



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

(Pictured Above) PH 1:1 Program Coordinator Shaneen "Middle" Cotterell and PH Executive Director Dan Chapman Smith at our monthly PH 1:1 Hang-Out.

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(Left) Wooden medallions made by participants at a PH 1:1 Hang-Out.



# A Message from Dan and Andrew

This past year felt like the first year since the onset of the pandemic when we were not reacting, pivoting, surfing the unknown. For PH it was an opportunity to finally step back and ask “what do we now know”? At Project: Humanity, we’ve felt increasingly assured that PH 1:1, our arts mentorship program for youth-on-the-margins, is dissolving isolation, forging critical connections and letting youth engage in the arts as a “rehearsal for life”. We know that we are playing an important role moving artists and youth beyond forms of coping towards authentic forms of wellbeing as they navigate living in our deeply expensive city. We know that as the theatre sector finds its feet again, our experimental dive into new approaches has resulted in delightful and impactful intersections between theatre and community.

We have done our best to take the things we’re learning and to advance them while balancing the realities of ebbing funding in the sector. One youth in particular has helped us take heart in the long game. A mentee in PH 1:1 was seeking mentorship in metal sculpting. It was difficult to find a mentor for this form and we offered several alternatives. She was patient and firm, waiting as two cohorts started without her. When we finally found the right mentor, this past year, they embarked on an exceptionally successful artistic journey together. This young person has reminded us of what is gained when you take the time to get it just right. The particulars matter. The pace does not. We are taking this cue to stay in the now and to appreciate the value of the work we get to do each day.

Thank you for taking part in our ongoing journey.



Andrew Kushnir  
Artistic Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew".

Daniel Chapman Smith  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan".

# Our Mission and Key Values

We've observed how the social fabric is frayed, how many are pushed towards the edge, experiencing feelings of isolation and disconnection. Project: Humanity is leaning into the power of real-life stories and the arts to help build up community and compassion in our society as a whole.

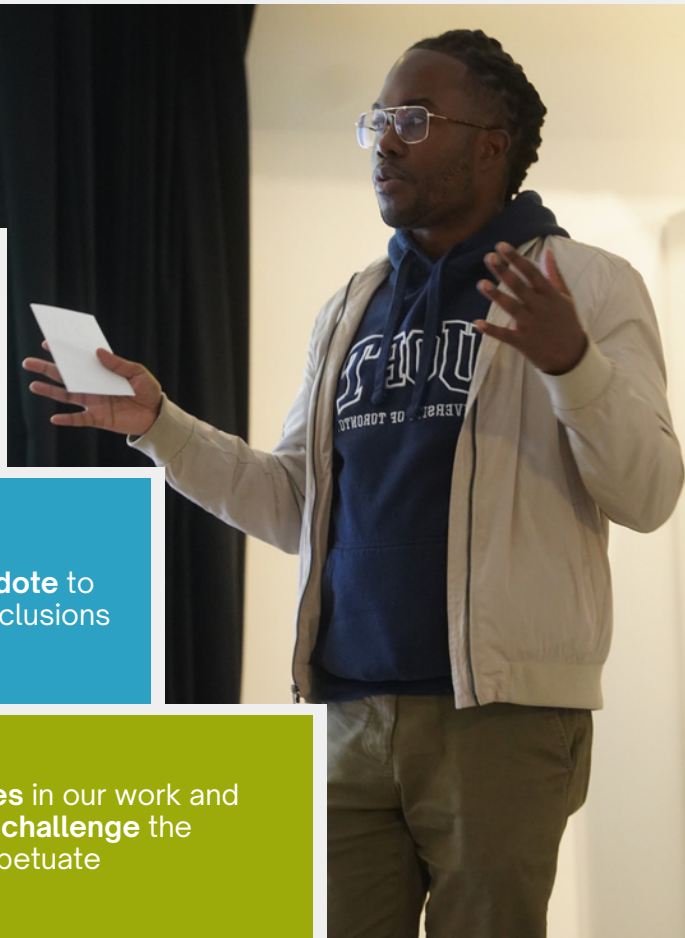
## AS A COMPANY, HERE ARE OUR KEY VALUES:

To value **process** over **product**

To actively **resist** binaries and **binary-thinking**

To centre **wonder** as an **antidote** to **reactivity** and rushing to conclusions

To **examine power structures** in our work and work culture and to **actively challenge** the **inequities** that they may perpetuate



David Lewis-Peart facilitating a workshop of *Rebuilding the Circle*. Photo by Drew Berry.

