COMPAS
MAKING CREATORS

FISCAL YEAR

2025 IMPACT REPORT



Dear COMPAS Friends,

The world is asking something of us right now: to stay connected when it would be easier to withdraw, to choose hope when the path forward feels uncertain, to imagine what comes next. Creativity is how we answer that call.

This year, with your help, more than 60,000 Minnesotans found connection, shared their stories, and envisioned new possibilities through COMPAS workshops, residencies, and performances.

A fifth grader asked her parents to change their vacation plans so she would not miss a single day of a songwriting residency at her school.

A student who had been unsure of his writing skills proudly signed a copy of his poem for his teacher when it was selected for publication.

A woman who was unhoused walked into a mental health drop-in center, noticed people decorating ceramic dishes, and for a while did not have to be anything other than someone making something beautiful.

Moments like these are how connection takes root and communities grow stronger. This year, because of the COMPAS community, there were thousands more just like them.

Thank you for making sure every Minnesotan has the chance to create, because what we imagine together takes shape in the world around us.

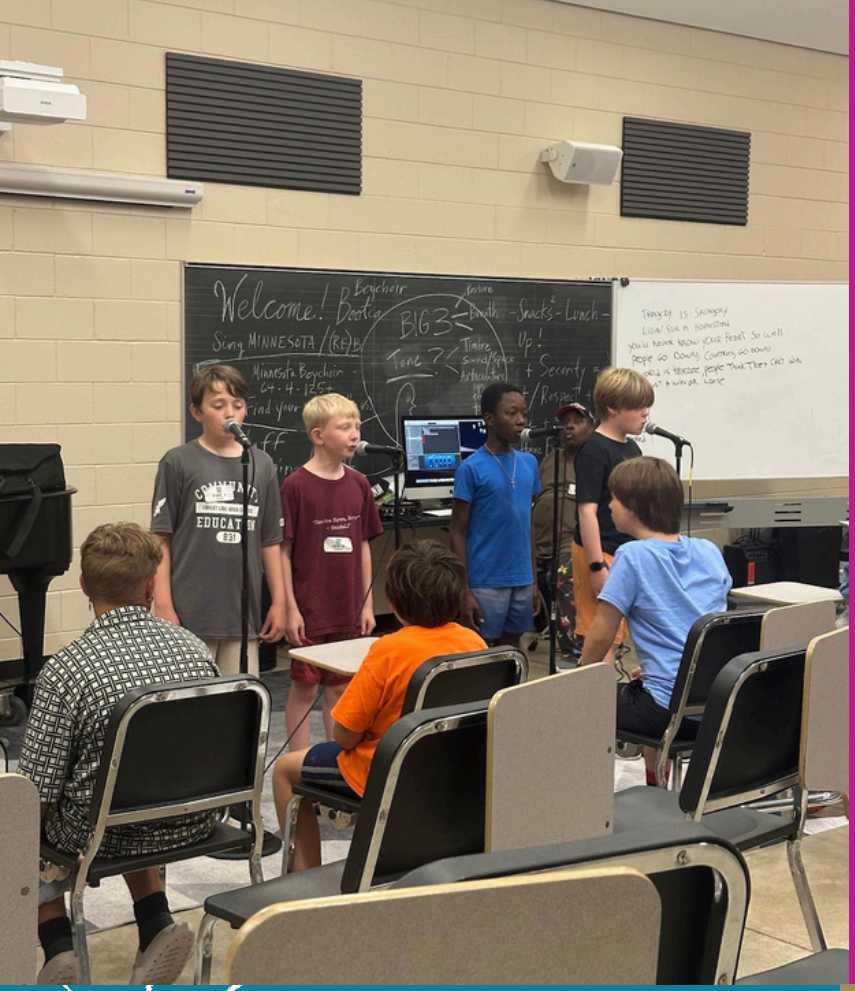
With gratitude and hope,



DAWNE BROWN WHITE
Executive Director



LIZ SHEETS
Board President



Our Mission

COMPAS delivers creative experiences that unleash the potential within all of us.

