



PROGRAM REPORT

We the Many Phase Two | 2022–2024

Crystal Celeste Price, Sade' Carrasquillo,
Cheryl Ann Kary, and Kyle Whalen



We the Many was a program of Arts Midwest that supported communities in the creation of unique artist residency experiences, encouraging the exchange of voices, cultures, and ideas relevant to each community context.

We the Many began with a pilot phase, which operated from 2019–2021. More information about the pilot phase is available [here](#). Following its conclusion, Arts Midwest built on the successes of the pilot to offer a second program cycle from April 2022–March 2024.

This narrative-based report explores program process, impact, and lessons learned in We the Many's second cycle. The report shares the successes, challenges, and resiliency of creative community work and amplifies the program's stories and learnings.

Arts Midwest partnered with three organizations across the Midwest region to lead and develop We the Many artist residency activities in their communities. From 2022 to 2023, We the Many Phase Two projects were led by the following Midwestern organizations: [Sacred Pipe Resource Center](#) (SPRC), [La Luz Centro Cultural](#), and [For the Love of the Arts](#).

Each organization received a \$100,000 grant to lead creative residency projects. Through the creative and cultural leadership of each organization, We the Many activities supported existing and new creative community-building initiatives.

Program Goals

- Center BIPOC, Native, and Immigrant community members as essential to the cultural vitality of the Midwest
- Respond to community-identified priorities through creative connection, arts-based activities, and ongoing capacity-building support
- Expand the understanding of what it means to be a Midwesterner through the creative exchange of voices, cultures, and ideas

Program Supporters

We the Many was a project of Arts Midwest with generous support from the Mellon Foundation and in partnership with the Indiana Arts Commission, Iowa Arts Council, and North Dakota Council on the Arts.

Organizational Partners

Sacred Pipe Resource Center,
Bismarck-Mandan, North
Dakota

Cheryl Ann Kary, Executive Director
Primary Artists-in-Residence: Shawna
Fricke, Rock Your Mocs Off Cohort,
Emma Doll-Goodhouse, Rochelle
Wells, Lisa Kraft

La Luz Centro Cultural,
Hampton, Iowa

Kyle Whalen, Executive Director
Primary Artists-in-Residence: Mario
Arévalo, Calle Sur, Gran Festival
Performers, Ballet Folklórico México
Azteca, Will Lopes, Marisa Hernández

For the Love of the Arts,
Northwest Indiana

Sade' Carrasquillo, Executive Director
Primary Artists-in-Residence: Daveed
Holmes, Ariel Michol, Yemina
Concepción, Fernando Lopez, Tyrel
Davis

Arts Midwest,
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Crystal Celeste Price, Program
Manager

■ We the Many Phase Two At A Glance

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April 2022–March 2024



2,157

Community Members Engaged



\$300,000

Awarded in Grants
(\$100,000 per partner community)



127

Artists Engaged



\$238,600

Program Services and Support
(Arts Midwest staff time, community visits, capacity-building support, storytelling, evaluation, translation, and organizational overhead)



341

Residency Activities

Arts Midwest invited organizational partners to lead creative residency activities in their communities. These invitations were based on each organization's existing creative and cultural leadership, as well as consideration of a racial, cultural, and economic equity lens.

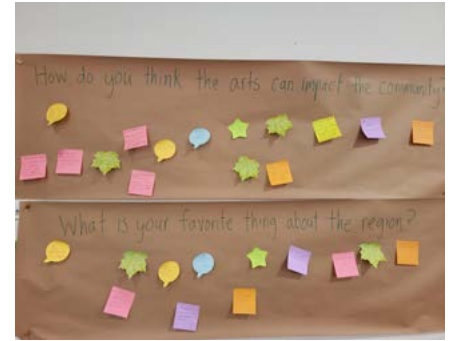
Throughout the process, Arts Midwest's role was to celebrate and support organizational partners' leadership and guide the process along the way as a regional resource and collaborator.

Arts Midwest invited organizational partners to the program between July–October 2022. Upon accepting the invitation, partners began program implementation in their communities, beginning with conversations and visioning sessions. Through these sessions, organizational partners identified the needs, key themes, and assets at play in their communities. These results informed their residency model development and artist selection as they designed their We the Many programs.

From late 2022 through 2023, each organizational partner led We the Many activities. The community-led nature of the design process meant each partner's We the Many program responded to their community realities, cultures, and nuances. Activities spanned from artist workshops centering Native American culture through themes of healing and connection, to countless arts and culture events like Gran Festival featuring local talent from the Latino community, to a multi-artist in residency project and workshop series exploring the theme of restoration, and much more. (Reflections from organizational partners on their activities can be found in "Community Activities and Impact," below.)

