



IMPACT REPORT

2018



INNOVATE. EDUCATE. CREATE.

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unveiling the creative side of sustainability

Dear Friends,

Inside this report you'll find the what and the how of RuckusRoots: images, numbers and graphs that show how we've grown, who we've served and the impact we've had in 2018. I'm really proud of what our organization has accomplished this year, and I think you will be, too.

In this letter, however, I want to focus on why we do what we do, and why we must continue. For me, it's personal. Besides family, the two things I love most in the world are art and our planet. Both should be celebrated, enjoyed and protected. And yet, both are under threat.

You've probably noticed that climate change is in the news a lot lately. Many people feel terrified and helpless. More than likely, you've experienced some direct effects in the form of wildfires, floods or drought. Even if you don't believe in climate change, you must admit the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, now 3 times the size of France, is alarming. By 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. Waterbound plastic greatly reduces the ocean's ability to act as a carbon sink and increases the effects of global warming.

Of course, this news scares and saddens us, but it should also embolden us. It's time to banish the overwhelming fear and to take action - both large and small. We believe that the micro supports the macro, and that acting locally can have global impact. RuckusRoots is doing its part. Our work supports underserved communities that experience the most environmental pollution and enjoy the fewest creative resources. We fill both of these voids within Los Angeles, the 2nd most polluted city in the U.S. and one of the top carbon-emitters in the world.

Our current programming asks students to look at our dysfunctional relationship with fossil fuels and their byproducts, and to create art that brings awareness and calls-to-action to others who typically don't receive this kind of messaging (e.g.: parents, grandparents and peers, who live in low income, highly marginalized neighborhoods).

In 2018, we developed and piloted a new technique that creates paintable canvas out of plastic bags. This activity asks students to thoughtfully engage with a material that is often carelessly discarded. We've already diverted 4,000 plastic bags from streets, landfills and rivers in 2018, and aim to divert another 12,000 bags in 2019. The paintings created from these bags will become murals that beautify underserved parts of our city.

You'll see in this report the power of these hands-on experiences to create lasting change. The more we can educate citizens that their actions matter, the more we can shift their values. The more quality arts experiences we have, the more empowered we feel as individuals to express those values and unite our community towards a common shared purpose.

I look forward to a year of transformation and growth for Los Angeles and for our planet.

In gratitude,



Christine Spehar
Founder and Executive Director



OUR MISSION:

Our mission is to create stronger, more sustainable communities by fostering connection, creativity and engagement.

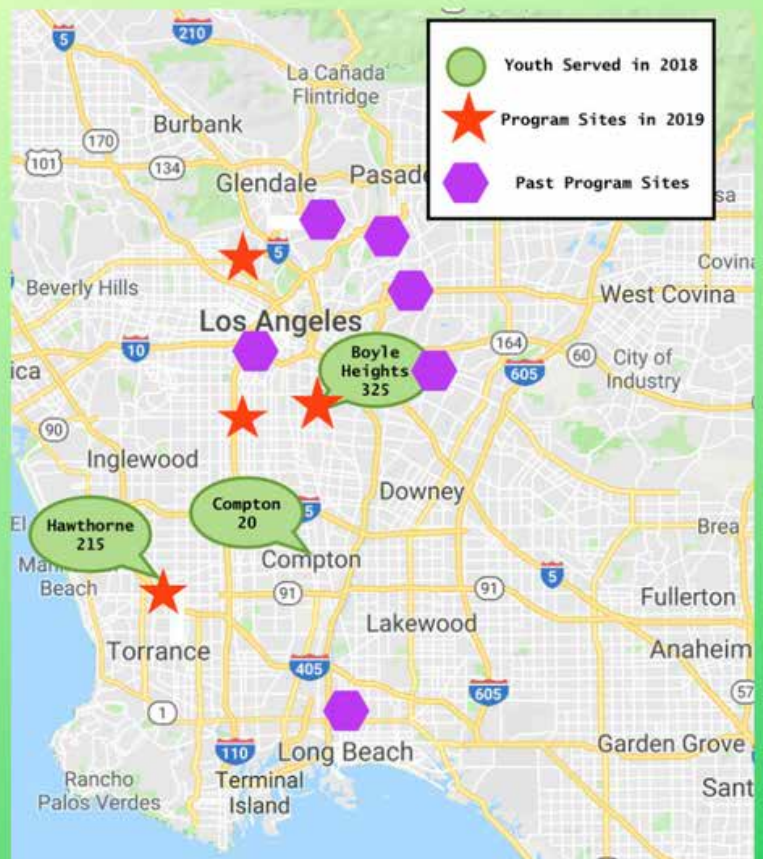
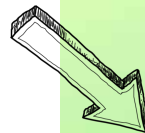


OUR VISION:

We envision a Los Angeles that provides a healthy, connected and beautiful home for people of all racial, ethnic and economic circumstances. We believe art and sustainability represent two core pillars that uphold this possibility for all people.