Our Vision

Minnesota thrives when all of us have access to creative opportunities that enrich lives and communities.



Building Community Through Creativity



Molly Taylor (formerly LaBerge), the founder of COMPAS

More than fifty years ago, COMPAS was founded on the belief that creativity belongs to everyone. This year, that belief was affirmed and celebrated from the stages of North Minneapolis to the libraries of the Arrowhead region, as COMPAS navigated headwinds and milestones alike, remaining steadfast in its mission to put creativity in the hands of Minnesotans, regardless of age, background or skill.

"Celebrating 50 Years, and the People Who Made It Possible

This year marked the continuation of COMPAS's 50th anniversary celebration. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan honored the occasion with a Certificate of Recognition, affirming that creative education is not a luxury but a cornerstone of Minnesota's identity. The anniversary was woven throughout the year's work: in the publication of "Move Hands Down to Heart," COMPAS's 45th annual anthology of student writing; in nine new Teaching Artists welcomed to our roster; and in continued partnerships across the state that have made COMPAS a trusted creative force for generations.

COMPAS emerging young artists SAINT PAUL

If there is one theme that defined this year, it is the power of young people to create, lead, and inspire.

COMPAS's fourth annual Emerging Young Artists (EYA) Award Show and Gallery Exhibition, held in March at Landmark Center in downtown Saint Paul, drew 135 young artists from the East Metro who submitted 287 pieces of visual art.

Sixty-two pieces were selected for the juried exhibition, and $9,200 in awards was distributed to twenty emerging artists.

The opening event crackled with the energy of young people who had something to say, and an audience ready to listen. During the exhibit's month-long run, thousands of people enjoyed and celebrated the talent and creativity of these young artists.



Images from COMPAS's fourth annual Emerging Young Artist award show and gallery exhibition launch event.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, young artists are finding new ways to express themselves, connect with others, and celebrate their creativity through COMPAS programs like Emerging Young Artist.

COMPAS PROGRAMS

CREATIVE COMMUNITY

You inspired thousands of Minnesotans!

Thanks to you, communities across the state were energized and uplifted through artist-led creative programs in libraries; shelters for those facing homelessness or domestic violence; social service organizations supporting individuals with physical, intellectual, or mental health disabilities; jails; youth organizations; community centers; and more.

4,198 Older adults banished loneliness and were inspired by transformative, creative experiences during programs in residential and day program settings.

36,322 Minnesotans experienced the uplifting power of creativity through programs in community spaces like parks and libraries, youth programs, social service agencies, and more, turning these everyday places into vibrant hubs.

13,880 Minnesotans were energized by Arts in Healthcare programs, which offered outlets for self-expression, reducing stress, improving well-being, and fostering meaningful connections.

COMPAS PROGRAMS

CREATIVE CLASSROOM

You ignited learning for students across Minnesota!

Thanks to you, classrooms across the state were transformed into vibrant spaces of discovery and creativity, where K-12 students explored new ideas, expressed themselves through the arts, and found inspiration that will fuel their growth and learning for years to come.

24,787 The number of students that connected with a COMPAS teaching artist at school.

3,312 The number of hours COMPAS teaching artists connected with students, enriching their lives, and inspiring them with creative experiences that foster connection, growth, and self-expression.

60,707 The total number of people of all ages who experienced the power of creativity through COMPAS programs this year. The result was vibrant works of art, unique stories, and the discovery of boundless possibilities through hands-on artistic expression.



COMPAS Student Anthology *Move Hands Down To Heart*

In classrooms across Minnesota, young writers found their voices through COMPAS residencies.

Roman T., an 8th grader from South View Middle School, captured the experience of being a young person of color in America through a poem that moved audiences to tears at the “Move Hands Down to Heart” publication celebration at the Minnesota History Center..

“When I started in early 8th grade, I never really thought I liked writing,” he said. “After meeting [COMPAS Teaching Artist] Frank Sentwali, and writing my first poem, I realized it’s kind of relaxing for me. It helps me bring out my inner feelings.”





Young authors sharing their work at the anthology reading.



