



NEW YORK CITY  
**Children's  
Theater**



# Annual Report

SEPTEMBER 28, 2020

# Andrew Frank

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# New York City Children's Theater Annual Report

**I**n Fall 2019, we kicked off a four-show season with our largest-grossing box-office hit ever; began programming in 48 schools and 36 Homeless Shelters; received word that we would be receiving a record \$470k in NYC and other government support; and hired three new staff members to help us manage it all. Flash forward to Spring 2020: theaters and schools shut down; our recently expanded staff was operating remotely from three separate states; and the plans we had been working to fulfill all season long required immediate and substantial change.

We regularly tell you that *New York City Children's Theater's programs cultivate children's growth in the areas of: Emotional Intelligence, Community Building, and Responsible Decision-Making and the result is empathetic, creative, and independent thinkers who make a positive impact on their world.* So when change was required we looked to our mission and drew upon our own empathy, creativity, and ability to make a positive impact. We managed to deliver reimagined versions of planned theatrical and educational programming. We invented entirely new programs and new platforms to share them on. We re-tooled our administrative set-up and retained our staff.

Most importantly we continued to serve some of New York City's most vulnerable children with engaging and enriching arts programs.

New York City Children's Theater is grounded in stories. Our story this year is one of holding fast to our values while simultaneously embracing and growing through fast-paced change. We created this report to honor the contributions of the many friends who made that possible and to share our story with them and with you.

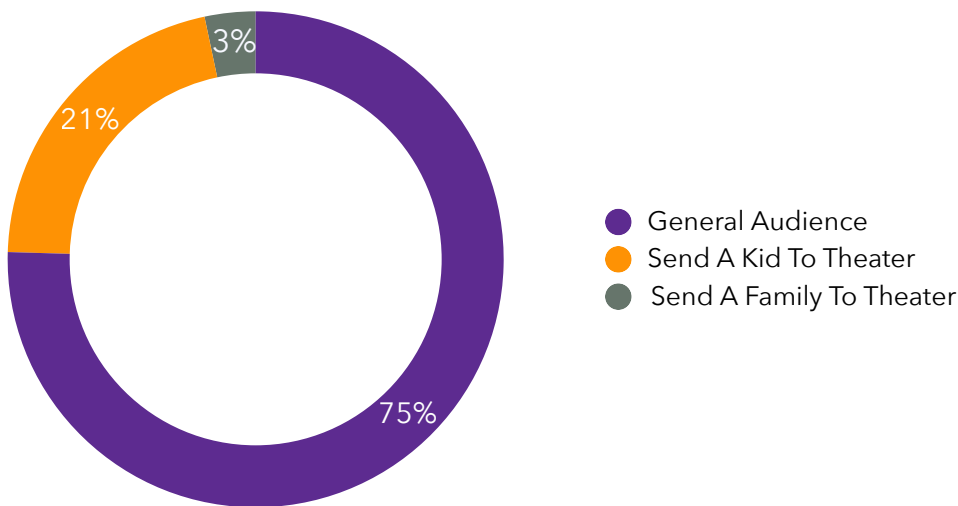


In the 2020 Season, New York City Children's Theater seated **3974 audience members** at three premier shows. We broke our **box office record** when an **all-female creative team** reimagined a holiday classic to become My First Nutcracker.

## THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS

Our donor-funded **Send A Family to Theater** and **Send A Child To Theater** access initiatives ensure that a generous percentage of our tickets go to **low-income families** and Title I **school groups**.

New York City Children's Theater promotes children's literacy and social development through professional theater productions and arts-in-education programs.



## MY FIRST

This year **24%** of our main stage production tickets were **granted through access initiatives**. Our donors helped us offer **750 Send A Kid to Theater** tickets and **107 Send A Family to Theater** tickets to low-income New Yorkers.