WHO WE SERVE:

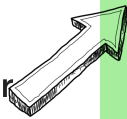
We target underserved neighborhoods across LA county that lack educational and infrastructural resources. Many of these communities are home to marginalized groups who often encounter systemic exclusion from collective conversations around both sustainability and creative artistic expression.



WHY WE ARE HERE:

RuckusRoots was founded as a 501c3 nonprofit organization in 2010 to tackle two problems facing Los Angeles: a lack of arts education and a lack of awareness and action around sustainability issues including litter, wildlife conservation, pollution and more.

At its core, RuckusRoots is committed to discovering solutions that address the root cause of these problems. We include marginalized groups in our programming and in the resulting dialogue centered around sustainable art-making, community-building and connection. Our current blend of both educational and public programs enables us to provide opportunities for expression to people of all creeds, colors and backgrounds.



2018 AT A GLANCE:

- 555 youth served
- 1465 direct participants (all ages)
- 2830 audience members
- 9 one-time workshops
- 1 workshop series
- 2 in-school programs
- 4 exhibitions
- 87 individual sessions or events throughout 2018

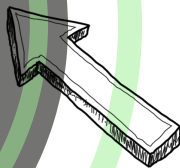


OUR PROGRAMS:

RuckusRoots provides the greater Los Angeles area with accessible and empowering experiences that foster creativity and build connections. Our programs amplify youth voices while helping them develop transferable life skills such as leadership and collaboration, empowering them to engage meaningfully in their communities.

"The beauty RuckusRoots nourishes in our communities is the perfect remedy for a world craving to remember creative engagement and purposeful connection."

- Kim., Donor

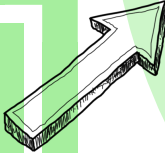


Pages 6 - 11 showcase a sampling of some of the programs we offered in 2018, from in-school sessions to community events.



"RuckusRoots is an inspirational machine in the NE Los Angeles community, facilitating beautiful projects that engage and utilize the creative expression of children and teens, while raising much needed environmental awareness. Students learn skills, are given creative opportunities, and celebrate individuality. They become aware of their impact. This is vital. We need more of you, Ruckus Roots!"

- Kristen, Community Member



**INNOVATION
EDUCATION
& CREATION**
STAND OUT AS THREE
DEFINING PILLARS FOR
OUR WORK.

Innovation: This year, we developed and piloted a new technique fusing reclaimed plastic bags into paintable canvases.

Education: Our programs empower Angelenos in three areas: visual arts, ecology and creative reuse.

Creation: We create large-scale collaborative artworks that beautify, inspire and unite communities.



THE COMMUNITY LISTENING PROJECT:

Location: Lifeline Charter School in Compton, CA

This research-based, digital arts program empowers young women to listen actively, organize effectively and create meaningful artwork to engage their communities. This initiative is especially important because the education of women and girls is rated as the 6th most effective action we can take as a society to reverse the current climate crisis. Source: Project Drawdown by Paul Hawken



Knowledge about gender and sustainability increased by **55%**

Photography skills increased by **45%**

Change-agent skills increased by **30%**

Graphic design skills improved by **28%**

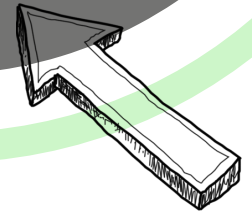
General sustainability knowledge increased by **18%**






“My poster depicts the reason why so many girls struggle with self-esteem. Our culture lets bullying, social media and beauty standards get in the way of self-love.”


- Bryonne, 16




Educating Girls:

 **PROJECT DRAWDOWN** reports that the education of women and girls is the 6th-most effective step we can take towards reversing climate change!


