Letter from the Executive Director

As I look back at 2018-19 here at New Urban Arts, I am excited to share that in May, our board of directors approved a new strategic plan that feels like the culmination of multiple conversations we have been having for a few years. The full plan is available at bit.ly/nu-a-19-24, and I look forward to sharing updates on our progress over the next few years. However, there’s one area where we’ve already made a lot of progress: investing in staff.

A few years ago, shortly before I became Executive Director, New Urban Arts decided to reduce our reliance on volunteer artist mentors. Our staff and board began working to create permanent, part-time employment for artists, in the form of Resident Artist Mentors (RAMs), dedicated educators for the busiest areas of the studios. When we first established these positions, we hired three RAMs for drawing/painting, screen printing, and music.

Last fall, we were able to hire our fourth RAM in sewing/fashion, Kevin Harper, and, as of this writing, I’m excited to announce that we just hired a fifth RAM in the literary arts. This RAM joins us as we begin the 2019-20 program year and will assist students with everything from creative writing projects, including poetry and spoken word, to college essays and academic writing.

Having a core staff who we can invest in, who continue to hone their skills as artists and educators, and who can build multi-year relationships with students has been essential to maintaining the unique culture that New Urban Arts’ programs depend on.

We’ve repeatedly asked ourselves; “How can we retain our RAMs; can we do more to make these jobs work for our teaching artists?” Part of our answer has been meeting basic needs; this fall, we will begin providing part-time staff with health insurance coverage. This will bring these positions even closer to our ideal vision for them as permanent, gainful, part-time employment—offering artists consistent income, along with the flexibility to pursue fellowships, residencies, commissions, personal projects, and other such opportunities.

As an added bonus, our program staff is now able to provide more personal attention and support to our volunteer artist mentors. These changes have been absolutely vital to managing the growth of our student population. We have more and more students walking through our doors each year, but with a larger program staff than ever before, we can be certain they are getting the kinds of personal learning experiences that are the hallmark of New Urban Arts.

Daniel Schleifer
October 2019

2018–19 Financials

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NOTE: These operating results are unaudited and will likely be adjusted during the audit process. These results do not include income or expenses from fiscal sponsorships, nor do they include funding received in 2018-19 with donor restrictions requiring us to expend the funds in 2019-20. Our audit is expected to be completed in October 2019 and will be made available on our website.
AUGUST 2018 We hired Charmaine Porter as our Development Associate. Previously, she had been serving as our AmeriCorps VISTA for NUA Knights. Executive Director Daniel Schleifer began conversations with the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, AS220, and the Steel Yard about creating a pilot Creative Workforce Development Program, envisioned as an alternate pathway for 18-24 year old artists not pursuing a college degree. The Creative Workforce Development program launched in Sept 2019.

SEPTEMBER 2018 We welcomed Steven Velazquez for a one-year stint as our Communications VISTA. Meanwhile, Daniel Schleifer, Board Treasurer Hugh Peltz, Finance and Operations Manager Tamara Kaplan, Director of Programs Emily Ustach, and Director of Development Sophia Mackenzie attended the kickoff of the Rhode Island Foundation’s Financial Resiliency program. This competitive, six-month program of professional development in nonprofit fiscal management placed New Urban Arts into a learning cohort with seven other organizations, of various sizes and in a variety of sectors. We also had the opportunity to work closely with Financial Management Associates—a nonprofit dedicated to building financial competency.

OCTOBER 2018 Daniel Schleifer began the process of being certified as a restorative justice facilitator through trainings with the Youth Restoration Project. Tamara Kaplan and Youth Programs Manager Ashley Cavallaro were also certified later in the year.

NOVEMBER 2018 We welcomed two new members to our board of directors: Marcela Betancur is the executive director of the Latino Policy Institute at Roger Williams University, and Rodney Eric López is the executive director of The Dancing Classroom.

DECEMBER 2018 New Urban Arts was contacted by the Smithsonian Institution about donating a piece to their collection. Ultimately, we selected a collaborative print produced by mentors, staff, and students in 2013. Daniel Schleifer spoke, alongside other community arts leaders at the 2018 Pell Lecture in the Arts and Humanities.

MARCH 2019 Katie Gui joined the team as interim program assistant.

