

A child with dark, curly hair is shown from the side, reaching out to touch the soil in a garden bed. The garden bed contains young green plants and is mulched with straw. A large, semi-transparent green circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text for the report.

Ruckus
Roots 

IMPACT
REPORT

2021

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Dear Ruckus-Raiser,

2021 is often described using words like rollercoaster, whiplash and exhaustion.

But another word comes to mind when I think about last year: generosity. Generosity with dollars, yes, but also with time, intention and perseverance.

“Helping others” became one of Google’s top search phrases, and though it was a challenging year for many, I am inspired by all the ways I saw our community step up for each other in 2021:

- Grassroots efforts to feed Los Angeles’ unhoused residents
- Donations of in-kind services to aid those facing eviction
- Free grocery deliveries to our most vulnerable populations
- Volunteers lending a hand to victims of wildfires and mudslides
- Food gardens cultivated in unexpected places like front yards, alleys and medians



I am proud to say that RuckusRoots was a part of many of these efforts, as we continued to adjust to pandemic-related changes while growing our network of supporters, including volunteers, teaching artists, funders and partners.

As an organization, we adapted to these challenging times by deepening the relationships we fostered in 2019 and 2020 and continuing to offer programming in a variety of formats, from online and in-person, to free, contactless delivery of art supply bags to low-income Los Angeles residents.

And finally, it was a year of reframing: perceived disappointments became new opportunities for growth and connection. Out of a relationship borne from a previously unawarded grant, RuckusRoots proudly welcomed a new foundational supporter. We also began a fruitful relationship and a new program at an up-and-coming urban farm, after being required to pivot yet again due to pandemic-related closures.

2021 was a year in which we bolstered our community through our actions and embraced the generosity that returned to us from supporters like you.

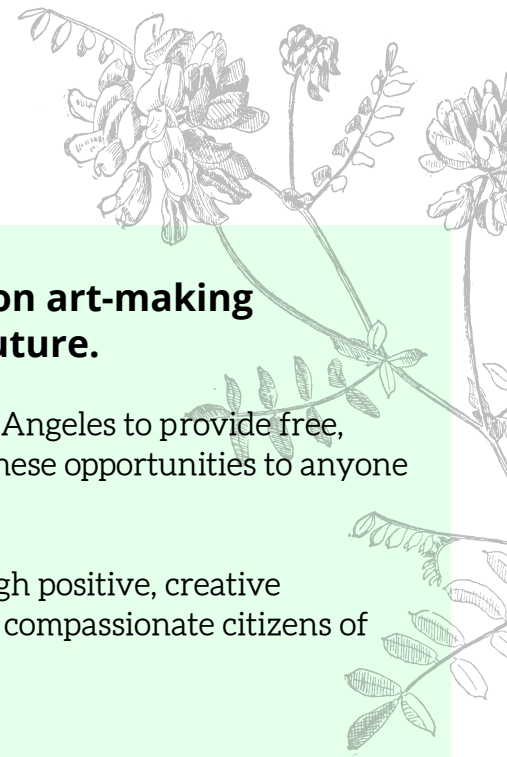
Above all, RuckusRoots will continue striving for equitable arts access and climate resilience for all Los Angeles communities, and we thank you for your support.

In gratitude,

Christine Spehar
Founder & Executive Director



CULTIVATING CREATIVITY...



RuckusRoots is a grassroots nonprofit focused on art-making as a way to build a more sustainable future.

We partner with local artists and underrepresented communities in Los Angeles to provide free, accessible opportunities to learn, make, connect and grow. We provide these opportunities to anyone who needs or wants them.