# About PH

Since 2008, Project: Humanity has worked to build connections between artistic excellence and community engagement. We have been long-committed to nurturing creativity and creative relationships that activate the conscience and imagination simultaneously. This work is organized into two arms, PH: THEATRE and PH: YOUTH.



A snapshot of our monthly PH 1:1 Hang-Outs, hosted at SKETCH Working Arts.

## PH: YOUTH

PH: YOUTH provides innovative arts programming to youth in shelters and schools across the GTA

Project: Humanity believes access to arts education is an essential need for youth, which is why we bring programs to shelters, providing opportunities for young people to express themselves, explore social issues and break down social barriers in their communities. Since 2008, we've led hundreds of workshops reaching over 1000 youth in 9 shelters across the GTA and dozens of schools.



Hailey Lewis and Alten Wilmot in a workshop performance for *Is This of Any Value For You?* Photograph by Drew Berry.

## PH: THEATRE

PH: THEATRE brings our groundbreaking documentary theatre productions to audiences nationwide.

Project: Humanity believes access to arts education is an essential need for youth, which is why we bring programs to shelters, providing opportunities for young people to express themselves, explore social issues and break down social barriers in their communities. Since 2008, we've led hundreds of workshops reaching over 1000 youth in 9 shelters across the GTA and dozens of schools.

# New to the Team



## SHANEEN "MIDDLE" COTTERELL, PH 1:1 PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Shaneen (she/her), also known by the stage name Middle, is a Canadian artist, DJ, composer, and audio engineer from the city of Toronto. Shaneen has extensive knowledge in music production, having graduated with honours in 2018 from Metalworks Institute. Shaneen is passionate about arts education and sharing insight on ways in which young creatives can begin navigating the music industry.

## ALLISON AHUMADA, ADMINISTRATOR

Allison (she/her) has called Canada her home away from home since her family migrated from Chile when she was 6 years old. Memories of Honest Eds, catching snowflakes and Women's Shelters form part of her earliest memories. She believes we are all stronger together, and no one should be left behind. With a strong background in Administration and her love for the arts she has found a happy temporary home at Project: Humanity.



# Our Board of Directors

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# PH YOUTH:



PH 1:1 began in May 2020 as a way to sustain our arts programming for youth-on-the-margins, many of whom had their struggles with isolation and mental health exacerbated through COVID-19 lockdown measures.

Now offered in partnership with 9 shelters/youth-serving community partners, it has not just sustained, but increased our engagement with youth facing the greatest barriers to accessing arts education, which is why we have cemented it as a permanent program.

*"There was a moment when we were jamming that we both were really into it and it seemed as if nothing else existed. And I was thinking about how we all need that at times, life can be heavy, but these moments really can make it special."*

- PH 1:1 Artist Mentor



Middle and PH 1:1 Mentee Aemun at a PH 1:1 Hang-Out.

## PH 1:1 NUMBERS TO DATE

9	LONG-TERM COMMUNITY PARTNERS
50	ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES EXPLORED
1276	COMPLETED MENTORSHIP WEEKS
4712	UNIQUE TOUCH-POINTS BETWEEN ARTISTS AND MENTORS
108	MENTORSHIPS LAUNCHED
\$141K	REMUNERATED TO ARTIST MENTORS





The following pages are  
excerpts from our  
**2023 PH 1:1 Impact Report**

## HEALING THROUGH THE ARTS

After 3 years of PH 1:1, we are coming to better understand the ways program supports mental health. There is already substantial research indicating the efficacy of the arts in this capacity. In 2019, the WHO released a report affirming that the arts play “a critical role in helping to prevent the onset of mental illness and supporting the treatment or management of mental illness”. In the context of our 12-week, one-to-one mentorships, we are seeing how youth participants’ feelings of isolation have been reduced alongside a marked increase in their confidence. A fostering of mental well-being has been a clear upshot of our work.”