APRIL 2019 Ashley Cavallaro became our interim director of programs, taking over for Emily Ustach, who left for maternity leave. New Urban Arts hosted a site visit from Acting Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts Mary Anne Carter, and Daniel Schleifer attended a roundtable discussion with NEH Chair John Parrish Peede. We also received good news that our United Way grant, the primary funding sources for the A Life After School (ALAS) program, was extended for a fourth year. Finally, we celebrated New Urban Arts’ 22nd birthday!

JUNE 2019 Studio Organizer Owen Muir left New Urban Arts to pursue his MSW at Rhode Island College. We celebrated his five years of service in that position, as well as his previous service as a volunteer artist mentor and alumnus of our youth programs.
Programs

The Youth Mentoring in the Arts Program, our core program, partners artist-mentors with small groups of high school students who develop powerful mentoring relationships through free yearlong after-school programs. Mentors foster self-discovery through community building and creative arts projects designed collaboratively with youth.

Students also access the following services:
- **Studio Study Buddies** are academic tutors who provide homework help and test preparation.
- The **Gallery and Performance Program** includes three annual exhibitions of student artwork.
- The **Studio Advocate** is a Rhode Island College School of Social Work MSW candidate placed at New Urban Arts as a resource to students.
- **Vacation Week Workshops** take place during the week-long April school break and are facilitated by our Resident Artist Mentors.
- **A Life After School (ALAS)** is our post-secondary advising program, including our summer College Explorations program.
- The **Studio Team Advisory Board (STAB)**, akin to a student government, is a leadership development program serving about 15 students each year. Their duties include advising staff and board, representing the organization publicly, orienting new students, selecting artist mentors, and organizing events.

The **Summer Art Internships** are a suite of summer enrichment programs that are designed to be accessible to low-income high school students. Students are offered a $400 stipend upon successful completion of the program, which combines best practices in art education, youth development, and summer learning. The two consistent offerings are: The **Summer Art Inquiry**, a thematic arts program in which students collectively explore a common theme through research, art-making, creative writing and personal inquiry, and The **Untitlement Project**, a program in which students interrogate relationships, selfhood, identity, stereotypes, gender, and body image through creative writing, conversation, and art making.

The **NUA Knights Program** is a comprehensive after-school and summer program located in Central High School. NUA Knights strives to create a greater sense of community and personalization for Central students by offering a variety of programs, many of which are run by Central staff and faculty.

The **Advanced Coursework Network (ACN)**, is an opportunity for students to earn high school credit for work completed in courses approved by the RI Department of Education. At New Urban Arts, we have offered ACN classes in Music Production and Portfolio Development.

*All Programs are free and open to high school students.*

Our Mission

Our mission is to build a vital community that empowers young people as artists and leaders to develop a creative practice they can sustain throughout their lives.

Recognition

New Urban Arts has received both local and national recognition for our innovative approach to arts education. In our 22 years, we’ve served over 4,000 high school students and 200 artists, received recognition from the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities through a Coming Up Taller Award (the nation’s highest honor for out-of-school arts programs), and moved 100 feet from our previous home to a newly renovated studio at 705 Westminster Street.
Youth Mentorship in the Arts

The Youth We Serve

- 16% Hispanic / Latinx
- 13% African American / Black
- 13% Multiracial / Multietnic
- 13% Caucasian / White
- 5% Asian American
- 5% identified as LGBTQ

783 students

100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they feel safe and supported at New Urban Arts.

95% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they have built strong, trusting relationships with peers and adults.

111 students participated in the A Life After School (ALAS) Program over the course of the year, including 36 seniors, 23 underclassmen, and 52 alumni.

What Inspires You About Working at NUA?
Reflections from our Resident Artist Mentors

“I think for me it’s definitely about feeling like I’m helping students that are or would have been in the same situation I was in at their age. Just having a place like NUA when I was in high school would have been huge. I’ve said this many times to others—beyond just the people I work with—that I really like being here.” — KEVIN

“In my experience, the most inspirational thing about NUA is the relationships that form within these walls. As an alumnus, I feel so fortunate to have mentors who I now consider my friends and/or peers today. I think there is something special about how people meet in this seemingly chaotic, immediate, non-committal studio, and the rich potential to build long lasting relationships and communities beyond New Urban Arts. In small ways too—people almost always come back to say hi.” — DANA

“I think NUA is critical because we don’t treat students as if they were lesser or a junior to us — but that they can give us lessons about art and lessons about life. I think everything here is about that kind of building of future community, even if we don’t have that on our mind in every moment of the day. This job is kind of the perfect job for me because it needs my technical skills, it needs my teaching skills and needs my nerdiness. I like the ability to be serious, but also be funny. I feel very appreciated and that helps me feel real and hopefully other people who work here also feel real!” — IAN