## NUTCRACKER

Directed and choreographed by Melissa Riker, Artistic Director of Kinesis Project

Written by Barbara Zinn Krieger

30 performances  
Theatre Row

Dancers: Hilary Brown, Corry Ethridge, John Pickup, Claudia-Lyn Rightmire

Set Designer Sheryl Liu, Lighting Designer Carolyn Wong, Costume Designer Heather McDevitt Barton, and Sound Designer Megan Culle.

*Whether your kids have never stepped foot in a theater or are seasoned veterans, this unique rendition will surely be a memory that little ones will cherish for years to come.*

-Theresa Wang, FiDi Families



## THE TRAVELER

Created and Directed by Andrew Frank  
Created and Performed by Bill Bowers

4 performances  
Theatre Row

## TASTE THE CLOUDS

Created by Hit The Lights! Theater Co.  
Samantha Blain, Kristopher Dean, Claron Hayden,  
Casey Leach, Mikayla Stanley

Based on the book by Rita Marshall

12 of an originally scheduled 26 performances  
The Flea Theater



## CREATIVE CLUBHOUSE

By the end of March, New York City Children's Theater realized we needed a venue for our theatrical programming that would **support families in quarantine**. Our Artistic Department quickly coordinated with artists from our current and past seasons to curate and optimize **digital video presentations** of popular NYCCT productions, our Marketing Department **created a new portal** on our website, and *Creative Clubhouse* was born.



Through the portal, we broadcast the very popular ***Interstellar Cinderella*** (2018. Based on the book by Deborah Underwood. Music & Lyrics by Laurie Berkner, Book by Barbara Zinn Krieger), ***Little Red Fish*** (2018. Based on the book by Taeun Yoo. Created by Puppet Kitchen.), ***Love That Dog*** (2017. Based on the book by Sharon Creech. Adapted and Directed by Andrew Frank and Jason Howard), and last season's hit ***This Is Sadie*** (Based on the book by Sara O'Leary, Directed and Choreographed by Stephanie Klemmons with a scenario by Barbara Zinn-Krieger).

Teaching Artist Caitlyn McCain, drew on the **trauma-informed pedagogy training** she'd received as an Education Intern at New York City Children's Theater to retool our **Literature At Play** curriculum into ***Creative Clubhouse Stories***. Each session of the interactive video class used **theater techniques, music**, and internet-sourced **video clips** to bring a storybook to life, and offered home-bound students an **opportunity to play** through their feelings. Books were specifically **curated to address some of the emotions** young students might encounter while being isolated from their normal friends and routines.

Additionally, Creative Clubhouse offered **activities for children, resources and support for grown-ups**, and **interactive videos created by New York City Children's Theater teaching artists**.

New York City Children's Theater is able to execute our mission through the work of a dedicated staff of administrators and teaching artists, as well as the talented creative artists that make theater with us. An investment in those people is an investment in our mission and our future. During the COVID-19 shutdown, **NYCCT retained our entire staff and paid all of our contracted creative and teaching artists the full value of their contracts**, even when shows and classes were cancelled.

Over **two dozen** teaching artists created over **100 hours** of interactive video lessons for New York City School Children.

Through Creative Clubhouse, **280 Families of Essential Workers** participated in New York City Children's **Theater Programming** at no cost.

**5800 Students from low-income families** saw at least one **free streaming performance** of a New York City Children's Theater production during the shutdown.

NYC officially shut down a little over a week before our planned opening of ***Dory Fantasmagory*** (Based on the book by Abby Hanlon. Book by Sara Wordsworth and Russ Kaplan. Music by Russ Kaplan. Lyrics by Sara Wordsworth.) We want audiences to have the opportunity to experience this imaginative romp live. Accordingly, we have postponed the opening until our 2021-22 season.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMS

From September, through March, our interactive theater in education sessions took place **in K-5 classrooms and community centers in all five boroughs**. Once schools shuttered, New York City Children's Theater contacted each of our school and community partners to coordinate remote learning possibilities; and our Education Department re-imagined our spring programming creating the opportunity for NYC students to engage virtually with students and complete almost 85% of our planned sessions.