## A PATH TO INCREASING CONFIDENCE

The Foundation of Art and Healing, a non-profit working on American public health through the arts, maintains that creating art has the power to build confidence and empower self-care by offering a tangible opportunity for someone to accomplish something meaningful to them – which reinforces their belief in themselves. By developing a regular practice in the arts, youth can “give rise to a sense of accomplishment and to feelings of self-worth in their own abilities.





*“[My mentee] has an increased sense of confidence about his future as an artist. Not only did his work on camera improve immensely in our time together, his attitude on what he was capable to handle changed over time. **I noticed a shift in his willingness to dive in and try new things and an increased dedication to his craft.**”*

- Mikaela, PH 1:1 Artist Mentor

*“I really spend most of my time doing background work. I feel like this mentorship helped me stress less out about whether I am trying too hard, and it helped me to be more social with other actors. **It really helped me to ground myself and be more confident around other people.**”*

- Mikaela's PH 1:1 Mentee

***“My mentee definitely left our mentorship with a new blossoming skill.** I hope that they left feeling confident to try their new skill out on their own, as my only goal with all of my students is to give them the confidence to try new things and pieces on their instrument.”*

- Kellie, PH 1:1 Artist Mentor

*“The mentorship was excellent and was very well-paced - I didn't feel rushed. I felt that I was actually absorbing the information at a good speed and **I'm very happy where I am now with my new abilities.**”*

- Kellie's PH 1:1 Mentee

*“I can see her growing more confident in her ability to get into university and find the resources to help her thrive rather than just survive. She was hesitant about her grades and acceptance but I think **she feels a lot more confident in applying and getting into the program of her choice.**”*

- Polina, PH 1:1 Artist Mentor

*“My mentor opened up opportunities to share my work and be in more spaces. **I've been looking into post-secondary media and communications and it helps me with networking.** When people see me with my camera they're like: “Oh! You do photography?”... It's a great conversation starter.”*

- Polina's PH 1:1 Mentee

For a more extensive analysis of PH 1:1's positive effects on youth mental health, along with program highlights and testimonies from our youth/mentor partnerships, read our [2023 PH 1:1 Impact Report](#)



## PH 1:1 HANG-OUTS

Created in response to feedback from our youth participants, these casual art nights kicked off in January 2023. It quickly became a go-to for PH 1:1 youth, providing a welcoming space to forge new connections, share artistic passions, and make lasting friendships. Both youth and mentors are invited to enjoy complimentary food, art supplies, and a secure environment for creative exploration. Hosted at SKETCH Working Arts, this initiative is building our PH 1:1 community while introducing participants to a vibrant artistic hub and an array of other arts programs. Our “hangs” have featured group activities using music, theatre and visual art. Youth participants and mentors alike have found a space defined by it’s enriching blend of creativity, peer-to-peer bonding, and artistic sharing.

## VERBATIM THEATRE WORKSHOPS

Over the past year, we’ve returned to high school classrooms with our Verbatim Theatre Workshops. Our work with students introduces them to the form, our methodologies and the ethics of verbatim theatre. This kind of theatre lends itself to questions of social justice including privilege, colonialism, and systemic marginalization. As creators and subjects, students undergo the process of leading an interview, selecting which words get used, and choosing how to perform those words. They also experience hearing their own voices and opinions as represented by peer-creators. At the end of this workshop, students gain meaningful insights about ethical storytelling and the value of their own ‘real-life’ narratives.

*“They kind of said it when we were sitting down and talking, but how it takes so little time to make such an amazing performance. I was really shocked.”*

— Tazqueen, Youth Workshop Participant



Dan at a monthly PH 1:1 Hang-Out.