“The people. The culture of the studio—students and staff. It’s just such a constructive and positive environment. I don’t take any credit for what goes on here because I feel like I’m just a facilitator, but it’s nice to hear from students that I’ve helped them do something and that the experience really mattered.” — TOM

“NUA is really a place where I can fully express myself as a person or artist.” — 2019 Student Survey

For a household of four with two children in Providence, this means an annual income of $44,955 or less.
During the 2018-19 school year, NUA Knights, our partnership with Central High School, served over 600 students, with 150 students participating 30 or more days. New and returning programs were offered, as well as summer internship opportunities, monthly special events, and vacation week programming.

From July 2018 through June 2019, 28 Central High School staff members, five community partners, and 13 community organizations worked together to provide over 40 different programs to students. NUA Knights programs provided diverse offerings, including swimming, weight training, strategy and games, computer programming, art, music, youth leadership, photography, theater, and more.

During the summer of 2018, Central offered 12 students the opportunity to participate in a paid internship at Central High School. Under the guidance of social studies teacher Jennifer Geller and local artist and educator Ana Snyder, students researched and studied the history and culture of Central High School and created art based on their findings. Program partners included Rhode Island College, historian and educator Taylor Polites, the Central High School Alumni Association, and the Steel Yard. Students produced steel sculptures, used Photovoice to capture images of Central High School and the surrounding area, and created temporary art installations at the school.

One of NUA Knights’ most popular programs was Cooking with Culture, offered by Central staff members Karen Freitas and Felicia Pupoh. On Wednesday afternoons, music came from the staff lunchroom. As you walked closer, you began to smell the delicious food being prepared: empanadas, meatballs, crepes, chicken wings, and beans and rice were some of the weekly recipes. Once inside the teachers’ lounge, you would see roughly 30 students cooking, dancing, eating, and playing games. In November, Cooking with Culture partnered with other program providers to hold Central’s first Friendsgiving (an event held around Thanksgiving to honor friends, teachers, and mentors by making and exchanging gifts). A turkey dinner with all the trimmings was served to more than 90 Central students.

NUA Knights hosted a number of special events and activities, including hiking, pumpkin painting, field trips, open mic nights, a talent show, game tournaments, and a field day. Monthly events helped build community within the school and promoted the after school program offerings at the same time.

In 2019-20, NUA Knights hopes to increase the number of freshmen participants, increase parent engagement opportunities, and incorporate additional supports for English language learners.

100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they feel safe at NUA Knights.
The Year Ahead

2019-20 Events

Mentor Show
Friday, November 15, 5-7pm

Cardboard Pancakes Holiday Art Sale
Saturday, December 7, 10am-5pm

Mid-Year Makings Student Art Show
Friday, February 14, 5-7pm

Not College Fair
Friday, March 27, 3-5pm

Annual Event and NUA Birthday Bash
Friday, April 17, 7-10pm

Art Party Year End Art-Show
Friday, May 15, 5-7pm

Get Involved

Enroll as a Student anytime throughout the year.
Mentor for an entire program year, from October through May. We accept applications every August.
Application forms for students and artist mentors are online at newurbanarts.org or at our studio at 705 Westminster Street.

Become a Donor of tax-deductible art materials, equipment, or monetary gifts.
Donate through Paypal online at: bit.ly/NUA-Give
Review our art supply wishlist at: bit.ly/nua-wishlist

Become a Sponsor for exhibitions, performances, and our annual silent auction. Please contact Director of Development Sophia Mackenzie at sophia@newurbanarts.org for more information.

Show up! Come to our public events listed above.

Visit Us!
We are located at 705 Westminster Street in the West End of Providence, RI • 401-751-4556 newurbanarts.org

“Many members of minority communities seek verification from the ideals of Western society that favor light skin. My work aims to address this established desire and attack this culturally ingrown yet superficial ideal.”
—NUA Student Artist Statement

“I had never used Ableton before, or any music making software. I’ve been trying to expand my abilities musically and going from physical instruments to those on a screen was very interesting and refreshing.” —NUA Student Artist Statement

TOP TO BOTTOM: NUA student Lucy C. and mentor Jazzmen
Lee Johnson in NUA’s music studio; Diary of a Mad Black Muslim Woman by Maryam D., so soph, so tired by Jayson R., Shirt by Danny S.