Simultaneously, while We the Many programs were taking place in communities, lead artists and community collaborators from across organizations gathered virtually from January–October 2023 for monthly cohort sessions hosted by Arts Midwest. During these sessions, participants were able to exchange ideas related to their residency projects and creative community-building. Cohort facilitators included Katie Robinson with Voices for Racial Justice, Tiffany Lofay and Sade' Carrasquillo with For the Love of the Arts, Cheryl Kary and Shawna Fricke with SPRC, and Valeria Gonzalez and Thelma Rivera with La Luz Centro Cultural, as well as Arts Midwest Program Manager Crystal Celeste Price. Together, the cohort explored themes and topics such as peer-learning, project sharing, capacity building in communities, conflict navigation, culture and healing strategy, storytelling, and more.

Arts Midwest worked collaboratively with state arts agency partners and lead partner organizations throughout the program's life cycle. These collaborations ranged from equity-based partner selection and outreach with state arts agency partners, to community visits and project visioning with organizational partners, to monthly cohort gatherings with organizational partners and artists, to project implementation led by organizational partners, to storytelling and celebration with both organizational partners and state arts agency partners.



Community members and artists respond to prompts at the For the Love of the Arts We the Many Visioning Party in Northwest Indiana in December of 2022. Photo by Crystal Celeste Price.



Painted rocks from Endangered Animal Rock Painting Youth Workshop with Sacred Pipe Resource Center's Resident Artist, Shawna Fricke, in Mandan, North Dakota, in July of 2023. Photo courtesy of Sacred Pipe Resource Center.



Community members gathered at Dia de los Muertos cultural community event at La Luz Centro Cultural in Hampton, Iowa in November of 2022. Photo courtesy of La Luz Centro Cultural.

■ Sacred Pipe Resource Center

Bismarck-Mandan, North Dakota

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The mission of Sacred Pipe Resource Center is to address and support the social/cultural, emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical needs of Native people of all Tribes living in the Bismarck-Mandan and surrounding area.

Serving 221 community members through 21 artist-in-residency activities, SPRC and lead artist-in-residency Shawna Fricke provided activities and workshops that focused on the overarching theme of Social Justice through healing and social connection, as well as ongoing activities designed to incorporate Native American art into the community to make it more reflective of our experience as the original inhabitants of this land.

Some examples of the culturally appropriate activities we provided are dentalium shell earring making, as well as more contemporary activities like t-shirt making (screen-printing) and flower arranging. SPRC has always supported an organizational Arts Council as part of our Community Councils, as a mechanism for getting input and connection with the local Native American community. However, the We the Many program brought so many more community members to the table because of the regular program of activities we were able to host. The Arts Council grew in membership numbers, and the quality and quantity of ideas that came from the Arts Council also grew. The program helped us with one of our major difficulties in the Councils – inspiring people to see a new Bismarck-Mandan-Lincoln community that sees them as integral members of the cities. Through our connections with other local organizations and entities, we were able to get many new ideas and suggestions.

We worked with the City Administrator in Mandan to explore the options of Native-specific holiday projects. Through this connection, we made another tentative connection with the City of Bismarck. Our use of the Bismarck Event Center for the Small Business Saturday event elevated the presence of Native artists in the community. Through our many art projects, we also elevated our presence as a community resource and a new local Native-based media service, Buffalo's Fire, featured our events in a variety of stories.

The We the Many grant was instrumental in helping SPRC “level up” in our programming, operations, and community. We understand that the population we serve (the urban Tribal population) faces isolation as a minority group in an off-reservation setting and is often met with more hostility, discrimination, and racial profiling than others. This is why this project was so important in the community. It allowed Native people to come into safe spaces where they could facilitate the healing and connection that individuals need regularly.

21

Workshops
Provided

221

Community Members
Reached



As a part of a creative workshop series, lead artist Rochelle Wells leads participants in a t-shirt making workshop in Mandan, North Dakota in June of 2023. Photo courtesy of Sacred Pipe Resource Center.



As a part of a creative workshop series, lead artist Emma Doll-Goodhouse leads participants in a shell earring workshop in Mandan, North Dakota in August of 2023. Photo courtesy of Sacred Pipe Resource Center.

La Luz Centro Cultural serves the Latino community in North Central Iowa with the mission to promote cultural awareness and diversity with hospitality and supportive services for all.