Where I'm From

I am from Nigeria and Minnesota

I am from mom, dad, sis, cousin and friends

I am from the taste of pizza with chicken and gooey cheese

I am from Sanfrioland and Wisconsin Dells

I am from art, dance and track

I am Marie I Koroma

Marie Koroma, Grade 2
Eagle Point Elementary, Oakdale
Teaching Artist: Desdamona



Young authors whose work was included in the 2023-24 COMPAS Anthology of Student Writing. The photo was taken at the annual anthology reading event at the Minnesota History Center.



Saint Paul Get Down

The Saint Paul Get Down, in its second year, deepened its impact as a hub for youth hip hop artists ages 14 to 24.

With COMPAS providing mentorship through Teaching Artist Terrell X and staff leader Jes Reyes, 16 talented young artists were selected from 70 applicants.

One participant, Myallo, parlayed his experience into an invitation to perform piano at Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter's address. "That would have never happened if I didn't do this program," he reflected. "It made me believe anything is possible."





Participants of the Saint Paul Get Down



Creativity Across Generations

COMPAS's commitment to lifelong creativity was equally vivid in its work with older adults.

Teaching Artist Mike Hazard spent a week at Cassia's Elim Oasis Adult Day Center in Princeton, MN, where participants, some of whom had never taken a photograph before, used cameras to capture stained glass, bold colors, and one another.

The camera became more than a tool. It became a mirror. A window. And a way to connect.

Ultimately, this wasn't just about using a camera. It was about noticing. About connecting. About sharing joy.







Photos: Residents of Elim Oasis workshop



Creativity Across Minnesota

COMPAS extended its reach across the state in significant ways. Teaching Artist Charlie Maguire toured the Arrowhead region with his concert Going to Bartalina: Songs and Stories of Commercial Sailing on the Great Lakes, marking the 50th anniversary of the Edmund Fitzgerald's sinking. One audience member in her 80s missed her ride to one of the performances and hitchhiked 25 miles to attend. As Charlie put it: "Never underestimate the women of the Minnesota Iron Range."



Summer Fun

COMPAS Teaching Artists were also the creative engine behind summer programs at the Science Museum of Minnesota, Hennepin County Libraries, and Park Square Theatre, bringing art, story, and discovery to thousands of young people across the metro.



Meaningful Connections

In Edina, a haiku project at Countryside Elementary led to more than 500 poems written by students, and a touching exchange between a student and her bus driver, who responded to a gifted haiku with a rhyming ode of her own. Small moments, lasting connections.

