



**ARTISTS  
STRIVING  
TO END  
POVERTY**

**2013 ANNUAL REPORT**



ASTEP was conceived by Broadway Musical Director Mary-Mitchell Campbell and Juilliard students to transform the lives of youth using the most powerful tool they had—their art. Today, ASTEP connects performing and visual artists with underserved youth in the U.S. and around the world to awaken their imaginations, foster critical thinking, and help them break the cycle of poverty.



## Who We Are and What We Do

### changing lives through the transforming power of the arts

We believe that access to the arts is essential to children's academic and social success. Research shows that from improving reading comprehension to advancing creative thinking, from teaching problem solving to fostering collaboration, access to the arts brings about significant improvements in children's educational and social development.

ASTEP programs engage youth ages 4-21 years old through collaborations with schools and community organizations, serving a population of low-income, at-risk, immigrant and refugee youth. In addition, our programming is research-based, employing nationally accredited Kennedy Center learning standards to train artists and create arts curricula. Youth attending ASTEP programs are not only inspired and supported

emotionally and creatively, but also develop specific, important skills they can use to make healthy and productive decisions.

The quality of the artists who volunteer with ASTEP uniquely positions us among other arts education nonprofits. Our volunteers are highly successful Broadway performers, professional artists, and students and faculty from schools such as Juilliard. They become transformative role models in the lives of the youth we serve, helping create a nurturing and safe environment that provide underserved youth with the skills, knowledge, and emotional wellbeing they require to succeed in their educations during adolescence and into adulthood. ASTEP is cultivating a community of professional artists who make using the arts a tool to empower youth a primary part of their lives and practice.

## Making the arts accessible to everyone through ASTEP on STAGE!

Every year, amazing artists we work with are eager to share their talents with children who might not have access to the arts. We continue to be inspired by their generosity and commitment to transforming lives through performance.

So in 2013, we launched **ASTEP on STAGE!**, an opportunity to connect professional musicians, singers, dancers, and actors with children and families in the NYC community to share their passion and demonstrate the transforming power of the arts.

The goal is to provide a safe space in which youth acquire skills in the arts and learn to use artistic tools to communicate effectively, think creatively, and improve collaboration and problem-solving skills.

"We're excited to launch this program by partnering with The Abraham House in the Bronx, a holistic, family-based program of services to offenders and their families, and other families who struggle to cope with poverty, violence, crime, and lack of essential services."

Abby Gerdts, ASTEP Director of Programs

Through a variety of one & two hour interactive performances, ASTEP Volunteer Artists will:

- Perform for the audience
- Lead children through an artistic exercise
- Provide a show and tell
- Take part in a Q & A

"Singing brings me out of myself. When I sing, I feel more open and courageous."

— Nivea, ASTEP Student

## The Maya Project with Teach for India

In 2013, ASTEP and Teach for India ventured into a pilot program to integrate the arts into the academic classrooms. The arts not only have the power to engage children but excite them about learning — ASTEP Volunteer Artists help TFI Teaching Fellows gain tangible tools to bolster their classroom teaching.

In addition, ASTEP is organizing and producing the Maya project, a musical to be rehearsed and performed by thirty students from TFI classrooms. ASTEP Volunteer Artists have been spending countless hours composing music, choreographing the scenes, and rehearsing, rehearsing, rehearsing! The show is scheduled to open in November 2014 and then tour around the country, directly impacting all Teach for India's 32,000 children, through the Maya Book, Curriculum ideas, Film and the 100 Artists Program!

### Maya the Musical

Maya is more than just the promise of a spectacular show. It's a symbol of the kind of education all children deserve. The musical is a life-changing journey through which 100 low-income students gain an integrated education combining: exposure and access, values and mindsets, and academic achievement.



The students have not only been able to learn the components of the musical, but also grasp the fundamentals of the English language in interactive ways such as song and dance.