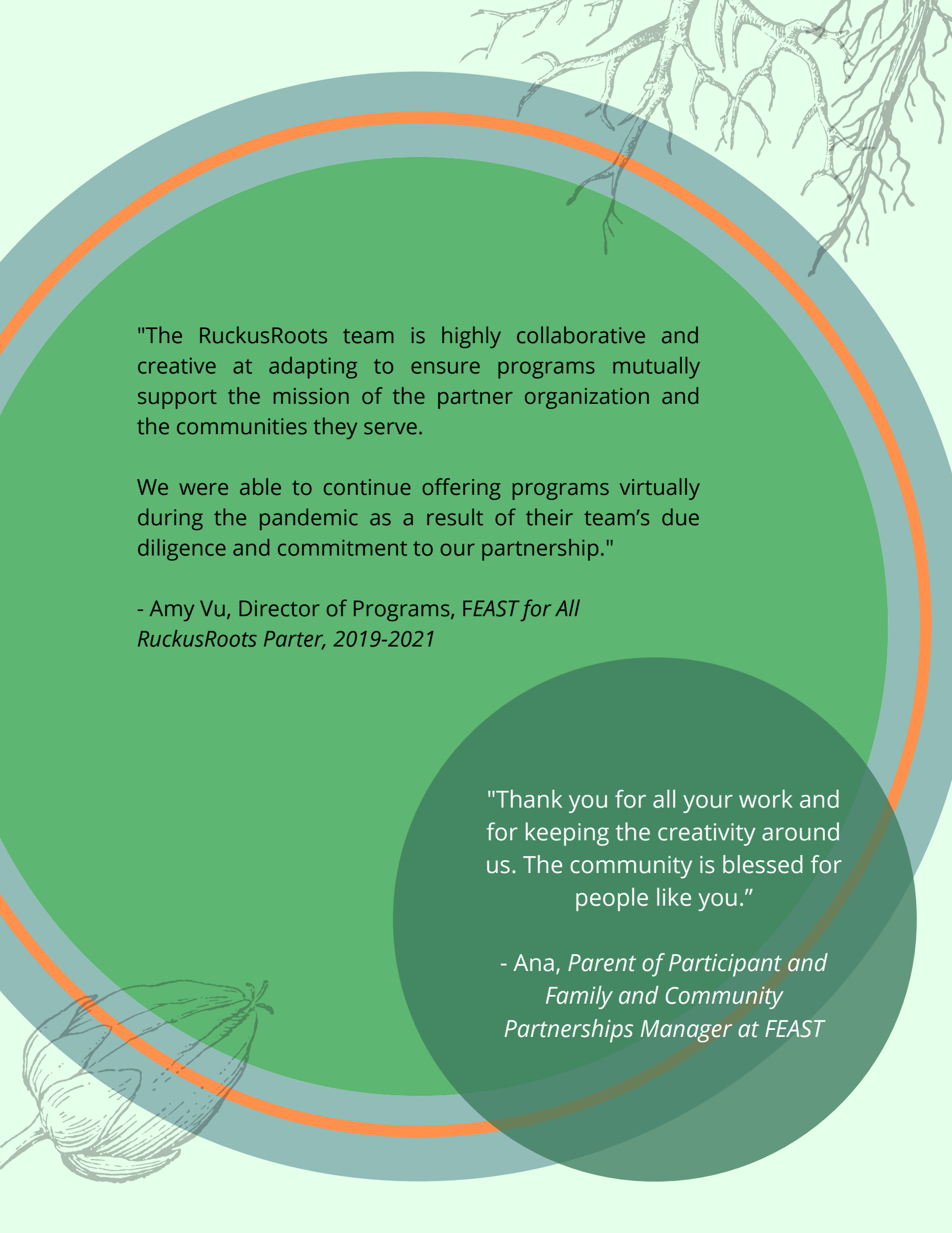
We believe that when individuals connect with the natural world through positive, creative experiences, they become better stewards of the environment and more compassionate citizens of the world.

Our vision is a creative, vibrant and resilient Los Angeles for all.



...& RECOMMITTING TO INTERSECTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

We're dedicated to the evolving conversation around sustainability and the issues that surround it. We address sustainability through a multi-faceted approach, and each of our program offerings seeks to provide impactful solutions. To those ends, we are constantly deepening our understanding of the intersections that exist between sustainability, creativity, race, economics, gender and place-based activism.



"The RuckusRoots team is highly collaborative and creative at adapting to ensure programs mutually support the mission of the partner organization and the communities they serve.

We were able to continue offering programs virtually during the pandemic as a result of their team's due diligence and commitment to our partnership."

- Amy Vu, Director of Programs, *FEAST for All RuckusRoots Partner*, 2019-2021

"Thank you for all your work and for keeping the creativity around us. The community is blessed for people like you."

