



GRACE



WonderArts



spark

# RURAL ARTS COLLABORATIVE

## Annual Report July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022



### One Mission, Three Branches

The Rural Arts Collaborative strives to create a vibrant Northeast Kingdom. Grassroots Arts and Community Effort, Spark, and WonderArts programs focus on arts, recreation, technology, and sustainability to elevate life in our region.



# Stories from This Year

"I was first drawn to Spark as a creative workspace that had the tools I needed to develop and prototype my mythology-inspired tabletop board game, Heroes' Journey: Labyrinth. It didn't take long for me to notice that I was surrounded by other passionate and creative professionals, one of whom has since signed onto the project as our Lead Illustrator. Working with Jackson Miller has taught me that Spark provides not just physical resources like computers, lasers, and printers, but also networking opportunities that can lead to meaningful collaboration."

—Will Marlier, Spark member and owner of Soaring Hubris Games



Liz Echeverria collaborated with the Center for an Agricultural Economy, local naturalists, and outdoor adventure instructors to co-create a semester-long open-ended outdoor exploration. Loreleh Harris, Craftsbury REACH! Afterschool Program Site Coordinator, describes her students' experience in the **Winter Outdoor Adventures** program: "The children loved this class, and were so happy and in the moment. It gave them an appreciation and a sense of awe for the beautiful Woodlot land."

**Kathy Stark**, Curator and Artistic Director at Grassroots Arts and Community Effort (GRACE), led the charge in creating GRACE's **permanent collection**. Across more than 500 staff hours between November and May, 2022, the vast collection of GRACE art was sorted, cleaned, photographed, and archived online. The resulting **Digital Archive** is available on our website, ready to introduce new audiences to more than 600 pieces of artwork. The permanent collection is fifty pieces representing 39 artists that will remain with GRACE in perpetuity. Visitors can view the general GRACE collection and the permanent collection in the Old Firehouse downstairs gallery and upstairs archive room.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Amelia Fritz

## STAFF

Sarah Mutrux, Executive Directors  
Liz Echeverria, Creative Programs Director  
Jake Lester, Creative Technology Director  
Jackson Miller, Spark Clerk  
Wolf Whitney, Teaching Artist  
Ashlee Rubinstein, Teaching Artist  
Beth Meachem, Teaching Artist  
Devon Smolca, Teaching Artist



## How Well Did We Do?

100% of our programs were easily accessible to children and families in schools, public libraries, and farmers markets in 13 locations.

- Craftsbury Academy
- Craftsbury Community Greenspace
- Greensboro Free Library
- Hardwick Elementary
- Lakeview Elementary
- Hazen Union High School
- Hardwick Farmers Market
- Highland Center for the Arts
- Spark
- Spark Annex
- Wolcott Elementary
- Woodbury Elementary

## Who is Better Off?

42% of the 4575 people living year round in Craftsbury, Greensboro, and Hardwick accessed our Community Programs to connect and build creative skills

52% of the 807 students in Craftsbury, Greensboro, and Hardwick elementary, middle, and high schools accessed mentorship or creative enrichment experiences



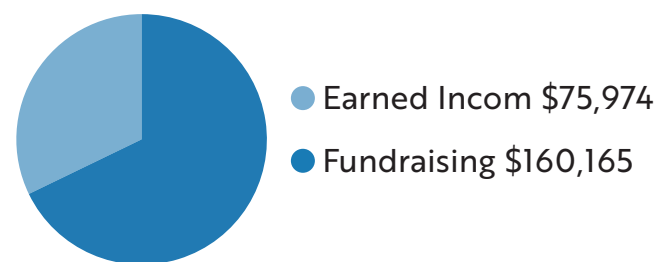
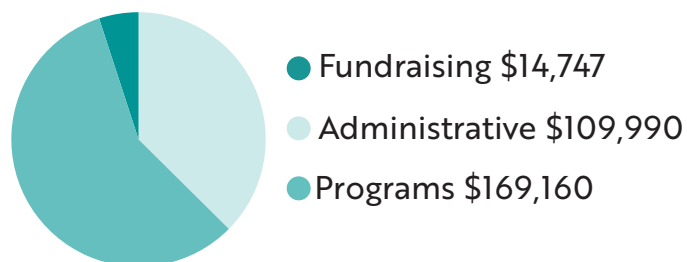
## 2022 By the Numbers