Throughout the program, La Luz Centro Cultural engaged approximately 771 community members and 103 artists, through approximately 38 community activities. We the Many programming ranged from enriched annual cultural celebrations like Dia de Los Muertos and Gran Festival in 2022 and 2023, a community concert in collaboration with the Franklin Arts Council and the local high schools with visiting artists Mario Arevalo and Calle Sur, and folkloric dance instruction with Ballet Folklórico México Azteca. In summer of 2023, a youth music camp was led by Iowa-based Brazilian music instructor Will Lopes at the Hampton elementary school. In addition, Iowa-based artist MARRISA Hernandez led a community mural in collaboration with local youth. A student cultural exchange event was held in the fall of 2023, as well as the ongoing arts and culture-based afterschool program at La Luz Centro Cultural.

With the completion of the two murals, we have had many community members recognize the beauty of the Latino Cultural. A picture of one of the murals is used by one of our local community Facebook pages as the profile picture, which has brought an awareness of how much we appreciate diversity in Hampton. Although not everything was successful, we were able to start new traditions, such as the community culture night. We also have possibilities to cultivate future partnerships with the Franklin County Arts Council and Will Lopes from Iowa Central Community College. La Luz Centro Cultural has also been able to see how much our afterschool children love art. With new arts supplies, local children/youth have grown more excited about art and there has been an increase in attendance.

The We the Many program allowed La Luz Centro Cultural to develop a deeper connection with different community organizations and members through new collaborations. It has allowed us to bring more opportunities to promote and celebrate the presence and importance of Latino culture in our community. La Luz Centro Cultural has a focus on the Latino community within our area and as such everything leads back to culture. With the We the Many grant, we were able to continue our efforts to help everyone we could by providing integral culturally relevant services, whether it was to find food, fill out a new document, process immigration applications, or help a child have a haven after school.

38

Workshops
Provided

771

Community Members
Reached



Community youth participate in 3-day summer music camp, led by music instructor Will Lopes in Hampton, Iowa in June of 2023. Photo courtesy of La Luz Centro Cultural.



Students took part in a exchange event to share their cultures and backgrounds. Photo courtesy of La Luz Centro Cultural.



Youth muralists and community member, paint a mural in downtown Hampton, Iowa in July of 2023. Photo courtesy of La Luz Centro Cultural.

For the Love of the Arts

Griffith, Indiana

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For the Love of the Arts, Inc. is dedicated to reducing youth violence and crime by providing fine arts mentorship and life skills courses focusing on social skills and mental wellness.

We served our community through 272 We the Many activities and events, reaching 1,157 community members. Residency activities, classes, and programs were led by 10 local artists representing the communities we serve. We focus on serving justice-involved youth, low-income families, youth with special needs, adults with special needs, adults in recovery, and children of adults in recovery, and our diverse communities of color.

Through the We the Many grant program, we opened the Love of Arts Creativity Center in February of 2023, offering artist-led classes such as videography, acrylic painting, music, dance, virtual reality art, cartoon drawing, crafts, creative writing, and theatre. Throughout 2023, we offered other programs as well, such as Little Creatives Program (parent/child art and early learning activities), arts classes at Lake Co. Juvenile Center serving justice-involved youth, several community outreach events, artistic showcase events, and the opening of SHINE Recovery Cafe and SHINE Kids (arts and learning activities for children of parents in recovery).

We the Many has allowed our organization to go to the next level of growth and development. We were able to acquire a space to house our arts activities in the heart of our community where there is a critical need for the types of programs we offer. Furthermore, we have expanded our services to support youth and adults with special needs through our arts classes and local partnerships. These partnerships include The Columbus Organization, which serves youth with autism, and Paladin, which serves adults with special needs.

Also, with an increased budget size, we applied for funding through the Indiana Arts Commission and were awarded operational support for the 2023-2024 grant cycle. Our artists in residency were given a unique opportunity to grow and expand in their work and were supported through the articles and press releases from Arts Midwest. We have expanded our work even further with SHINE Recovery Cafe through a partnership with Recovery Cafe Network, and as part of our growth through We the Many. During cafe hours, children of members or guests can participate in the SHINE Kids program, a safe place where recovery-affected youth can learn, grow, and thrive with support.

Overall, this partnership has greatly impacted our community and allowed our organization to expand in multiple ways.

272

Workshops
Provided

1,157

Community Members
Reached



Program collaborators, supporters, and lead resident artists pose at the Artist in Residency Showcase in Northwest Indiana in September of 2023. Photo courtesy of For the Love of the Arts.



Artists Arielle Gray and Yemina Concepcion having a joyous moment at the For the Love of the Arts Creativity Center. Photo by Daveed Holmes.



Artists-in-Residence pose for a photo at the newly opened For the Love of the Arts Creativity Center in Northwest Indiana in February of 2023. Photo courtesy of For the Love of the Arts.