- Ana, *Parent of Participant and Family and Community Partnerships Manager at FEAST*

MEET OUR LEADERSHIP & STAFF



Christine Spehar
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Allegra Bick-Maurischat
PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE BOARD



Stephanie Spehar, President
University of Wisconsin, OshKosh
DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABILITY



Danielle Marquez, Treasurer
City of Hawthorne, CA
FINE ARTS COMMISSIONER



Tommi Iten, Secretary
Carlson Baker Arts, Los Angeles
TEAM LEAD



NiNo Alicea
Ricky Martin Productions, Los Angeles
ART DIRECTOR



Scott Froschauer
The Word On the Street, Los Angeles
SCULPTOR, FABRICATOR, ARTIST



...& NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR GROWING TEAM!

PROGRAM FACILITATORS



Stephanie Leah
Garden Magic



Sam Shoemaker
Garden Magic



Jamia Weir
Roots of Reuse



Allegra Bick-Maurischat
Healthier Together



Julio Muñoz
Online Programs, Wild Art

We were lucky enough to add THREE NEW VOLUNTEERS to our wonderful team. Alex, Alexandria and Brendan lent us their help during our in-person programs in 2021.



Alexander Carstens
Volunteer



Brendan Bailey
Volunteer



Alex Landa
Volunteer

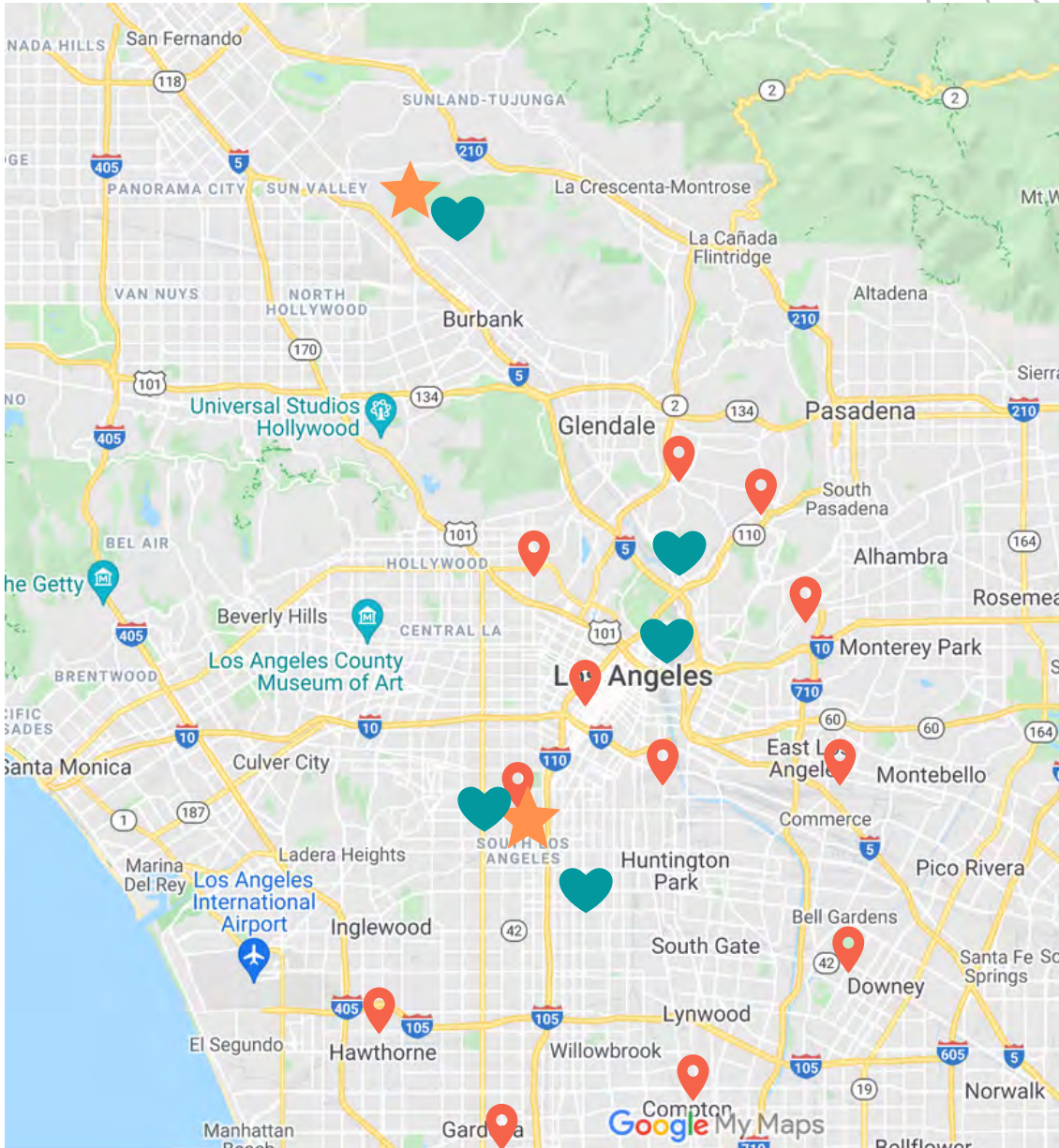


Nisha Maxwell
Social Media Marketing




This year we welcomed social media guru Nisha Maxwell. She has been a great addition to our team of contractors, and our channels have never looked better!

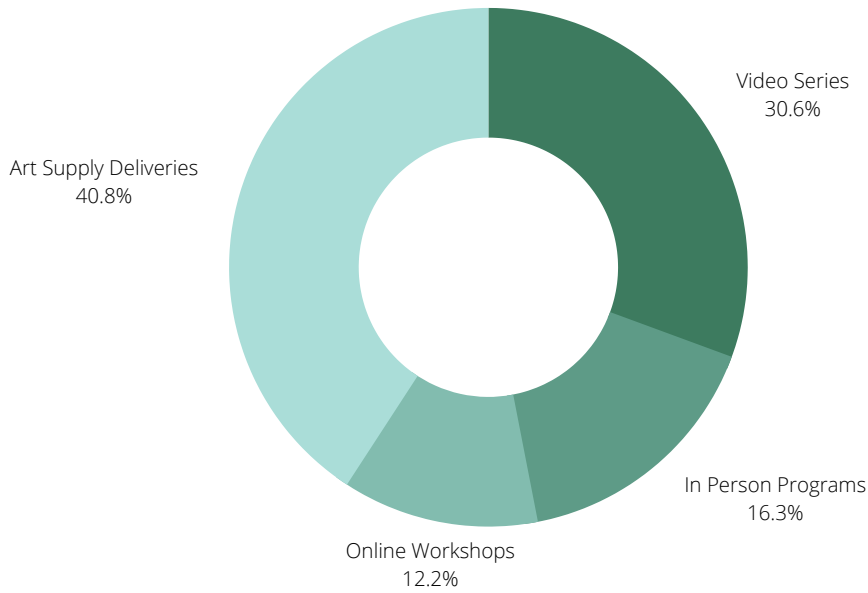


FROM SUN VALLEY TO SOUTH CENTRAL...



GUIDE:

-  past program sites
-  2021 program sites
-  communities served in 2021



3500
audience members
reached

2021 PROGRAM BREAKDOWN


...WE MADE A DIFFERENCE IN HUNDREDS OF HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS L.A. COUNTY!

344
unique
artworks created

480
youth
impacted

973
direct
participants





"I had a wonderful time volunteering with Ruckus Roots helping with their Garden Magic program. Helping kids engage ecology through art was a great experience. All of the activities were creative, well organized, and plain fun. I'm really glad that an old friend recommended this organization.

Everyone from the kids, to the organizers, to the guest teacher were all a joy to meet and help.

I look forward to lending a hand in the future."

- Alex, *Volunteer*



Our inaugural
YouTube series
garnered over
**300 unique & organic
views!**

ON SCREENS...

Over the spring/summer of 2021, and as a way to reach more constituents during the continuing pandemic, we wrote, filmed, edited and published our very first YouTube series! We were lucky enough to partner with the incredible ArtsGarage L.A as our filming and production location - special thanks to local artist, Cameron Taylor Brown for her lovely space!

The Roots of Reuse, is a specially-designed six-episode series that aims to engage families and kids in a virtual space in lieu of our usual in-person school programming.

Each episode shares creative reuse projects to make at home using recycled materials - all while learning about how to lessen your environmental impact!