# PH: THEATRE

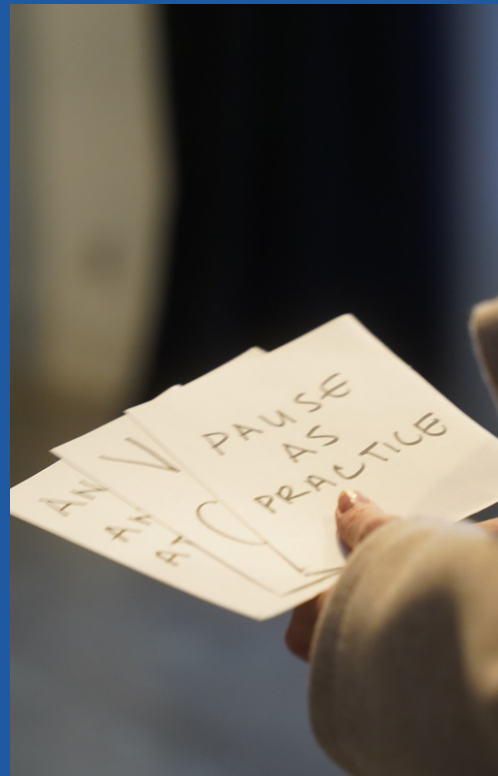
With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, Project: Humanity continued development with our Proximity Lab. The Proximity Lab – born in the lockdowns during the pandemic – has continued to be a vital think tank and experimentation ground for new forms of verbatim theatre and public engagement.



Katey Wattam facilitating a workshop of *Rebuilding the Circle*. Photo by Drew Berry.

Katey Wattam is a director and trauma-focused social worker who has been developing an experiential workshop entitled *Rebuilding the Circle: Relationships, Rupture, Repair*. At the centre of this work: how do we undertake the emotional demands of storytelling – in theatre especially – in a healthy way? In its pilot, she and co-facilitator David Lewis-Pearl took participants through a collaborative process that touched on neurobiology and the nervous system, accountability, ethics and values and holistic health. They designed a space and process to reflect on the current culture in the theatre community and how we can work internally and relationally to ‘rebuild the circle’.

## Rebuilding the Circle



An image from *Rebuilding the Circle*. Photo by Drew Berry.



## It's a Shame and The Candlemaker's Game

PH further developed Lucy Coren's It's a Shame (which seeks to expand our understanding of sex workers in our community) and Richard Lam's The Candlemaker's Game (which converts conflict resolution tools into a tactile, theatricalized game experience). Both projects undertook an auditing phase where the lead artists crafted new plans for workshops slated for the 2023/24 season.



## Audacious Citizens

Dr. Kathleen Gallagher's latest ethnographic research project is entitled Global Youth (Digital) Citizen-Artists and their Publics: Performing for Socio-Ecological Justice (called Audacious Citizenship for short). Andrew Kushnir has been embedded in this work, as he was in her last project, which culminated in the 2019 production of his play, Towards Youth and their book Hope in a Collapsing World (2022). This latest project asks many questions, among them: can we build movements to refuse climate fatalism with the help and leadership of young people, drama and theatre?

In February 2023, Andrew joined Kathleen at their site in Lucknow, India, to work with and learn from the youth at Prerna (Study Hall). This marks Andrew's second visit to India and second encounter with the critical feminist pedagogy at this school. This research trip naturally advanced his understanding of the remarkable role that drama plays in these young people's lives – and how it contributes to forms of social awareness and activism.



# CHEW

As one competitor puts it *“It’s like a standing-still parade. We just happen to be eating food.”*

With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, and in partnership with Crow’s Theatre, we held a 10-day workshop for the verbatim musical, CHEW. Over the course of several years, Montreal playwright Sarah Segal-Lazar interviewed dozens of competitive eaters in Canada and the States to figure out what drives them to stretch their stomachs beyond comprehension. Inspired by London Road and A Chorus Line, co-creators Segal-Lazar, Anika Johnson and Andrew Kushnir, CHEW examines how the reasons we do unreasonable things can be most surprising of all.

The musical’s workshop also included a youth dramaturgy session led by Max Cameron-Fearon, where high-school theatre students joined us for a group talk-back session after watching a preview of the show. It culminated in our first ever public showing of Chew, with over 60 folks in attendance for the one-night-only event.



The ensemble for the first public reading of CHEW.