In our **Literature at Play** programs, New York City Children's Theater teaching artists guided students through weeks-long residencies during which they explored the themes of a picture book, dissected its structure, and remapped its story into an **original script and song**. Our **anti-bullying programs** harnessed the **emotional intelligence** of NYC students into an interactive theater piece to give them the **opportunity to learn, practice, and improve their ability to stand up for themselves and for others**, and to **cultivate empathy** in their daily interactions. We continued bringing weekly **Literature at Play** sessions to **students in homeless shelters**, we expanded our work for **students with disabilities** and those diagnosed with **emotional disturbance**, and we created a **brand new program for multi-lingual learners**, which we delivered remotely to students in the Bronx.

In 2020, 29 Teaching Artists served **2432 Students** in 22 Schools & Community Centers.

Together they wrote **88 scripts and songs** through the New York City Children's Theater

**Literature At Play** Program. **2888 Students** participated in a New York City

Children's Theater **Anti-Bullying Workshop**.

Our programs align with the NYC/DOE blueprint for English Language Arts (1-3) and Arts (1-4). School Teachers have reported that their students show **increased cooperation, focus, and interest in reading and writing** in response to our residencies. Each class is given the opportunity to share their new work with another class of their peers in a staged presentation. In addition to **building literacy and social-emotional skills**, these programs offer students the opportunity to show off their **creative skill** and **gain confidence** in their performance abilities.

## WHO WE SERVE

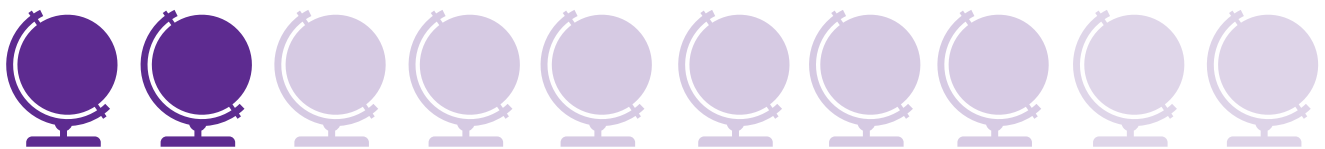
New York City Children's Theater creates our **Education programs to serve the diverse field of learners that populate New York City Schools.** We offer each of our Teaching Artists tools designed to best position them to **serve the students** they meet in that field.



**31%** of the population we serve are **students with disabilities** or **emotional disturbance.**



**80%** of the population we serve identify as **Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color.**



**20%** of the population we serve are **multilingual learners** who speak more than one language in the home.



**70%** of our partner schools are **Title I Schools** the majority of whose student populations are **economically disadvantaged.**



## ARTS PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS IN TRANSITIONAL HOMELESS SHELTERS (ARC)

In the fall we began our fifth year as an arts enrichment partner for the Department of Education's After-School Reading Club (ARC). Our teaching artists fanned across **all five boroughs** to bring **book-based theater and songwriting activities** to **students living in transitional housing**. These interactive sessions took place **throughout the entire school year**, engaging children with a comprehensive program that **improves literacy and language skills and supports students emotionally and socially**. In the spring, COVID-19 closures forced us to translate the program to a video format, which we were able to deliver to half of contracted sites.



By providing a weekly opportunity to learn through play and explore creativity, **the program offers young people experiencing housing instability a structure in which to practice academic and social skills in a supportive setting and build vital tools to help them succeed under traumatic situations.**

In 2020 **27 Teaching Artists** delivered **414 in-person lessons** and **89 video lessons** which served **1080 students** in **36 transitional shelters** through the New York City Children's Theater **ARC program**.