Featured Artist: Jamia Weir
Concept & Production: Allegra Bick-Maurischat
Filming & Editing: Christine Spehar & Erinn Bone

Episode 1: Plarn & Pom-Poms (aired May 20th)

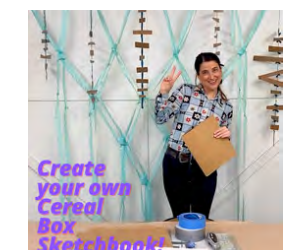
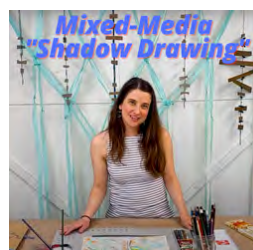
Episode 2: Plastic Coil Vessels (aired June 1st)

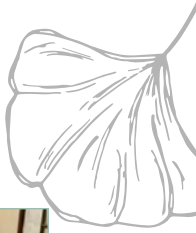
Episode 3: Eco-Flowers (aired July 12th)

Episode 4: Plastic Bottle Sculptures (aired August 4th)

Episode 5: Cereal Box Sketchbooks (aired August 26th)

Episode 6: Shadow Drawings (aired September 7th)



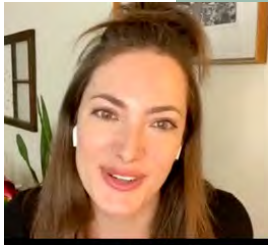
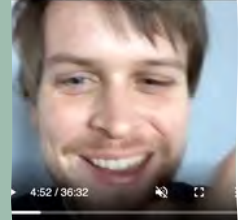


...IN VIRTUAL CONVERSATION...

Our Holiday Happy Hour conversations were a hit on Instagram Live – featuring Executive Director and Founder, Christine Spehar in candid, casual conversations with some of our favorite creatives tackling climate change and eco-justice in their work.



We chatted live with Sam Shoemaker, sculptor & founder of MycoMyco mushroom farm, the duo behind Studio Tutto, local public art studio, and Stephanie Spehar, RuckusRoots' Board President, climate activist & anthropologist.



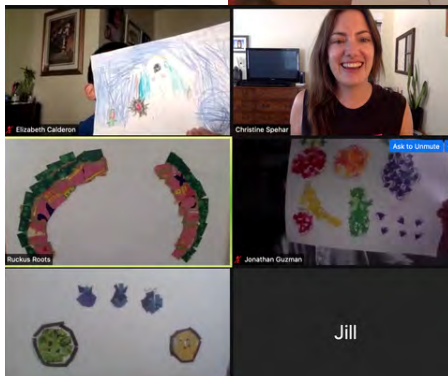
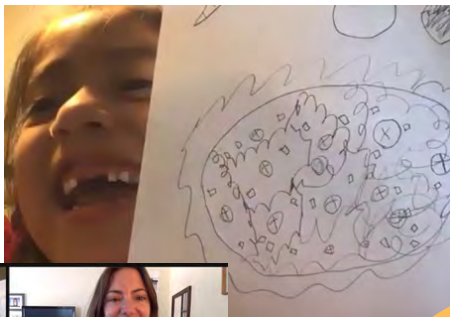
...ART-MAKING AT HOME...

Our "Healthier Together!" Workshop series took place over the summer of 2021 in collaboration with partner organization, Feast for All. These classes provided underrepresented youth of all ages with socially-distant art supply deliveries, as well as the opportunity to learn new techniques for earth-friendly artmaking tied to themes of cooking, health and wellness.

Each session began and ended with a guided movement and mindfulness activity, encouraging children to tap into their bodies and minds with positivity and love for themselves, their families and the planet!

Reach: over 120 children
Range: ages 3 to 16 years
Recurrence: 70% of participants returned to class week after week

Program Facilitator:
 Allegra Bick-Maurischat



50
 art supply bags created & distributed to underserved families

500
 trash items repurposed into artworks



...AND (FINALLY) IN-PERSON AGAIN!



Our first in-person program since the start of the pandemic, Garden Magic was a wonderful opportunity to get dirty in the garden and connect with a new community base in Sun Valley, CA. This outdoor art and ecology "camp" for youth combined hands-on learning about native plants, fungi, pollinators and more with creativity each Saturday over the Fall of 2021.

Reach: over 100 community members

Range: folks aged 4 to 75 participated in our final painting day at the garden!

Recurrence: Over 20 hours of hands-on nature-based learning

Program Facilitator: Stephanie Leah

Over the course of our 7-week program, we created and learned together at up-and-coming urban farm, The Hungry Gardens.

