



FREE ARTS

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH CREATIVITY

THANK YOU FOR
YOUR PAST SUPPORT OF
FREE ARTS!

2020: A YEAR OF GROWTH AND LEARNING

COVID-19

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic and in adherence with government-mandated restrictions, all in-person programming at Free Arts was forced to a halt in March 2020. This challenged us to find alternative ways to provide critical programs and services to thousands of children and families who depend on us. Did you know that LAPD, child advocates and shelters reported a spike in domestic violence in Los Angeles as parents and caregivers face the unprecedented stress of COVID-19, fires and civil unrest? Divorce and child abuse are at an all-time high, further destabilizing families. Sex trafficking of young girls and boys continues to increase unabated.

At Free Arts, we know that art is even more essential during times of crisis, so we created responsive virtual programming to our community that needs us most. We are resilient and continue to deliver programs to children through live sessions and accessible pre-recorded video.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

This year we as a nation came face to face with the long-term effects of social & racial injustice. As we watched many partake in protests to speak out against inhumanity, we were inspired by the dedication and determination to make meaningful change happen.

Free Arts will remain steadfast in using art as a vehicle for community while continually examining what more we can do to not only provide services and cultural awareness but to dismantle the structures and systems that stand in the way of equality and inclusion.

MENTAL HEALTH

The effects of COVID-19 made it apparent that addressing mental health is a top priority for Free Arts. We experienced this firsthand when we lost a team member due to their battle with mental health.

Art has proven time and time again to help ease anxiety and depression. Additionally, talking about mental health and raising awareness normalizes these issues, making people feel less alone. To be more responsive to this issue, we are including activities surrounding mental health conversations in our new curriculum.



"Art in this time is essential to our youth; it provides them with creative freedom and self-expression. We are in times where it is difficult to predict what our future will look like. We provide support to youth whose parents have lost jobs and even homes. This art will help our youth see the light at the end of the tunnel. It provides them with a bit of hope for things going back to normal one day. Therefore, I truly think art has helped our youth free their minds again and fuel their imagination. "

—Salvador Molina, Youth Development Professional, Boys and Girls Club of Santa Monica

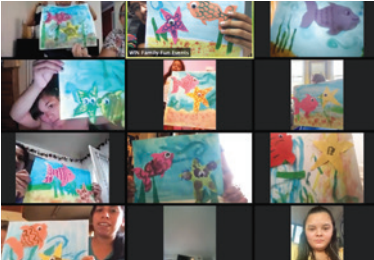
[Turn over to see what's next and how you can help](#)

2021: A NEW FUTURE



NEW CURRICULUM

Free Arts has been continuously updating our curriculum, recently bringing in diversity experts to address topics related to diversity, equity, community and identity. Given the important issues that 2020 has brought to the attention of our entire nation, our goal is to bring in new ideas related to: Black Lives Matter, social justice, mental health, and the LGBTQ+ community.



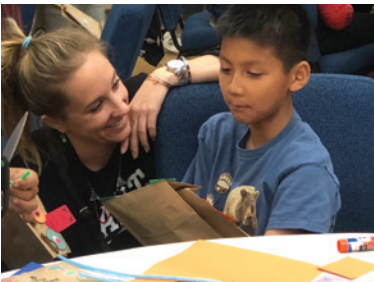
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

Free Arts' Weekly Mentorship program has gone virtual, giving children a chance to explore creative self-expression in a variety of artistic media, guided by a trained and dedicated volunteer-mentor. In addition, recorded videos are available for those who can't participate in live workshops. Each child is provided with an art kit with all the supplies needed to create.



ACTIVITY BOOKS

Art is needed now more than ever. Free Arts put together activity books that provide children a break from the stress of day-to-day. We targeted distribution towards our partners that cannot have live programming and children that don't have access to technology. Activities address topics such as social justice, mental health and LGBTQ+.



COURTHOUSE PROGRAM AND LUNCH VOUCHERS

Free Arts will continue to provide lunch vouchers daily to families in need and will expand in providing food assistance to children in underserved communities. In addition, the new curriculum and pre-packaged activity books with crayons will be available for socially distanced programming and take-home experiences.



BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM

In 2021, the newly virtual Building Bridges program will implement a new curriculum for children in grades 4-6 using painting, sculpture, storytelling and poetry to explore similarities and differences between Islamic and African American cultures. Children will participate online, studying present day and historical art and its relation to culture.



FREE ARTS' CORPORATE AND VOLUNTEER DAYS

With COVID-19 being a factor for in-person team building & volunteer experiences, Free Arts implemented a new virtual program "Art with a Purpose" which allows corporate donors, groups and volunteers to partake in virtual art experiences boosting morale while enabling team building. All virtual group art projects focus on themes of community, identity and transformation, while experiencing various avenues of art.

Go to our website for more information, or contact Bianca Hunter at bianca@freearts.org