OUR PODCAST

Creativity on Tap



Host Frank Sentwali



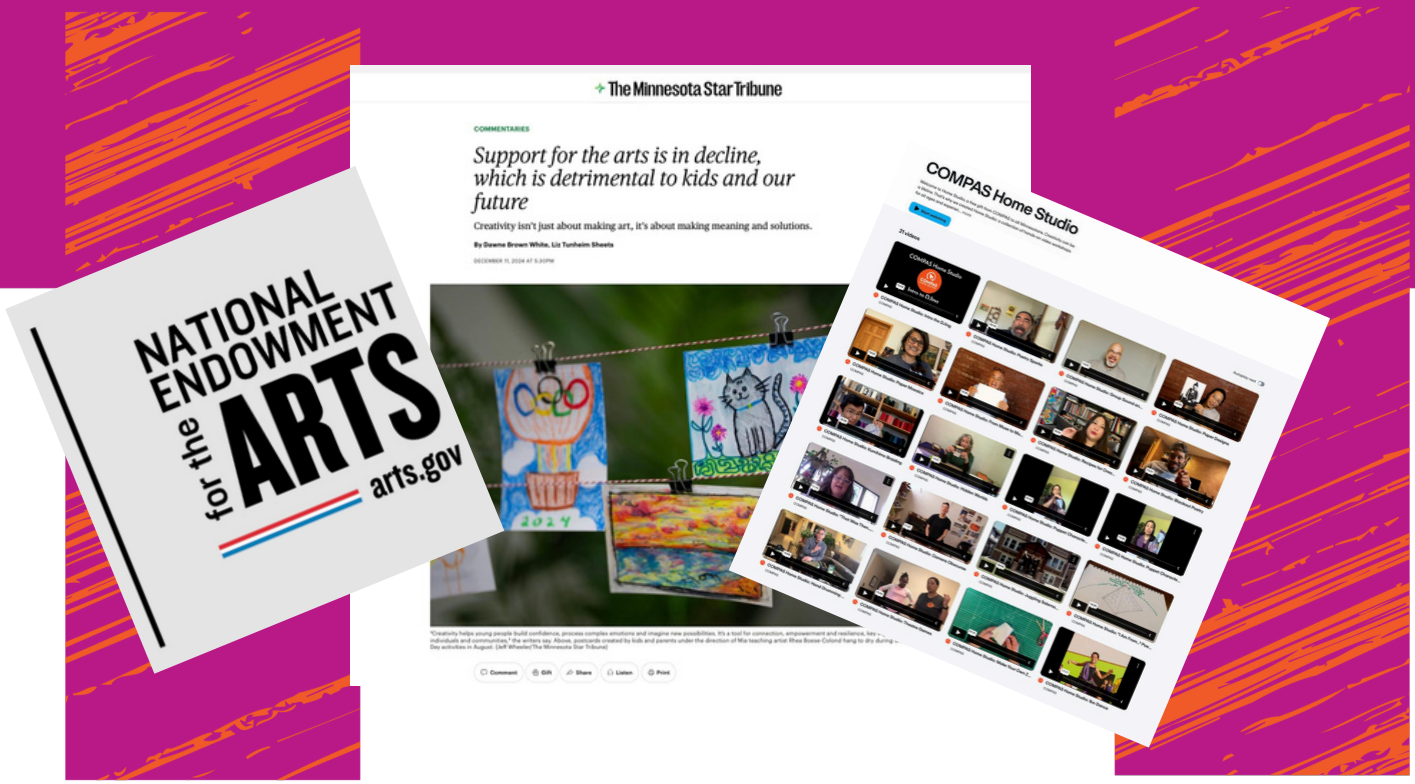
Creativity and the World

COMPAS added its voice to many meaningful conversations about the role of creativity in addressing today's most pressing challenges on our podcast, "Creativity on Tap."

This year, we were also proud to join the family of podcasts on Saint Paul's WFNU Frogtown Radio (94.1 FM, in the 5-mile radius around University and Dale avenues), where our show can now be heard weekly.

Available anywhere you download podcasts or at **creativityontap.buzzsprout.com**

Facing the Headwinds



This year was not without its challenges. In the spring, COMPAS learned that its National Endowment for the Arts grant had been terminated due to shifting national funding priorities. The grant had supported the Emerging Young Artists program, enabling 59 students to exhibit their work in a month-long gallery and bringing COMPAS Teaching Artists to more than 600 students through in-school residencies.

COMPAS responded with transparency, advocacy, and resolve. The organization called on supporters to contact elected officials, shared its story publicly, and stood in solidarity with arts organizations across Minnesota and the country facing similar losses. In a commentary responding to a Minnesota Star Tribune investigation into declining arts funding, Executive Director Dawne Brown White and Board President Liz Tunheim Sheets wrote, “Creativity is a human right. Let’s ensure every Minnesotan has the chance to embrace it.”

To meet the moment, COMPAS also opened its Home Studio program, an online library of creative workshops led by its roster of Teaching Artists, to all Minnesotans at no cost.



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT YOU.

Your generosity fuels our mission to ensure every Minnesotan has access to creative experiences that inspire and empower.

Thank you for being an essential part of this shared journey. We are deeply grateful for your support and belief in the arts as a force for good in our world.