**1930** Individuals served    **689** Youth served

**1017** Adults served    **224** Seniors served

**Expenses \$293,897**

**Revenue \$236,140.24**



This year-end report for Fiscal Year 2022 beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022, focuses on the operating revenue and expenses of the business excluding noncash expenses such as depreciation and any other revenue such as unrealized gains on the investment. Expenses exceed income for a net loss that is greater than the previous year. This marks the third consecutive year of loss, which is primarily due to economic impacts of Covid-19. In FY2021 we received a Paycheck Protection Plan loan which was forgiven but not available again in FY2022. Also due to the pandemic, we pulled back indoor programs from November 2021 through May 2022, resulting in lower than usual program and event revenues. Our investment in staff training and planning during this year of change was a wise investment for the sustainability and quality of our programs. We anticipate FY23 program income and expenses to return to normal.



# Letter From the Director

I am honored to be welcomed back into this vibrant community after eight years away. Despite a challenging first year back, one thing is clear: **when we focus on serving the people who need us the most, we stand the best chance of making a positive change in our community.**

Over the last several years, many community members have noticed that our geographic service area and variety of offerings has continued to grow, and voiced concerns about long term sustainability. In January, our full program staff took the time to audit and strategize our program designs, yielding clear boundaries and defining who we serve and what we do. Spring brought a fresh suite of workshops and activities, with a renewed effort to do the best possible work for the people who need us the most. We immediately saw support for our narrowed focus:

- Vermont Afterschool fully funded our \$159,000 request to support our **comprehensive afterschool initiative**
- The Prevot Family Foundation and other donors generously supported our efforts to **target low-income families in Greensboro, Hardwick, and Craftsbury**
- Our partnership with the REACH! gained us access to **children who could not otherwise afford to attend camp**

- The Turrell Fund awarded us \$5000 to address the **increased need for behavioral support in youth programs**
- The Vermont Community Foundation recognized our efforts to **bring the community together** at the Craftsbury Greenspace and the Greensboro Bend Community Park with two grants totalling \$8000

We have chosen carefully from the wealth of opportunities that have presented themselves this year. The result is a more unified Rural Arts Collaborative, with the same nature-based, open-ended, creative activities designed to expand horizons, create close connections, and spark joy.

**Thank you to everyone** who attended our programs and supported our initiatives, not only during Covid-19, but also during this time of immense transition. We hope to see all of you again very soon in one of our programs.



Sarah Mutrux  
Executive Director



## Spark : vision and innovation

If you didn't get the chance to visit our open houses in May, you might still think that Spark is a resource for photocopies and help with computers, but Spark is so much more. Our maker and co-working space is about creativity and collaboration.

### *Empowering Youth through Spark Mentorship*

Last year, Jake Lester worked with Hazen Union High School to mentor students in projects that interested them, like working with the 3D printer, laser cutter, or learning about bike maintenance. This collaboration with the high school grew and Jake left Spark poised to carry the mentorship program forward. In 2023 we will expand it into our own makerspace and into the Community Park in Greensboro Bend.



## WonderArts : creativity and resilience

WonderArts is known for its rich history of nature-based creative enrichment, designed with our four values in mind. Through the lenses of arts, recreation, technology, and sustainability, we strive to provide fun year-round creative recreational activities, utilize the right technology for the space and project, and use sustainable materials and practices.



## GRACE : inclusion and outsider art

A winter workshops hiatus allowed us to focus on making the Old Firehouse available for small gatherings. We have welcomed in a youth Jiu Jitsu practice, Vermont Learning-Support Initiative's neurodivergent networking group, and a monthly fiber arts meetup.

# Special Thanks

Thank you to all of our volunteers who helped with events this year! From slinging pizzas in the Greenspace, to staffing open hours at Spark and trimming the grass at GRACE, thank you for your time and energy!

Another big thank you to the local businesses who generously sponsored events: Calderwood Insurance, The Genny, Willey's Store, and Mac Nurse, Above the Treeline Designs.

And thank you to all our donors. It is your generous and continued support that enables us to help make our community vibrant and welcoming.



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values sustainable  
business practices.



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In-house printing and design  
Digital reports and letters  
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