Participants learned painting, drawing and color theory along with their ecology lessons and created hand-painted "garden markers" as their culminating project. These markers are permanently installed as to organize the garden beds and as our beautification gift to the space and our wonderful host, Joni Albers, founder, CEO and head gardener at The Hungry Gardens.



40

unique artworks created

100 % of parents surveyed said their kids and family felt more connected to their local community and habitat after our Garden Magic workshops!



FROM MAGIC IN THE GARDEN...



Take a look at just some of the lessons from Garden Magic below...

Soil Party: Kids learned about the science of soil and made their own soil microbes

Native Plants and Pollinators: Kids got to plant milkweed and learned about the importance of native plants in healthy garden systems

Special Guest Workshop with mushroom expert & artist, Sam Shoemaker, to learn about cordyceps, "zombie" mushrooms and more!

We wrapped up our time together on a high note with a community event to engage donors, share our art installation in the garden with the greater community and celebrate being in-person again! Kids, parents, grandparents, and volunteers alike joined in the fun and loved seeing the painted markers we made as our gift to our host, The Hungry Garden.



...TO "ZOMBIE" MUSHROOM WORKSHOPS AT THE YMCA!

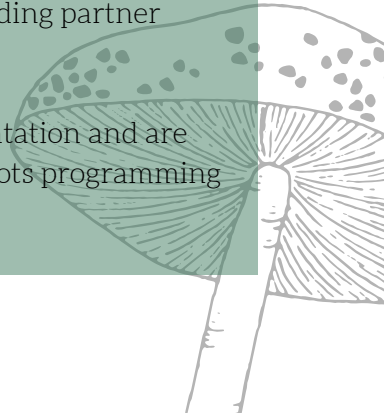
35
students reached



Program Facilitator: Sam Shoemaker

We loved our time with Sam so much that we hosted a special event with him at our pending partner location, YMCA of Verdugo Hills!

The students there loved his presentation and are looking forward to more RuckusRoots programming in the coming year.



WE ALSO SUPPORTED OUR UNHOUSED NEIGHBORS WITH ART SUPPLY DELIVERIES!

As in our 2020 response to the pandemic, we continued our efforts to purchase, package and distribute art supplies to unhoused families and kids in our local L.A community.

Each supply kit contained reusable, non-toxic art supplies and well as a guide with ideas for making recycled art projects.



We distributed

- scissors
- fabric
- watercolors
- recycled paper
- yarn
- clay

and more — in reusable cotton bags!

200

impacting an estimated unhoused community members

Community Member Spotlight: Lauren Rock

Lauren Rock started working with a mutual aid team serving the Los Angeles unhoused community in early 2021. Every week, this group distributes lunch as well as resources like tents, hygiene products, and clothing to encampments in El Pueblo and MacArthur Park. This group isn't affiliated with any nonprofit—just a bunch of friends who collect money and donations on social media and work together during the week to organize distribution efforts. They encourage others to find their local mutual aid group and pitch in or consider creating their own sustainable distribution.

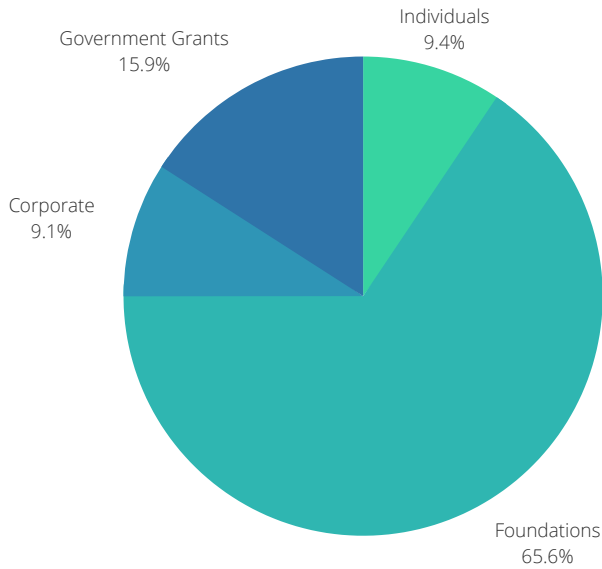
You can help out Lauren's team by sending money via Venmo to @laurenjuliarock with "unhoused LA" in the notes or buying items off the Amazon wishlist: [tinyurl.com/unhousedLA](https://www.tinyurl.com/unhousedLA)