In designing We the Many and working with organizational partners, Arts Midwest intentionally embraced a spirit of evaluation and reflection, with the goal of deepening program impact along the way.

Evaluation and reflection components included community visioning activities, partner surveys, cohort and community reflection conversations, community visits from Arts Midwest and other stakeholders, and storytelling from community and regional writers throughout the process.

In fall of 2022, Arts Midwest shared a community-building resource guide, “We the Many: Getting Started,” with lead organizational partners to support their project implementation. Arts Midwest later created and published [“Creative Community-Centered Project Planning”](#), a free resource available on the Arts Midwest Ideas Hub, which came out of the We the Many guide.

State Arts Agency Partner Feedback

“Thank you, Arts Midwest, for daylighting this organization for us. They were unknown to us previously and subsequently have applied to our two-year general operating support grant program for the first time and stand an excellent chance of being funded. Great job finding such a perfect match for the We the Many program. It buoys the spirit to support an organization that does such meaningful work.”

“Although I am deeply aware of SPRC’s commitment to their community, it became much more apparent as social media posts grew around specialized programming during the last year. Also, their recent move from Mandan to Bismarck was predicated on needing more space, a more central location and robust internal structures being put in place. There is a committed staff, very strong leadership, and well-attended events of every kind. We are now embarking on a partnership with Sacred Pipe towards an Indigenous Professional Development Fellowship program. I believe We the Many participation had a very positive impact on the organization.”

“The Iowa Arts Council thanks Arts Midwest for selecting La Luz Centro Cultural for this program and investing in the cultural life of Hampton, Iowa. It’s incredibly rare for any organization to be given the time, resources, and encouragement to imagine and create at a scale and in ways that invite participation from the entire community and strengthen its social fabric, while also being connected with the tools and relationships necessary to sustain these efforts into the future. We the Many is a unique and important experiment in so many respects.”

Organizational Partner Feedback

“The flexibility has been surprising. We are used to being held back, and instead we are being asked to think even larger about more connections, and it is so supportive.”

“I feel like we are doing innovative things and thinking outside of the box, and the support of the collaboration has been instrumental in helping us feel confident about our plans and what we are doing.”

Cohort Participant Feedback

“Through the cohort sessions we felt seen and supported as a diverse community of color.”

“I liked just learning about what others are doing and the challenges we tackle together.”

“Art can heal communities when multiple groups are united.”

“I enjoyed connecting with new people.”

Announcing Phase Two of We the Many	Arts Midwest	January 2023	Link
“We the Many” Concert Wows Hampton Audience	Hampton Chronicle	March 2023	Link
Art as a Catalyst: Indigenous Expressions in North Dakota	Arts Midwest	May 2023	Link
A Light for the Latino Community	Arts Midwest	May 2023	Link
Transforming Lives through Art in Northwest Indiana	Arts Midwest	May 2023	Link
Native-Led Non-Profit Offers Dentalium ‘Shell Sesh’ as One of Many Community Projects	Buffalo’s Fire	August 2023	Link
For the Love of the Arts Program Helps Troubled Youth, Adults in Recovery	The Times of Northwest Indiana	December 2023	Link
Artist Residencies Plant Seeds for the Future	Arts Midwest	January 2024	Link
Overcoming Addiction Sometimes Starts With a Meal and Art	Arts Midwest	January 2024	Link
Tiny Town, Big Diversity: How One Rural Iowa Town is Celebrating Cultures	Arts Midwest	February 2024	Link
A Mural Brings Hampton, Iowa’s Latino Community Together	Arts Midwest	February 2024	Link
The Art of Love (Documentary)	For the Love of the Arts	February 2024	Link
Connecting Bismarck’s Indigenous Community Through Art, Food, Culture, and Kindness	Arts Midwest	March 2024	Link

Outlined below are some key programmatic successes, feedback, and challenges. There are countless moments, successes, and challenges within this program that are not noted, as they have span across culture, geography, and time. Hopefully these countless moments have impacted the memories and hearts of those involved, inevitably shaping the ongoing ecosystem of arts and culture of the Midwest.

Successes

For Arts Midwest, the community site visits were invaluable moments of relationship-building and perspective-taking. Site visits allowed Arts Midwest to attend community activities and make connections with community members, as well as share back project highlights, visions, and community priorities with the Arts Midwest team and other regional partners. Additionally, it was effective for Arts Midwest to support and follow organizational partners through social media, especially Facebook, as this is a primary way that partners are able to reach their communities and share and amplify their impact.

