art Plan (on contract with Metro Parks Tacoma)

- Ongoing management of Public Art Program

"Art has the power to connect our heart, mind, and soul, and this art piece is all about the connections to the Port and the Port's rippling effect in the greater Tacoma region."

- Kristin Ang, Port of Tacoma Commissioner



*The Jewels*, a public artwork created by Diane Hansen for Tacoma Housing Authority's The Rise at 19th housing complex. Photo by Sierra Hartman.



*Swell*, a public artwork created by Rotator in commemoration of The Port of Tacoma's centennial. Photo by Rotator.

### Public Art Reaching Community (PARC) Training Program (on contract with Metro Parks Tacoma)

- Lead mentor artist: Elisheba Johnson. Participating artists: Rahman Curtis Barika, Adika Bell, Priscilla Dobler Dzul, Sophia Munic, Teruko Nimura, Gillian Nordlund, Gerardo Peña, Paige Pettibon, Trenton Quiocho, Jessica Spring, Monica Yi, and the team of Anida Yoeu Ali & Masahiro Sugano. Virtual training sessions and development of temporary project proposals on the theme of “Long Distance,” exploring what it means to connect with people while maintaining a pandemic-safe physical distance. Six temporary projects completed

“Loads of gratitude to all involved in this project and all selected to shine for their work making T-town so amazing... This experience has brought great conversations about supporting others with future big and small projects. Tacoma is a great place to dream out loud because other dreamers and doers are listening and right here to boost you up.”

- Tara Scheidt, writing about Adika Bell’s PARC project

“Metro Parks is proud to partner with the City and excited to bring art to our entire city through PARC.”

- Andrea Smith, Metro Parks Tacoma Commissioner

## FOCUS ON TRAINING

Public Art Reaching Community (PARC) is part of Metro Parks Tacoma’s 1% for the Arts commitment, funded by a portion of their 2014 capital bond. PARC has created an opportunity for Tacoma-area artists to gain skills in public art and engagement while creating artwork for their community on a neighborhood scale.

Under the direction of lead mentor artist Elisheba Johnson, 12 Pierce County artists participated in the program, learning how to develop artwork for the public realm through a combination of online classes, presentations, and mentorship sessions led by experts in the field of public art. Besides just offering training, each artist will create a temporary training project, and then be eligible for at least 5 permanent public art projects in Tacoma. Programs like these help open up the very competitive field of public art. This is one way we are supporting a greater diversity of voices telling our stories in the public realm.



Community members were invited to watch the Plague Parade - a procession of youth and their caregivers from a local daycare, and banners they created. Event was organized by Gillian Nordlund as part of the temporary projects created by PARC artists. Photo courtesy of City of Tacoma.

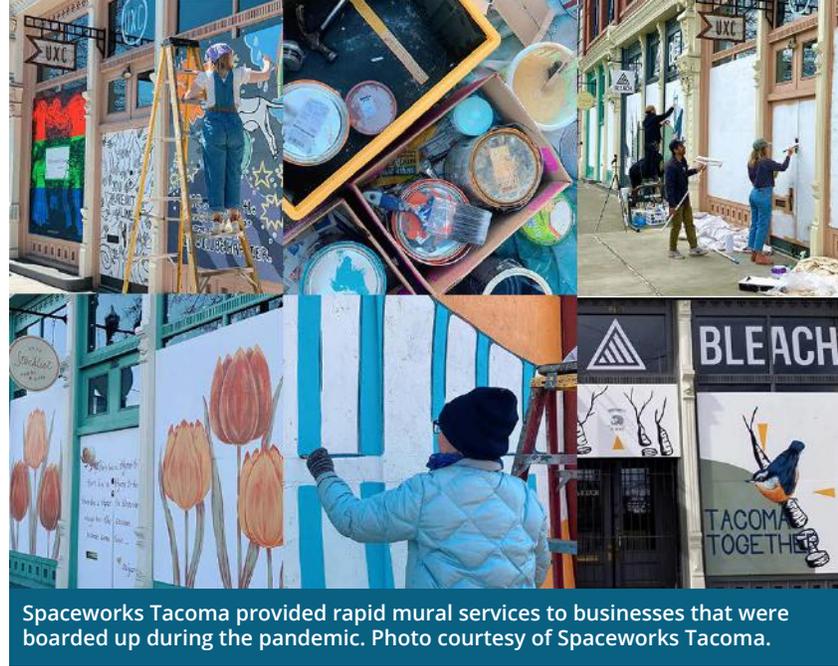
## CREATIVE ECONOMY

### Whipsmart

- Tacoma selected as first city in Washington to participate in Creative Economy study conducted by Whipsmart
- Whipsmart is a new non-profit, established to define and build the Creative Economy in Washington State
- Partnered with Whipsmart to identify needs of the creative sector and advocate for ways to grow and support our creatives