# Wenonah Cares

This year, we entered into the second year of our three-year Wenonah Cares partnership - an initiative created to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Camp Wenonah. The family-owned community-focused summer camp donated an entire table to the Project: Humanity team and community to join in on their 25th Anniversary Gala. Members of the Wenonah community have collectively supported PH both financially and with pro-bono consulting in areas such as fundraising, partnership development, and branding.



(Left) Dan receiving a cheque from Camp Wenonah at their 25th Anniversary Gala.  
(Right) PH 1:1 Mentee Emily R. participating in WCIT at Camp Wenonah.

## PH 1:1 Youth at Camp Wenonah

For the second year in a row, Camp Wenonah invited a PH 1:1 youth participant to take part in their Wenonah Counselling & Instructor Training (WCIT) program - where youth are invited to spend a month developing their individual leadership skills in a real camp environment.

This year's participant, Emily R., thrived. As a result of her time at the camp, she was invited to work at Camp Kavita, a Camp for kids with organ transplants & organ failure. She also turned this opportunity into another, landing a job as a camp counselor in the city:

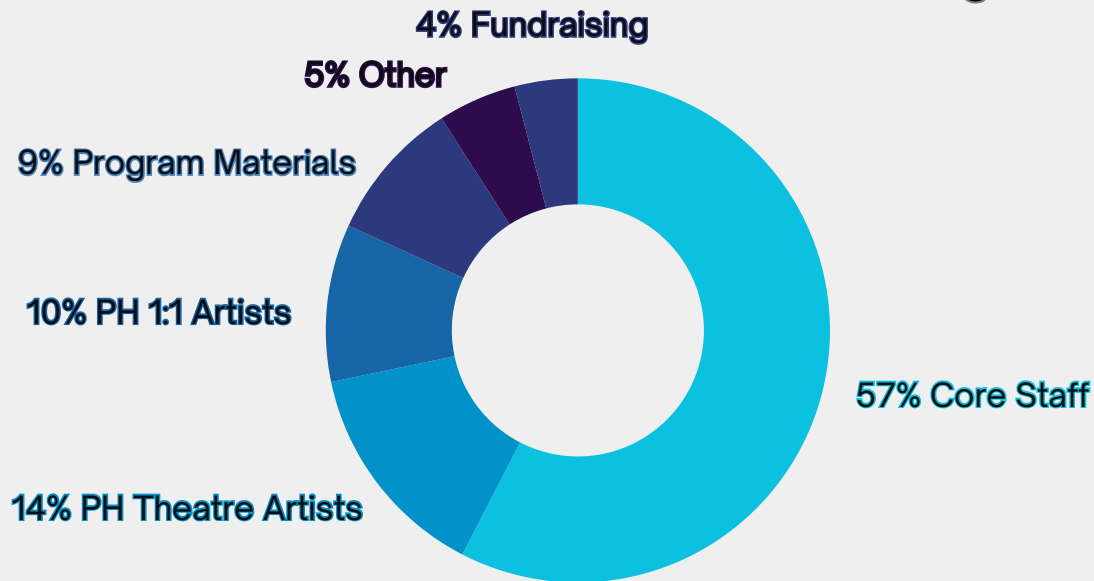
*"I thought it was so smart how there are rituals every day, it provides schedule and community. A lot of people talk about Wenonah like family like community. The community feeling was really strong. I try to integrate what I learned - and my supervisor complimented me for the energy I bring!"*