The show features an original script, and Broadway composed music that tells the story of Princess Maya's journey. Tasked to bring light back into her Kingdom, Maya and her friends use the values of courage, compassion and wisdom to lift 3 curses that have been cast on the world. The show has taken these children on a whirlwind journey of self-discovery where they, like Maya, discover their values, potential and brightest light.

## ASTEP partners with Kennedy Center

For a second year in a row, ASTEP was invited to present creative workshops at The Kennedy Center for the American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF), a national college and university theatre program involving 18,000 students from across the nation. ASTEP's experienced presenters worked closely with eager-to-learn professors and student participants from coast to coast with the goal of highlighting creative ways to use the arts to transform lives and communities.

Led by Abby Gerdts, Mauricio Salgado, Nick Dalton, and Alejandro Rodriguez, two main workshops added a social justice framework to the conference:

**Artists as Citizens Workshop** - an interactive workshop that focused on how we can delve beyond our technical training to harness our collective power and begin to build a space where everyone's stories can be heard. Together, attendees explored how to use their craft as a means of ensuring the strength of their communities, their culture, and the future of the American theater. Themes of empathy, poverty and social justice were explored.

**Devising with ASTEP Workshop** - ASTEP artists live at the intersection of the Arts and Global Justice. Using ASTEP's unique process oriented approach, attendees created original pieces of Devised Theater,

drawing from their own personal experiences and ideas, a few inspiring prompts, and techniques for devising guided by ASTEP facilitators.

*"The Devising with ASTEP workshop was the highlight of my week at KCACTF. Thank you so much for showing me what a strong future exists for artists hoping to help humanity. I know, with whatever I pursue in life, I want to help people. If I am able to help people through something I enjoy, well, there isn't a better combination!" ."*

— Maria Arvanitakis, Kansas State University

- Cape Cod Community College - Region I
- Towson University - Region II
- Saginaw Valley State University - Region III
- Darton College - Region IV
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln – Region V
- Centenary College of Louisiana – Region VI
- American River College – Region VII
- Los Angeles Theater Center – Region VIII
- The Kennedy Center - National Festival

**Photo**  
KCACTF participants  
who attended an  
ASTEP Workshop



## Unleashing the ASTEP College Campaign

As ASTEP has grown, the number one question we get asked by students is, "How can we carry out the ASTEP mission in our own communities?"

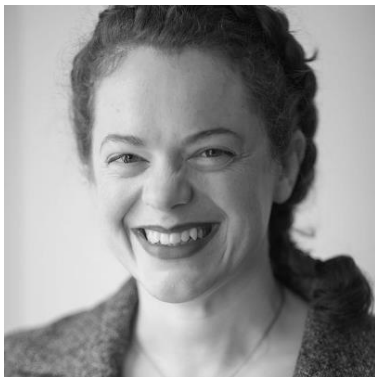
That's why ASTEP launched the College Campaign to connect with like-minded high school and college students around the country, empowering them to share our mission of using the arts to transform children's lives.

The College Campaign encourages young artists to bring ASTEP's vision to all of corners of the United States—small towns and large cities alike—and scale them to fit the needs of their communities. Student Chapters are paired with an ASTEP Mentor who provides support and guidance as the chapters develop local community initiatives (LCI) that range from volunteering at a local shelter to producing a fundraiser.

Student Chapters currently include:

- Santa Clara University
- Boston College
- Albright College
- Temple University
- Emerson College
- Adelphi College
- Le Moyne College
- New York University
- St. Mary's College

"Working with ASTEP is truly invaluable—the feeling you get when you know you are simultaneously doing what you love while being able to help and inspire others is one that has only strengthened my connection to my art and to the world."