### Spaceworks Tacoma

- Celebrated 10th anniversary
- Formed as a joint initiative of the Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality and the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber
- Instrumental in developing Tacoma's creative entrepreneurs and artists and cultivating vibrant communities
- 11 new creative businesses and 7.35 FTE jobs created through the Spaceworks incubator, a program funded by a Community Development Block Grant
- 21 businesses participated in the Spaceworks incubator: Consensual, Skybox, Limitless, Space Planet, Allies in Action, Shui Productions, Embellish Multispace Salon, Reverend Al's Bona Fide Potents, Leviathan Books, The Painting Panda Pottery Studio, Ugallery, Galaxy Dance, Optimus Design, power 2 the poetry, Fruit Bat Baking Co., Alexa Janell Photography, Hitfam Media Group, Krakken Design, Kowchsurferz Anonymous, Adrian Milano, Rejuvenation Junction
- 88% of business served are owned by women
- 54% of businesses served are owned by people of color
- 50% of business owners served are low to moderate income
- 15 tenants in coworking program and residencies, which provide affordable private studios in downtown and Hilltop
- 38 Artscapes projects, rapid murals throughout the city and a new video at the Tollbooth gallery



## TACOMA ARTS MONTH

- Celebrated 19th anniversary with theme 'Cultivate Wonder and Care'

### 10 Community Engagement Projects

- Teruko Nimura & Tamiko Nimura. *Care is Free*, mental health care packages distributed at Food is Free tables
- Jamika Scott. *Where is Your Heart?*, documentary project of residents talking about the people, places, and things that bring them joy
- Daniel Garcia. *Community Boombox*, live and physically-distanced pop-up DJ and performing arts experiences around Tacoma
- Gerardo Peña. *I Am Tacoma*, a mural at 62nd & McKinley Avenue that encourages audience participation
- Paige D. Pettibon. *Going Home*, a children's book written and read in Lushootseed
- Saiyare Refaei. *When will we begin to act and care for our planet?*, a collaborative storefront mural painting project
- Abby E. Murray. *Corre y corre sin detenerte / Run and Run without Stopping*, an anthology of poems written by detained undocumented youth in Pierce County
- Anida Yoeu Ali. *Mommy Art School*, an exhibition of works by young artists created during the pandemic
- Jessica Spring. *You'll Heal Tacoma*, distribution of letterpress posters playing off the iconic "You'll Like Tacoma" signage
- Jefferson Mok. *Wonder and Care 253*, online gallery featuring community-contributed expressions of wonder and care for each other

*"I think right now, as a mother and artist, I'm just really scared for our ability to relate to one another and to recognize our shared humanity so I think that the theme 'Cultivate Wonder and Care' for me feels like an urgent call to action. We're all so isolated right now I just want people to know that they're loved fundamentally as a fellow human being."*