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1. Includes matching gifts
2. In-kind donation

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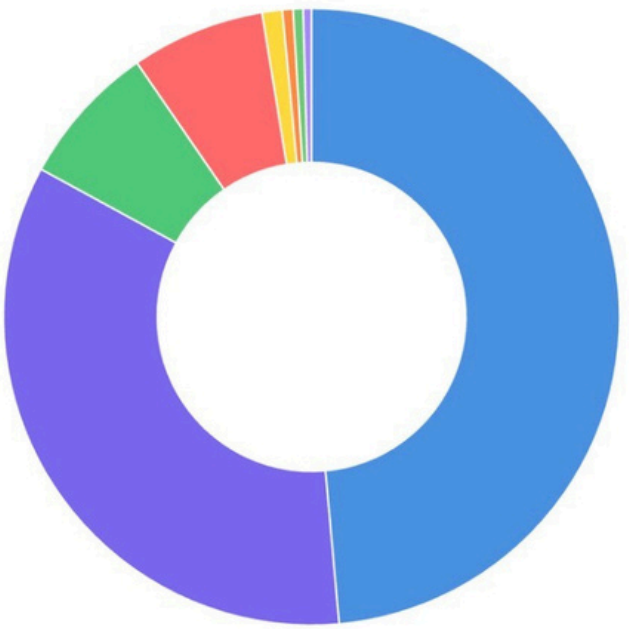


3. In honor of Joseph Bursch
4. In honor of Dawne and all the COMPAS staff--congrats on 50 years!
5. In honor of the teaching artists
6. In memory of Harlan Stoehr
7. In memory of Molly Taylor
8. In memory of David White
9. Creative Legacy Circle gift

Financial Summary: Revenue & Expenses

Income

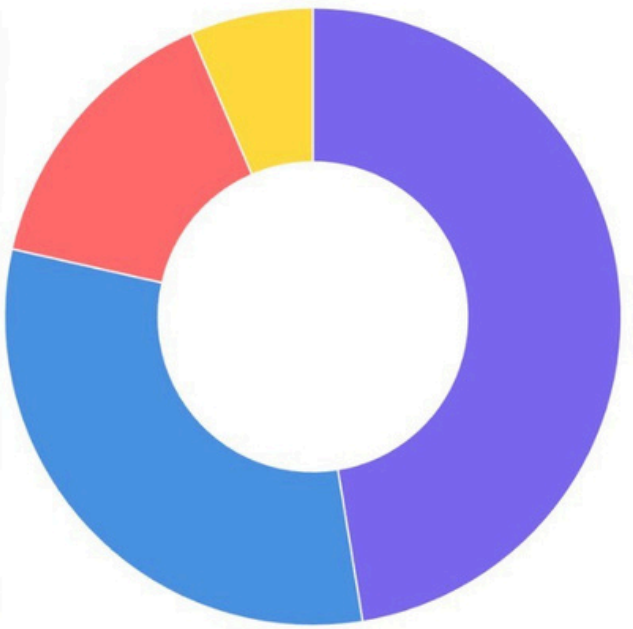
Total Income: $2,341,355



- Foundations and Corporations: $1,137,120 (48.6%)
- Program Service Fees: $804,906 (34.4%)
- Individuals: $174,816 (7.5%)
- Government Grants: $164,197 (7.0%)
- Special Events: $24,880 (1.1%)
- Miscellaneous Revenue: $13,017 (0.6%)
- Investments: $12,142 (0.5%)
- In-kind Contributions: $10,277 (0.4%)

Expenses

Total Expenses: $1,780,868



- Creative Community: $844,375 (47.4%)
- Creative Classroom: $553,950 (31.1%)
- Management & General: $267,629 (15.0%)
- Fundraising: $114,914 (6.5%)

Our Board






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COMPAS staff at Creativity Unleashed fundraiser

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Intern

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Intern









COMPAS
MAKING CREATORS

COMPAS.ORG

COMPAS is an arts education nonprofit that puts creativity in the hands of Minnesotans, regardless of their age, background, or skills. Based in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metro area, COMPAS teaching artists deliver creative experiences and arts programming across Minnesota.

Together, we can continue to spark creativity, empower individuals, and help communities thrive through the arts. Your support makes it possible to bring the transformative power of creativity to those who need it most.

Please visit compas.org/donate to give today.

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