**Photo**  
Laura Careless(top) and Crystal Boyd,  
ASTEP Scholarship Recipients

## ASTEP Residency Scholarship

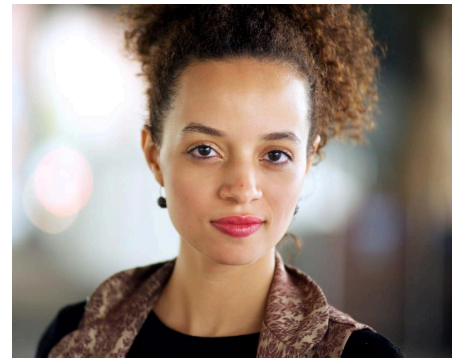
ASTEP aspires to do more than engage and inspire children during critical times of their lives but also to support the social strides of our volunteers. With the aid of SPACE on Ryder Farm, ASTEP offered a scholarship program for eligible volunteers that consisted of a 5 day, 4-night residency with room and board working space.

This year's theme was "Taking Refuge" and ASTEP Volunteer Artists Crystal Boyd and Laura Careless were chosen from a stellar pool of applicants—their excellence and originality made them stand out!

During her residency, Crystal worked on her short film, "Currency", which follows two teens adapting to homelessness in NYC. Laura used this time to design a collaborative piece, "Women Who Run

with Wolves", which combines visual art with dance, song, and film.

*"I needed proof that ... my human instincts are present in every aspect of my existence and range far beyond the pursuit of survival, and that a creative life is not only a pleasure and a privilege, but also an essential part of a wild and thriving experience."* — Laura Careless



2013 Numbers	The	ASTEP	Community
	<p><b>3,100</b> Number of children served through an ASTEP arts class</p>	<p><b>143</b> Number of Volunteer Artists placed in ASTEP programs</p>	<p><b>3</b> Number of new programs launched in 2013</p>
	<p><b>4,000</b> Number of people reached through ASTEP workshops and seminars at institutions such as Santa Clara, New York University, Walnut Hill School for the Arts, etc.</p>	<p><b>20</b> Number of ASTEP Volunteer Training sessions</p>	<p><b>3</b> Number of scholarships offered to ASTEP Volunteer Artists and Student Alum</p>



### Volunteer Reflections with J.J. Krehbiel

J.J. Krehbiel, a graduate of Bridgewater College, first learned about ASTEP while attending the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival where ASTEP presented a series of workshops. As the conference ended, J.J. knew ASTEP was the nonprofit for him.

“Finding a way to combine my passion for theatre and my commitment to being an advocate for a more just world seemed like a distant reality until I learned about ASTEP,” he said. “As an ASTEP Volunteer Artist in India, I have been

extremely fortunate to work at Shanti Bhavan, a residential school for economically marginalized children. During my time at Shanti Bhavan, I have taught literature and writing classes, collaborated with other ASTEP Volunteer Artists to facilitate a two-week arts camp, and had the pleasure to teach and learn from the most inspiring children and young adults I have ever met. The students, who are generally the best hope for their families to climb up the socio-economic ladder, strongly crave a creative outlet to deal with all of the pressure that they are under.”

“Being able to work alongside extremely talented volunteers has helped me improve my own acting skills, and sharing those skills with the children of Shanti Bhavan has given purpose to my art. I have learned far more from my students than what I could ever pass on to them. Their beaming personalities and brilliant humor have had a powerful impact on my life and is the reason why I look forward to coming back to Shanti Bhavan.”

Currently, J.J.’s talents and need to help others has brought him to Ecuador where he has trained to be a Community Health volunteer. There, he works as a member of the Peace Corps, primarily inventing mediums to spread sexual health and HIV education.



## NEW YORK CITY

**Refugee Youth Summer Academy**

ASTEP provided the creative arts component for a 4-week summer camp for the IRC's Refugee Youth Program (RYP), which supports the personal growth, cultural adjustment, and education of multicultural refugee youth and helps them successfully transition into the US school system.

**ASTEP on STAGE!**

ASTEP connected performing artists with after-school programs at youth-serving community organizations in NYC to provide a safe space in which youth can acquire skills in the arts and learn to use artistic tools to communicate effectively, think creatively, and improve their collaboration and problem-solving skills.

**Arts at Incarnation Children's Center**

ASTEP provided arts programming for the Incarnation Children's Center, a pediatric facility for children and adolescents living with HIV/AIDS. ASTEP's day-long creative arts workshops and activities engaged students with experiences that focused on developing a strong sense of community, deepening their capacity for creating, and exposing them to the performing arts.