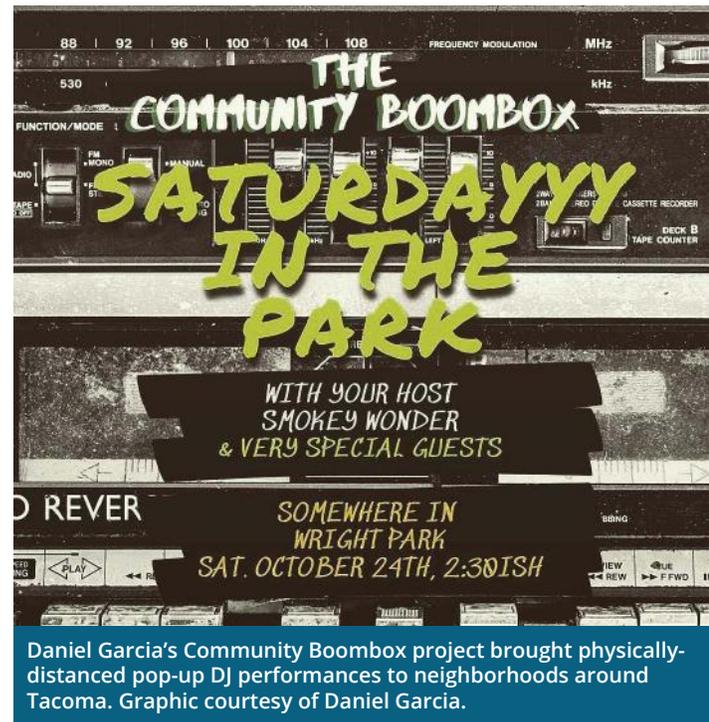
- Teruko Nimura, *Care is Free* project



Materials in the free art supply kits that were distributed to middle and high school students in partnership with Tacoma Public Schools. Photo by Heather Conklin.

*"I always think that if people can remain curious, if people can remain empathetic, then there's always hope on the horizon...There's been a lot of heaviness in the community especially around various policies, the election, the death of Manuel Ellis, so there are just a lot of heavy moments. [The Community Engagement Project] really gave me a chance to engage with people in a way that made me smile, that made them smile, and allowed us to talk about things that weren't necessarily always happy but that filled our hearts and refilled our well."*

- Jamika Scott, *Where Is Your Heart?* project



Daniel Garcia's Community Boombox project brought physically-distanced pop-up DJ performances to neighborhoods around Tacoma. Graphic courtesy of Daniel Garcia.

## 2,500 art supply kits

- Distributed to middle and high school students in partnership with Tacoma Public Schools. Kits support arts education as well as self-expression and self-care during remote learning.

## Community Events

- 96 community-produced events
- 8 visual art exhibits

## Artists in Focus

- Tacoma creatives, working in a variety of artistic disciplines, shared videos and images of their work and about their creative practice as a pivot from the in-person Tacoma Studio Tour
- 31 artists participated

## Communication and Sponsorship

- Promotional reach with City of Tacoma, 3 segments of TV Tacoma's CityLine show, Tacoma Venues and Events, Tacoma Public Schools, Market the Arts Task Force, KNKX, Showcase Media, Northwest Public Broadcasting, The News Tribune, and participating artists and cultural organizations
- Updated capabilities on TacomaArtsMonth.com to promote primarily virtual programs throughout the month
- Twice-weekly e-newsletters announcing upcoming events
- Tacoma Arts Commission Instagram takeover

*"It's going to be better, so I can do better art, use my art skills better because it was hard because I didn't have anything to use."  
- Tacoma Public Schools student and recipient of an art supply kit*



Speakthunder Berry performs at Saiyare Refaei's Community Engagement Project. Project included contributions by Elle Grey, Speakthunder Berry, Gerardo Peña, and Beverly Naidus. Photo courtesy of Saiyare Refaei.



Gerardo Peña stands in front of the mural he created at 62nd & McKinley for his Community Engagement Project. Photo courtesy of Gerardo Peña.

## ARTTOWN TV SHOW

artTown is a cultural documentary-style TV show exploring Tacoma's emergence as a major creative hub in the Pacific Northwest. The series offers segments featuring diverse perspectives on a variety of creative disciplines