Arts Midwest published nine stories in total, three per community, about We the Many, proudly working with community-based and regional writers. These stories highlighted the existing work of partner organizations and their program activities. Collaborating with organizational partner leads on story themes allowed for partners to strategically amplify relevant initiatives in their projects and broader work, making the stories more meaningful and impactful for our partners and their networks.

With a collaborative cohort facilitation model, Arts Midwest's goal was to allow for collective ownership and peer-learning, as well as the exchange of perspectives and expertise throughout the cohort sessions. Cohort participants averaged about 8 people per session, with at least two participants representing each community partner organization. In the final cohort session, participants shared that the sessions have been a supportive environment, offering a communal and non-competitive space to gather regularly in addition to their community projects.

Challenges

As a regional program led by Arts Midwest, We the Many contained multiple moving parts across community context and realities that followed a larger timeline. This was a creative challenge for Arts Midwest to connect and support organizational partners in a way that was relevant and met the needs of each community. Through community visits, project check-ins, and the cohort sessions, Arts Midwest embraced flexibility and adaptability to meet the inherently unique needs across each community context.

The 10-month timeframe for the cohort gathering series allowed for some participants to deepen relationships across communities. However, for others the time commitment was a challenge. In future programs, the cohort sessions could follow a 6-month model, which would still allow for relationship building and peer-learning while relieving the burden on participants' schedules. Some cohort participants inquired about the possibility of gathering in-person. Adding an in-person cohort gathering component would also be valuable for future programming, as it would further expand and deepen connection across the region and program.



Community members participate in a folkloric dance lesson during Gran Festival event in Hampton, Iowa in June of 2023. Photo courtesy of La Luz Centro Cultural.

In keeping with the organization's mission to build unprecedented opportunity across the Midwest by advancing creativity, Arts Midwest believes that the creative exchanges and relationships formed with We the Many, at both a regional and local level, will continue to evolve and grow beyond this program.

Through program structure and values, and large unrestricted grant-giving, We the Many prioritized trust-based partnership, collaboration, reciprocity, creative exchange, and relationship building. It sought to strategically shift the power dynamics that can often be at play in funder-grantee relations. By centering curiosity, collaboration, and mutual learning, We the Many provided an opportunity for Arts Midwest to redefine the way partnership can look across the Midwest creative landscape and cultural organizations.

One of Arts Midwest's overarching goals for We the Many was to amplify the voices and creativity of BIPOC, Native, and Immigrant community members as essential to the cultural vitality of the Midwest. Sacred Pipe Resource Center, La Luz Centro Cultural, and For the Love of the Arts each distinctively demonstrated creative leadership rooted in community care, cultural connection, and integrity. As we conclude this We the Many program cycle, Arts Midwest is truly honored to have supported the extraordinary work of these lead organizational partners through this program.

In this report, and in keeping with its values of equity, integrity, and learning, Arts Midwest hopes to offer a transparent reflection and provide a philanthropic program model that emphasizes creative community-based programming. The resources and relationships invested in BIPOC, Native, and Immigrant communities are necessary to build a more equitable world—and to foster creative growth that powers thriving, entrepreneurial, and welcoming communities across the Midwest.

Staff and Collaborators

Voices for Racial Justice

Katie Robinson

Katie facilitated several monthly cohort virtual gatherings for artists and project collaborators across the region, bringing invaluable perspective and a racial justice lens to this community-building work.

Arts Midwest

Crystal Celeste Price, Program Manager

Torrie Allen, President and CEO

Anne Romens, Vice President

Ellen Mueller, Director of Programs

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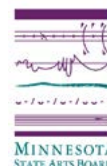
Michael Johnson, Program Manager
(through June 2023)

FISCAL YEAR 2024

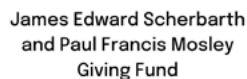
National Endowment for the Arts



State Arts Agencies



Foundations, Corporations, and Other Government Funders



Arts Midwest's activities are made possible by a grant provided by the Minnesota State Arts Board through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature general fund.

Arts Midwest's activities are also supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin.



Thank You

The We the Many Program Report was written by Crystal Celeste Price, Sade' Carrasquillo, Cheryl Ann Kary, and Kyle Whalen.

Editing support provided by Emma Bohmann and Ellen Mueller.

Design by Alana Horton and Keiko Takahashi.

Cover: SHINE Recovery Cafe Team poses for a photo the day before opening (August 14th, 2023). Photo by Daveed Holmes.

Back: Rock Your Mocs Off Artist participants are gathered at Sacred Pipe Resource Center, in Mandan, North Dakota in December of 2022. Photo courtesy of Sacred Pipe Resource Center.