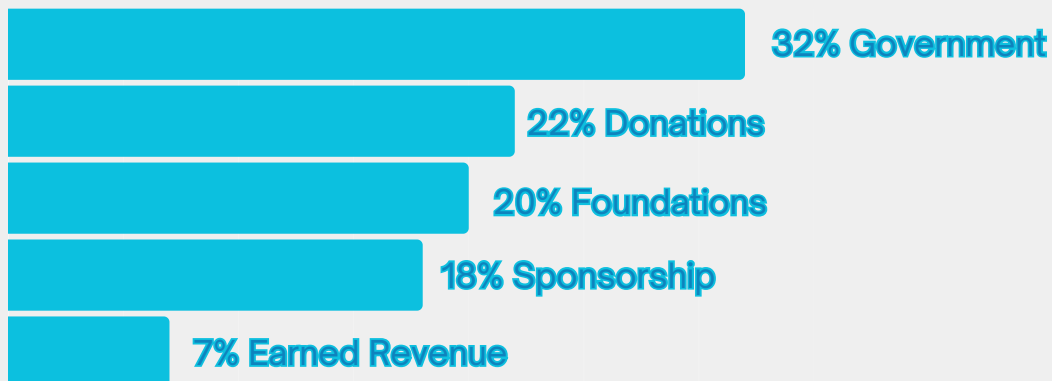
# Financial Overview

## Spending Breakdown

Budget: \$224,113



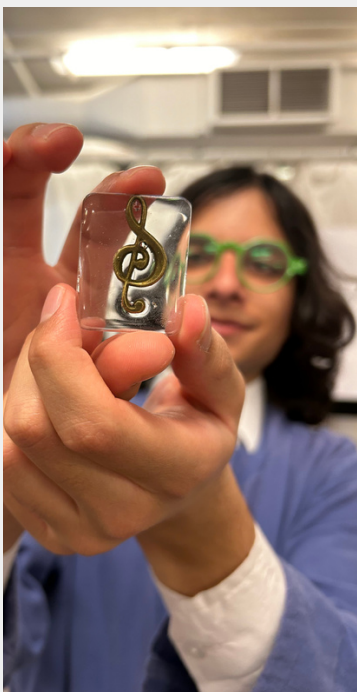
## Revenues



(Right) A painting by PH 1:1 Mentee Aemun.



# Looking Ahead



Aemun presenting their art at our monthly PH 1:1 Hang-Outs.

## PH: YOUTH

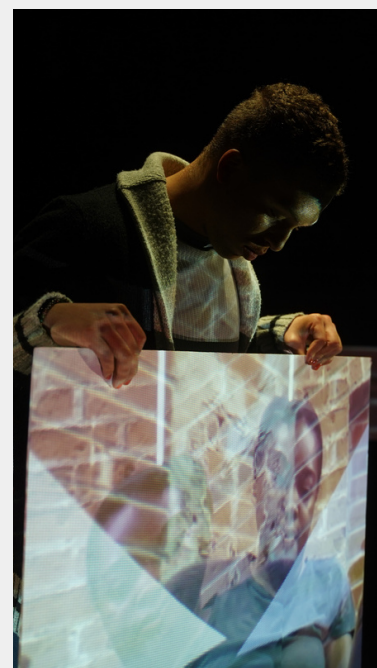
Next year, we're excited to begin expanding the reach of PH 1:1, while also introducing more programming to reflect the on-going needs of the youth we serve. Thanks to the support of the Aubrey and Marla Dan Foundation, we're excited to be reintroducing our PH: Drama Drop-In program with our partner, Youth Without Shelter.

And after a year of scaling down to ensure the sustainability of our programming, we are looking forward to securing more long-term partnerships to ensure that our PH: Youth programming can continue to provide reliable and accessible arts education and the mental health support that is fostered through it, for youth-on-the-margins across the GTA.

## PH: THEATRE

In the 2023/24 season, PH continues to invest in our Proximity Lab projects, with an eye to learning more from audiences interacting with these works-in-process. The Audacious Citizens project has a number of other research sites: in Greece, Colombia, Taiwan and England. There are plans in the coming year to connect with the young people in these communities and explore their complex relationships to the climate emergency.

The company is also hopes to support further development of *The Division* – a new verbatim play by Andrew Kushnir – that seeks to metabolize the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, reckon with the past and the challenges (and treachery) of historical nuance.



Alten Wilmot in a workshop performance for *Is This of Any Value For You?* Photograph by Drew Berry.

# Thanks to our Incredible Partners and Supporters

## Anonymous

Adam Chen  
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Alison Humphrey  
Alten Wilmot  
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Andrew Gillespie  
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Debra Joy Eklove  
Deby Ko

Doreen Fumia  
Ed Noble  
Ellora Patnaik  
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Quilin  
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