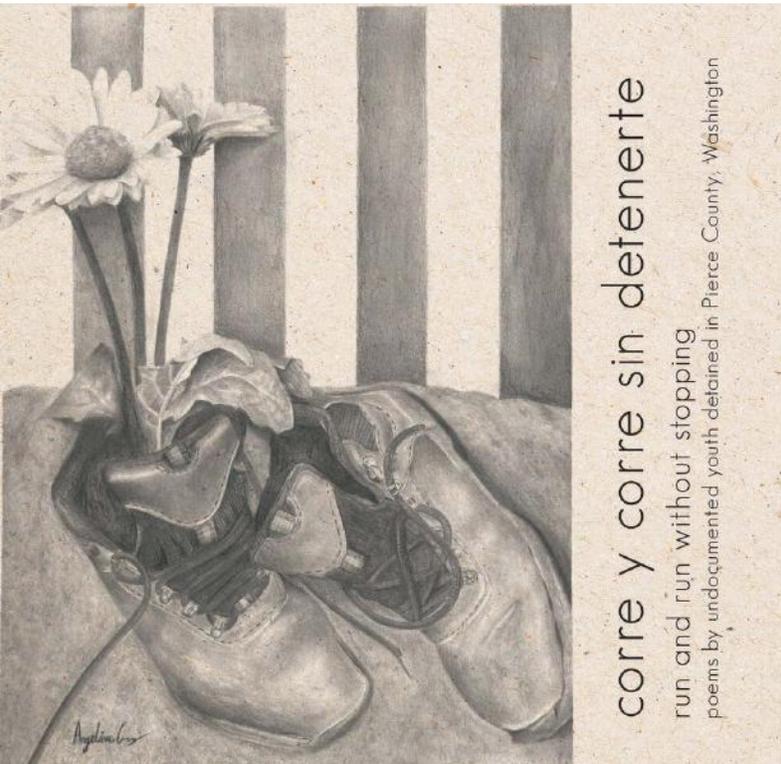
- Packaged and aired 2 re-mixed episodes
- Pandemic-appropriate themes focused on finding creativity in isolation, family collaborations, and artists working in their individual studios

## TACOMA POET LAUREATE

- 2019-2021 Tacoma Poet Laureate Abby E. Murray hosted or participated in 67 events, readings, workshops, and presentations, serving 5,805 attendees



Saiyare Refaei paints a mural as part of their Community Engagement Project. Project included contributions by Elle Grey, Speakthunder Berry, Gerardo Peña, and Beverly Naidus. Photo courtesy of Saiyare Refaei.



Abby E. Murray's Community Engagement Project was an anthology of poems written by detained undocumented youth in Pierce County.



Letterpress printing postcards to include in Teruko Nimura and Tamiko Nimura's Care is Free project. Photo courtesy of Teruko Nimura and Tamiko Nimura.

**Uplift Tacoma**

- Developed multimedia platform to provide Tacoma residents a means of connection, inspiration and support in times of physical distancing
- BEING.DOING.KNOWING, a 3-part video series focused on Blackness in Tacoma, produced by the January Group.
- Compiled and aired video content, created by cultural organizations, on TV Tacoma
- Shared local cultural content on social media using #uplifttacoma
- Shared local and national resources for artists and cultural organizations

**Creative Communications Roster**

- Maintained roster with 55 Tacoma-based individuals and small firms offering print and digital design, illustration, branding, and video services

**Platforms**

- Maintained cityoftacoma.org/arts, tacomaartsmoth.com, Tacoma Arts Facebook page with 5,636 followers, Tacoma Arts Instagram account with 3,476 followers, e-newsletter for Tacoma Arts Month communications, and 2 email listservs with 1,350 members



Stills from BEING.DOING.KNOWING video series focused on Blackness in Tacoma. Produced by The January Group.

## TACOMA ARTS COMMISSION

- Volunteer members: Heather Conklin, Chair; Rosie Ayala, Vice Chair; Olivia Allison; Michelle Douglas; Heide Fernandez-Llamazares; Anna Holcomb; Paula Jacobson; Michael Kula; Benjamin Maestas III; Elizabeth Pew; James Stowe; MaryMikel Stump; Wanda Thompson; Lynn Wilmot-Stenehjem; Sarah D Woodson
- City Council liaisons: John Hines and Keith Blocker
- Commission demographics: Council Districts 1, 2, 4, 5; expertise as practicing artists, arts professionals, educators, and arts supporters/patrons
- 8 monthly meetings; transitioned to virtual meetings during pandemic
- 390 hours of volunteer service

# TACOMA CREATES

Tacoma Creates is a voter-approved initiative to increase access to arts, culture, heritage, and science experiences throughout Tacoma by reducing barriers to access and expanding offerings, particularly for underserved youth. The initiative was passed in 2018, and in 2019 we developed administrative structures, local legislation, and several pilot programs. In 2020, the program really got off the ground as we launched the inaugural year of our organizational funding programs, developed new partnerships, and began work with the first cohort of the Tacoma Creates Advisory Board. Beginning this work during a global pandemic offered complications, but also opportunities for the cultural sector to demonstrate their role in supporting a healthy and connected community.