Fostering Self-Love:

 According to our findings, lack of self-love is the single most important issue affecting teenage girls in the community of Compton, CA


Participants reported a **20% increase** in self-love after participating in our program



Promoting Sustainability:

 **55% increase** in understanding of how sustainability relates to gender inequality

Engaging Communities:

 **7 in 10** participants showed an increased knowledge of changemaking tactics AND expressed a desire to act as an agent of change in their local community

WILD ART:

Location: Eucalyptus Elementary School, Hawthorne, CA

This integrated arts curriculum blends visual arts lessons (color theory, composition, drawing, and painting techniques) with ecology and conservation education – all focused on local wildlife.

We developed a system of turning old plastic bags into paintable canvases so that each student can truly see the ecological impact of their project and become more aware of their plastic use. The resulting plastic surfaces are durable and waterproof. The final student paintings will be installed as a community mural on campus at Eucalyptus Elementary in the spring of 2019.



STUDENTS REACHED:

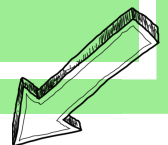
200 4th graders with no other access to arts education at school.

AUDIENCE REACHED:

1200

JOB CREATION:

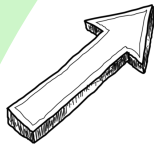
We provided 3 young, professional, diverse artists with new career opportunities in the arts.



NOTABLE IMPACT: We diverted over 4000 plastic bags from streets, rivers & landfills in a single 9-week program!

"RuckusRoots provided an amazing opportunity for youth to be enriched through art one class at a time, allowing students a chance to practice art techniques while learning about sustainability and how they can be stewards of the environment and make a difference!"

-Danielle Brunaczki, 4th Grade Parent,
Arts Commissioner for City of
Hawthorne, CA



The post-program surveys from our Wild Art program at Eucalyptus Elementary School yielded the following results:

- 67% saw improvement in drawing and painting techniques
- 50% saw an increase in sustainability knowledge
- 50% saw improvement in creative reuse techniques and methods
- 88% saw an increase in wildlife and ecology knowledge
- 88% believe the program laid the foundation for students to become effective change-makers in their local community.

TRASHFORMATION WORKSHOPS:

These improvisational art experiences turn community-generated waste into sustainably and collaboratively-built art.

Following is a sampling of our 2018 TRASHformation projects:

YMCA Dream Tree

Location: Weingart YMCA in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles

The Dream Tree: El Árbol de Sueños Project engaged kids and families in fun and empowering art-making activities at their local YMCA. Designed as a series of weekend workshops for children, families and community members, we explored a new theme each week using recycled materials to create art connected to cultural identity.

The litter was transformed into beautiful art that decorated The Dream Tree over the holidays at the YMCA.



325
Direct Youth Participants,
ages 5-10-years

1530
Total Audience members

94%
Latino & Spanish-speaking
households

Participation in this community installation gave families and kids real-life tools and tips to employ in their own homes every day to reduce waste, think creatively and inspire local change-making.

"This organization punches way above its weight class. It is hard to find a more energetic, diverse, cost-effective, and out-of-the-box thinking nonprofit than RuckusRoots. I support many nonprofits, and this one is at the top of the list."

- Donor

Woven Shade Tarp

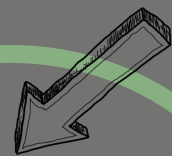
Location: Scottsdale, AZ

In May 2018, we participated in LUSH Cosmetic's Western Regional Managers Conference in Scottsdale, AZ. As recipients of their Charity Pot Grant, we were invited to share our mission with the LUSH community and host a version of our TRASHformation program in support of No More Deaths (No Más Muertes), another LUSH-funded organization.

The resulting Woven Shade Tarp is made almost entirely out of recycled materials (LUSH charity pot lids, fabric). An estimated 200 volunteers connected thousands of lids, each adorned with fabric circles bearing positive messages. The final piece we created was a 10' x 7' quilt-like structure, currently being used as a mobile shade tarp that can be installed in many different ways—off of existing plants, vehicles, structures or poles.



100% of TRASHformation participants surveyed said they felt more connected to their community after the program.