## DEEP SOUTH MIAMI DADE, FLORIDA

**Art-in-Action**

ASTEP led Art-in-Action, a six-week arts summer camp for middle and high school immigrant and migrant youth in South Florida. AIA provides a safe space in which youth acquire skills in the arts and learn to use artistic tools to build leadership, strengthen their capacity for self-expression, learn to collaborate and solve problems, and develop the confidence to make healthy life choices. ASTEP partners with enFAMILIA, a community organization that builds healthy family relationships among the immigrant, migrant, and farm worker communities of south Florida.

*"Taking part in ASTEP's art camp changed my way of looking at the world."*

—Jorge, ASTEP Student



## INDIA

**Arts at Shanti Bhavan**

ASTEP provided artistic and educational support for the students at Shanti Bhavan Children's Project, a school and home for economically and socially disadvantaged children near Bangalore, India. ASTEP delivered art education and empowerment programs, which included music, theatre, dance, and visual art.

The power of the arts is used to enhance personal development, academic achievement, and leadership skills for students in Pre-K through high school.

**Arts at Teach for India**

ASTEP supported Teach for India Fellows who work with a student population of extremely low-income children in Pune, India. ASTEP focused on incorporating the arts into their teaching curriculum in addition to organizing and producing the Maya project, a musical to be performed in November 2014 by thirty students from TFI classrooms.



#### QUITO, ECUADOR

##### **Arts at Project CREO**

ASTEP delivered arts education programs for Project CREO's programs located in the central historic district of Quito, Ecuador. Programming focused on at-risk youth, ages 7-16, while simultaneously working with local parents and school teachers within the community. The children that ASTEP worked with face high levels of poverty, domestic abuse, school drop-outs, street violence, and crime.

ASTEP Volunteer Artists taught dance, music, and creative arts classes with the focus on goal setting and establishing positive habits while connecting with the local community.



#### SOUTH AFRICA

##### **artsINSIDEOUT**

ASTEP supports the artsINSIDEOUT program, a unique group of students and working professionals in the performing arts who have been personally affected by HIV/AIDS. In July, they traveled to Nkosi's Haven in Johannesburg, which offers holistic care and support for mothers living with HIV/AIDS and their children, including orphans (infected or not).

Through acting, singing, dancing, story telling techniques, and the visual arts, artsINSIDEOUT inspired Nkosi's Haven youth to unleash their creative energy, empowering them to communicate their own experiences. Through a shared connection of this marginalizing disease, they were able to initiate a process of healing. With the building of community, creativity and consciousness they reached their ultimate goal – health, inside and out.



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Thank you to our many supporters and major donors, without whom we would not succeed.

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# ASTEP Financials

<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Contributions and grants	402,597	392,668
In-kind contributions	81,088	88,194
Special events	5,057	46,828
Other revenue	652	1,456
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>	<b>489,394</b>	<b>529,146</b>

<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Payroll	213,628	237,134
Payroll taxes and benefits	54,274	66,297
Office and program supplies and expense	2,396	1,021
Printing and postage	37	96
Travel	53,302	71,125
Boarding expenses	9,569	6,041
Meetings and conferences	3,005	240
Professional fees	11,275	9,500
Occupancy	6,504	6,600
Food	239	6,825
Insurance	1,341	5,178
Volunteer and student expenses	34,858	44,559
Contracted services	20,166	10,942
Business registration fees	1,907	1,225
Depreciation expense	1,662	1,350
Other operating expenses	4,849	2,342
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>419,012</b>	<b>470,475</b>

**Program Services: 70.5% | Management and general: 15% | Fundraising: 14.5%**



"I've always felt like theatre training is so much more than learning how to be on stage and can truly make a difference in other people's lives, but I never witnessed how powerful artistic expression can be for someone until working with ASTEP."

— Francesca Betancourt, ASTEP Volunteer Artist

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