Learn more at [www.tacomacreates.org](http://www.tacomacreates.org)

Current Tacoma Creates funding contracts run through June 2021. A more complete annual report for Tacoma Creates work will be published in the fall of 2021.

*"It is amazing that Tacoma has something of this caliber and so accessible at the same time! We feel very lucky to be involved with FabLab. It's the science class every kid should have."*

*- Parent of student participant, FabLab*

*"I can't even regret coming because I started smiling, and I haven't smiled in a while."*

*- Teen participant, Tacoma Refugee Choir*

*"We had a tense evening going for us, and these activities brought us back to center as a family. Thank you for that."*

*- Parent participant, Tacoma Arts Live*

*"Thank you so much for doing this. In this lonely year we need reminders of our sense of community."*

*- Audience member, Puget Sound Revels*



## 2020 – 2021

### COMPREHENSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND IMPACT FUNDING

- Tacoma Creates funding supports arts, culture, heritage, and/or science organizations providing general public programming, and youth education programs, along with internal capacity building, as well as equity and access work
- Tacoma Creates is funded through 0.1% sales tax
- \$5.9 million was collected in 2020
- 58 organizations were funded in the inaugural funding cycle, running from April 2020 through June 2021
- Approximately \$5 million was allocated to 18 organizations in the Comprehensive Organizational Support category, and 40 organizations in the Impact Funding category
- Funded Organizations: Alchemy Skateboarding, Asia Pacific Cultural Center, Breaker Gallery, Buffalo Soldiers Museum, Cathartic Muse, Centro Latino, Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation, Citizens for a Healthy Bay, Classical Tuesdays in Old Town Tacoma, Destiny City Film Festival, Elements of Education, Entertainment Resource Alliance, Fab-5, FabLab Nonprofit, Foss Waterway Seaport, Genesis HCDC, The Grand Cinema, Greentrike, Hilltop Artists, Historic Tacoma, Job Carr Cabin Museum, Kareem Kandi World Orchestra, Krownless Kings, LeMay – America’s Car Museum, Museum of Glass, The Night Show with Will & Keilani, Northwest Sinfonietta, Oasis Youth Center, Orchestral Recital Series of Tacoma, Permaculture Lifestyle Institute, Puget Sound Revels, RAIN Incubator, Rainbow Center, Spaceworks Tacoma, Symphony Tacoma, Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma Arts Live, Tacoma Artwalk, Tacoma Boat Builders, Tacoma City Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Tacoma City Ballet, Tacoma Concert Band, Tacoma Historical Society, Tacoma Little Theatre, Tacoma Ocean Fest, Tacoma Opera Association, Tacoma Refugee Choir, Tacoma Sister Cities, Tacoma Tree Foundation, Tacoma Urban Land Trust, Tacoma Urban League, Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center, Tacoma Waterfront Association, Tacoma Youth Symphony Association, Tacoma Youth Theatre, Ted Brown Music Outreach, WayOut Kids, Write253



Student glassblowing at Hilltop Artists.



*Nihonjin Face* performed by Tacoma Arts Live.

# TACOMA CREATES

## OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION

- New Tacoma Creates logo designed
  - Four stakeholder sessions held to help guide and inform the logo design process
- New newsletter launched
  - 3,000 subscribers across the cultural sector and general public
- New [website](#) launched
- Internal Tacoma Creates listserv created
  - 77 subscribers affiliated with Tacoma Creates funded organizations
- Three virtual convenings held for Tacoma Creates organizations
- Three listening sessions held to get feedback on the funding application



## ADVISORY BOARD

- 48 Tacoma residents submitted applications to serve on the inaugural Tacoma Creates Advisory Board
- In August 2020, the Economic Development Committee (EDC) of City Council interviewed 18 candidates
- In September 2020, the City Council appointed 12 individuals to the Tacoma Creates Advisory Board
  - Inaugural members: Kenya Adams, Putter Bert, Megan Clark, Sheree Cooks, Amanda Figueroa, Jason Gamboa, Roxane Hreha, Michael "Tony" Hudson, Connor Mon, Dominica Myers, Liesl Santkuyl, Davon White
  - Advisory Board members represent all five council districts, as well as background and experience in arts, culture, heritage, science, K-12 education, and community engagement. There is one youth member. All members have a strong commitment to equity in the cultural sector
- First meeting of the Tacoma Creates Advisory Board held October 5, 2020
- Information about Advisory Board positions and monthly meetings [available online](#)



Northwest Sinfonietta performing at LeMay - America's Car Museum.

## TACOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Tacoma Creates funds support cultural organizations in providing youth education programs for Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) students both during the school day as well as afterschool through our Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) partnership.

In the first quarter of the year, 11 organizations offered a combined total of 35 classes through our ELO partnership with TPS and our community partners: Greater Tacoma Community Foundation, Metro Parks Tacoma, and YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap Counties. When schools closed due to the pandemic, organizations transitioned to providing various virtual programs. Several of these organizations were able to participate in the Emergency Day Camps set up to support families of first responders, healthcare workers, and other essential personnel.

## TACOMA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Tacoma Creates partners with Tacoma Public Library as part of our commitment to present cultural programming in different parts of the city. During 2020, all programs were virtual, but were still very successful in reaching new audiences. In the first 6 months of our pilot year of this partnership (July-December), 11 organizations presented a combined total of 22 events through the Tacoma Public Library virtual platform. Programming included storytime programming for young children, interactive workshops for teens, and talks about history and art for all ages.



### PANDEMIC PIVOT

“Showing students what real life science is about” – that’s how one Tacoma Public Schools educator summarized their partnership with Foss Waterway Seaport.

With the Tacoma Creates-supported partnership between Foss Waterway Seaport and Tacoma Public Schools, students are able to envision themselves in real-life science scenarios and teachers are able to “show the students what they can be” by working with real scientists. With the pivot to virtual programming due to the pandemic, educators from Foss Waterway Seaport led virtual field trips to their museum space and to study sites such as Swan Creek, which broadened students’ worlds. The virtual field trips reduced transportation-related barriers and provided student access to communities outside their own.

For Tacoma Public Schools educators, this partnerships provides high quality, educational experiences for their students, and fosters student engagement, empowerment, and growth. The project-based curriculum provided by Foss Waterway Seaport aligned with what teachers were already teaching, and helped to enhance their classroom learning. Partnering with cultural organizations can provide students the opportunity to imagine their potential, see themselves as part of a community outside of their school, and participate in more equitable and accessible learning.

*Quotes and input from an interview with Julanne Boyd, Sherman Elementary School, and Paul Gerbyshak, Gray Middle School.*

# TACOMA CREATES

# EQUITY AND ACCESS

Equity and Access are central goals for Tacoma Creates, and we are providing support to funded organizations to help them deepen their work in this area. We have partnered with Coleman & Associates to facilitate a series of learning opportunities as part of the JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) platform. In the first six months of our initial funding programs, 60 individuals representing 46 organizations participated in a combined total of 14 hours of workshop calls. Additionally, Coleman & Associates provided 20 hours of direct consulting, at no cost, to Tacoma Creates organizations. This is supporting both internal work around organizations' policies and practices, as well as the public-facing work of presenting equitable and accessible programming.

## IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC

In July, we facilitated a series of four focus group calls to learn more about how Tacoma Creates-funded organizations were adapting to the challenges of the pandemic. Representatives from 9 organizations in the Comprehensive Organizational Support category and 14 organizations in the Impact Funding category provided input on where they were in the still-early days of the pandemic.

### How was your organization's programming impacted by the pandemic?

- 27% did not cancel any programming
  - 50% of these shifted some programming online
  - 50% of these adjusted in-person programming to be physically distanced
- 64% canceled some programming
  - 75% of these shifted some programming online
  - 38% of these adjusted in-person programming to be physically distanced
- 9% canceled all programming

### How did your organization's programming shift?

- 68% shifted at least some programming online
  - 63% of these began producing videos
  - 30% of these provided supplementary physical materials
- 64% used social media to distribute programming to the public
- 73% used Zoom to distribute programming to the public



Two individuals planting a tree for Tacoma Tree Foundation.