Studies have shown that the **opportunity to recognize oneself** in a story allows children to process their feelings and **gain the emotional maturity** to function as **both leaders and cooperative team members**. Our program is based in story books, specifically chosen for their relevance to the lives of the students we serve. Our **highly-trained staff** create activities which align with the NYC/DOE blueprint for English Language Arts (1-3) and Arts (1-4).

Additionally, **we trained DOE Teachers** supporting the program to use the same **trauma informed strategies** we employ. Teachers gained **tools to create a supportive, calm, and creative classroom for students who may have experienced trauma**. This crucial part of the program will have **exponential results** as they apply these lessons in hundreds of classrooms across the New York City in years to come. Students with disability or diagnosed with emotional disturbance

## SERVING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY AND THOSE WITH EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

New York City Children's Theater continued its commitment to serving students with disabilities and those diagnose with emotional disturbance this year.

Created as a traveling show for **students with disabilities** and the very young, FIVE offers students the opportunity to **explore their five senses** through **music, puppetry**, and **interactive theater** as they join Piper, a literally senseless puppet from outer space, on a journey through New York City's five boroughs.



In 2020, the cast of **FIVE** delivered live performances to **1694 students** in **14 schools**. New York City Children's Theater created a newly developed video version offered free of charge to **61 schools** which specialize in **students with disabilities** or **emotional disturbance**.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** is an approach to teaching aimed at **meeting the needs of every student in the classroom**. UDL methodologies **dissolve barriers between students with disabilities and the subject of a given lesson**.

In addition to translating FIVE to a video format, the New York City Children's Theater Education team brought **Universal Design for Learning** practices to students in residencies around the city. As one example, we designed a program at PS 177 in Queens specifically for **five to eight year-old students with multiple disabilities**. The program ran for eight weeks in seven classrooms. We met with classroom teachers and school administrators to ensure that the program would meet the needs of students. When the pandemic began, this program was moved to a virtual setting and was **offered in both live as well as pre-recorded versions**. The students and teaching staff were excited to continue exploring these books through a digital format and the residency concluded with **100% participation of students and staff**.

*The Teaching Artists deserve 5 stars... I wish there was a higher score than 5 stars! ...truly phenomenal. They were engaging, patient, and incredibly nurturing.* - Classroom Teacher PS 169M

## MUSIC AND MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Last year we piloted an exciting new program that combined **songwriting and theatrical storytelling to build language skills in second grade multilingual learners** in one of the **poorest districts in NYC**. An independent review of our work showed that the program helped some of the city's most vulnerable children **improve their speaking, reading, and writing skills, and increased classroom participation.**



Twice a week for eight weeks, **teaching artists engaged classes of second graders with drama and music activities centered around a storybook.** Each book was specifically chosen for its relevance to the lives of the students we serve. Together **the classes wrote a multilingual script and song** based on the story, rehearsed, and presented the resulting work to the school community. The program was designed to ensure that **early learners develop English language skills in authentic and engaging settings that use the power of the arts to foster self-expression and generate critical thinking.**

In 2020, NYCCT Teaching Artists guided **468 students** in **20 classes** through a multilingual adventure based in one of **7 books** together they created **3 scripts** and **20 songs** in our Music and Multilingual Learners program.

New York City Children's Theater contracted an expert in **comprehension strategies** to train both our teaching artists and the classroom teachers in the program to use **teaching modalities specifically suited to working with multilingual learners.** Teaching artists met with language, music, and classroom teachers at each school throughout the residency to ensure that **programming met student needs.** Covid-related closures interrupted the residencies halfway through. We offered each school the opportunity to complete the residency remotely. Three of the five schools did, and in June, got to **share the original multilingual scripts they had written with their peers.**