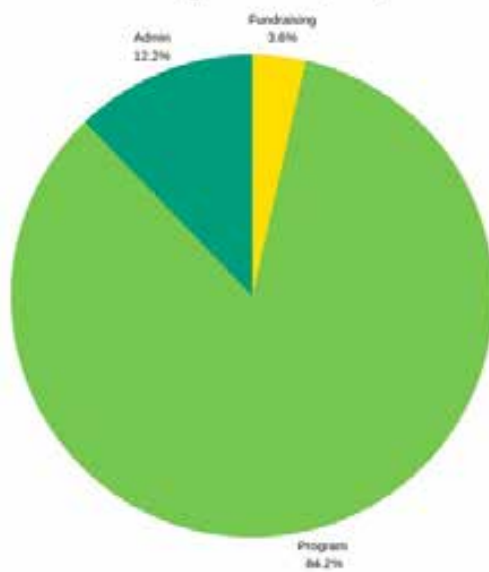
"Everyone was so excited to be able to contribute to such a meaningful activity. Thank you, RuckusRoots!"

- Tricia Stevens, Ethical Campaigns Manager, LUSH Cosmetics

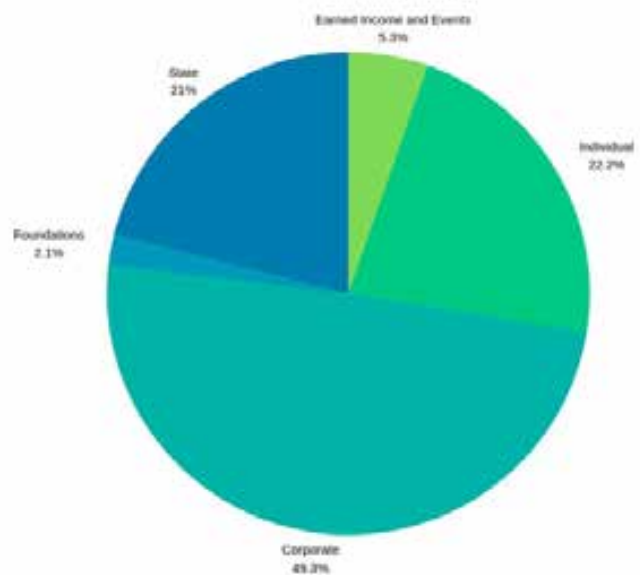
FINANCIALS:

- In 2018, we strengthened our funding base to include state grants and foundation support. Additional county & city funding are projected in 2019.
- We increased our revenue stream by 40% from 2017 to 2018.

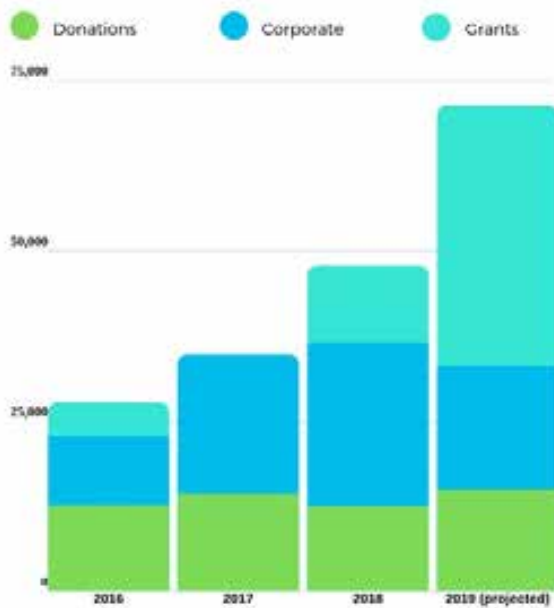
2018 Expenses: \$36,639



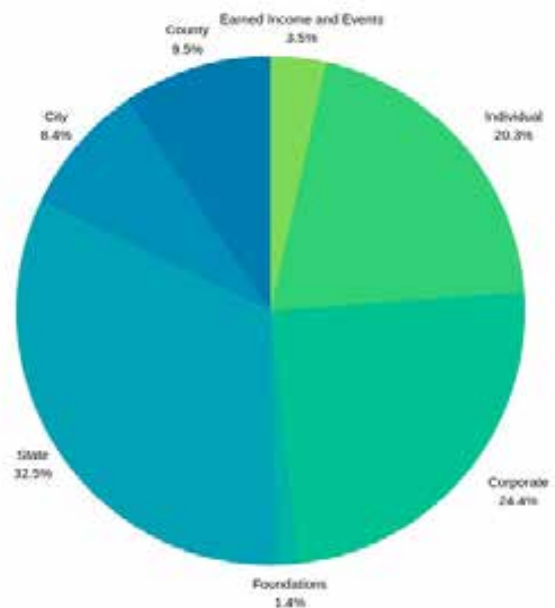
2018 Revenue: \$48,944



Revenue Sources



2019 Projected Revenue: \$71,200





821 likes on Facebook

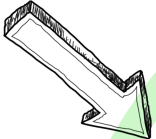


Our Instagram following
DOUBLED in the last
last year

FAST FACTS & FIGURES:

In 2018, we organized:

- 10 different location sites for programs and events
- 6 teaching artists in classrooms
- 90 hours of programming in schools
- 95 student artworks exhibited



"I first heard of RuckusRoots when a friend from LA saw one of their projects at the LA Zoo. I learned more about it after googling it. It is a most worthy non profit organization that helps where it is needed most - in our underfunded LA school system."

- Elway, Community Member

OUR GROWING TEAM:

Operational Staff:

Christine Spehar: Executive & Programs Director
Allegra Bick-Maurischat: Communications & Programs
Coordinator

Board Members:

Stephanie Spehar
Jennifer Bone
Regina Clemente
Jessie Anderson

Advisory Committee

Ruby Roth
Ariya Kelly
Cecilia Sasso

Teaching Artists:

Raquel Natalicchio
Allison García
Luís Angel Zepeda
Carly Brock
Allegra Bick-Maurschat
K. Bradford



Consultants & Alumni:

James Peterson
NiNo Alicea
Scott Froschauer
Robin Guttman
Rebekkah Waites
Erinn Bone
Beth Pickens

"I've had the privilege of working with RuckusRoots on a few programs and can't say enough! Great team with a great purpose. In a world where educating our youth is so important, non profits such as RuckusRoots are vital!"

- Erinn B, Music Mentor

2018 PARTNERS:

Eucalyptus Elementary School
City of Hawthorne Arts Commission
SilverLake Independent Jewish Community Center
Girls Inc., of Greater Los Angeles
Little Stones
YMCA of Greater Los Angeles
Lifeline Charter School
Get Empowered!
MÚCARO
Art Contraptions
No Más Muertes

"What I love most about partnering with RuckusRoots is the ability to interact with so many amazing artists and exciting young minds to make a real impact on our world."

- James Peterson, Art Contraptions

SPONSORS:

Thank You, Donors!

Nelson M.
Peter B.
Christine S.
Lindsey S.
Cori H.
Amy M.
Travis H.
Marlene U.
Danielle G.
Evan D.
Alvaro H.
Andrew W.
Lici K.
Kerry B.
Michelle M.
Lauren R.
Jess A.
Charlotte E.

Jennifer B.
Elizabeth E.
Justin M.
Cindy M.
Elizabeth O.
Jonathan B.
Katie J.
Kim F.
Shelley B.
Heather H.
Siobhan C.
Eric F.
Kristin D.
Christine K.
James W.
Dennis M.
Monica P.
Katsumi M.
Mike & Kathy R.

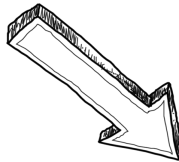
Tom R.
Marc J.
Steve H.
Gerry S.
Kate H.
Bill W.
Anne E.
Leida S.
Anthony F.
Marge S.
Susie S.
Jim F.
Christine H.
Mark H.
Sarah O.
Tom P.
Mary & Gerry H.
Scott F.

LUSH Charity Pot
California Arts Council
CALI Foundation
Hawthorne Arts Commission
Word on the Street Project
Hyperslow



RuckusRoots is now a self-sustaining organization with a growing list of supporters, allies & collaborators!

LOOKING AHEAD:



ON THE HORIZON in 2019

- 12,000 plastic bags diverted
- Increased reach of 20%
- One new school and one repeat program at current partner school
- Blending of 2 programs: TRASHformation and Wild Art into one public art installation in East L.A!
- Collaborating on a large-scale sustainable art project: MÚCARO for Puerto Rico!



**THANK
YOU!**



Follow along
on Instagram
@ruckusroots

Check out our
Platinum Seal of Transparency
on [Guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org)!





unveiling the creative side of sustainability

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