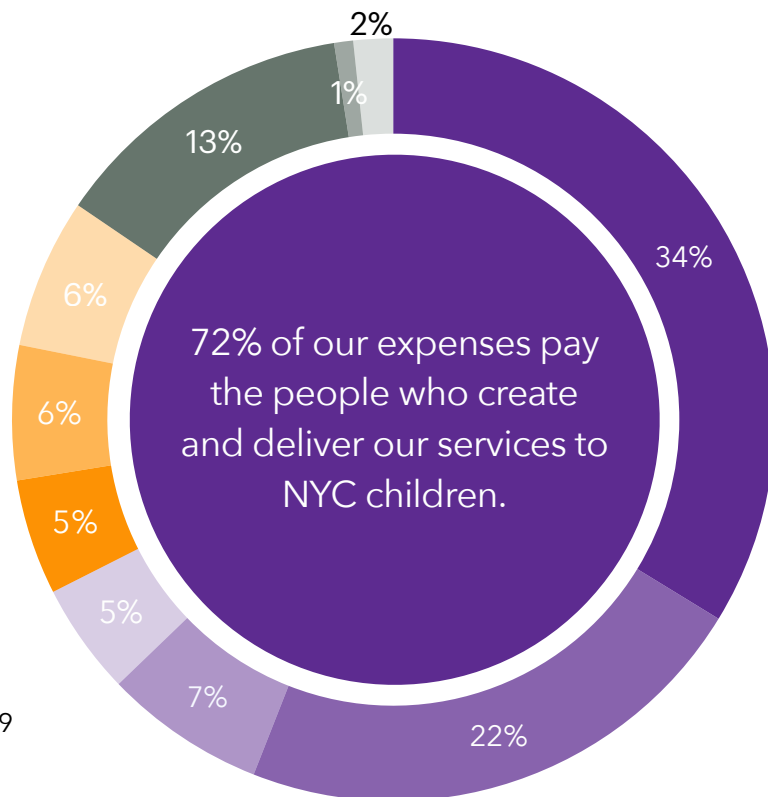
*With the integration of drama and theater into my daily activities, all my students are involved and supported. They get more creative and confident to share and express knowledge and understanding — especially those students who are not yet fluent readers or writers. I now feel more confident integrating theater more often and sometimes use it as an alternative to my writing and class discussions*

-Classroom Teacher



**Income**

- Foundation Support \$338,550
- Government Grants \$335,000
- Individual Contributions \$267,300
- Donated Goods & Services \$97,500
- Ticket Sales \$63,360
- Corporate Contributions \$45,450
- Education Programs \$40,200
- Miscellaneous \$5,200



**Expenses**

- Administrative Salaries \$431,705
- Education Program Salaries \$284,349
- Production Salaries \$87,468
- Payroll Taxes \$60,606
- Contracted Production Creative Services \$62,761
- Professional Fees \$72,870
- Production Expenses \$81,370
- General Operating Expenses \$166,455
- Advertising/Marketing \$10,284
- Miscellaneous \$21,537

## 2020 NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S THEATER STAFF

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**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER**

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Becca Bernard

Madeline Calandrillo

Sindy Castro

Jessica Cermak

Khalia Davis

Lynda DeFuria

Bekah Elles

Brian Feinstein

Claire Fleitz

Diana Fox

Laura Galindo

Kit Goldstein Grant

Meghan Grover

Psacoya Guinn

Kimberly Hale

Betina Hershey

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Carrie Ellman-Larsen

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Tony Macht

Kalle Macrides

Mackenzie McBride

Caitlyn McCain

Adam Boggs McDonald

Katherine McDowell

Cheyenne Mesura

Mandy Nicole Moore

Peter Musante

Julia Nickerson

Garry Novikoff

Drew Petersen

Yvonne Roen

Ingrid Running

Michael Schott

Nicole Serra

Julia Sharpe-Levine

Karina Sindicich

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Frankie Sunswept

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## 2020 NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S THEATER DONORS

**W**ithout the support of the following foundations, individuals, and institutions, we could not have created the impactful programming which inscribed 2020 with success. Thank you all for your support.

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