75

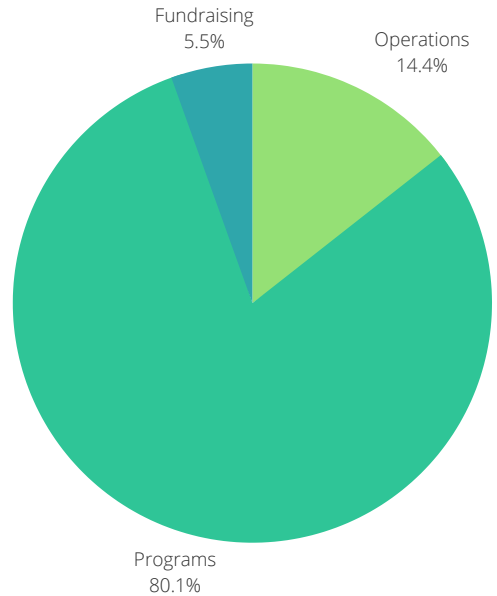
art supply kits created and delivered



2021 Revenue: \$111,116



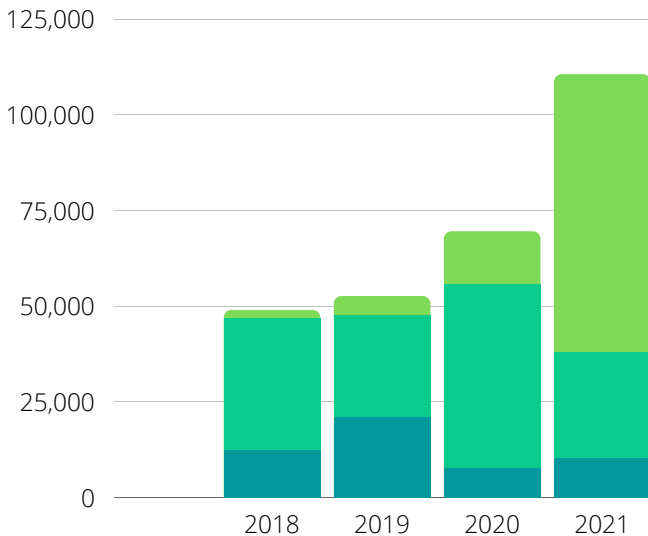
2021 Expenses: \$72,840



A PROMISING FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

Revenue Trends:

- Foundations and Earned Income
- Corporate and Government Grants
- Individual Donations



Individual Donors	50
Government Funders	3
Foundation Funders	3
Corporate Funders	1
In-kind Location Donors	2
Revenue Increase 2020-2021	58%



OUR SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS

Our programs are made possible through contributions from individuals, grant makers and collaboration with partners. Thank you to those who worked with and supported us in 2021:

50 donors
helped us raise over
\$8,000
during our 2021
giving season!

Susie
Christine
Evan
Cori
Travis
Ko
Eric
Nelson

Dennis
Mary Susan
Dulcie
Monching
Monica
Tita
Peter
Regina
Jennifer

Cecilia
Sara
Courtney
Errol
Sarah
Gabriel
Tommi
Tom
Jason
Anne
Stephanie
Kandace
Randi
Charlotte
Danielle

Eugenia
Summer
Kymber
Phoenix
Allegra
Lauren
Robert & Susan
Mary S.

Jim
James
Bill
Susie
Cameron
Marianne
Gerry & Mary H.
Mike & Kathy

WE DOUBLED IT!

We more than doubled our monthly sustainer group in 2021 *AND* gained twice the in-kind donations compared to 2020!

FUNDERS

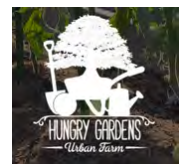
The California Arts Council
The Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
The Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture
Tah Dah Foundation
Lush Cosmetics
Network for Good
AmazonSmile
Perenchio Family Foundation

PARTNERS

FEAST for All, Los Angeles
Hungry Gardens Urban Farm
Arts Garage L.A
Studio Tutto
YMCA Verdugo Hills
Unhoused L.A Mutual Aid
Imperfect Foods

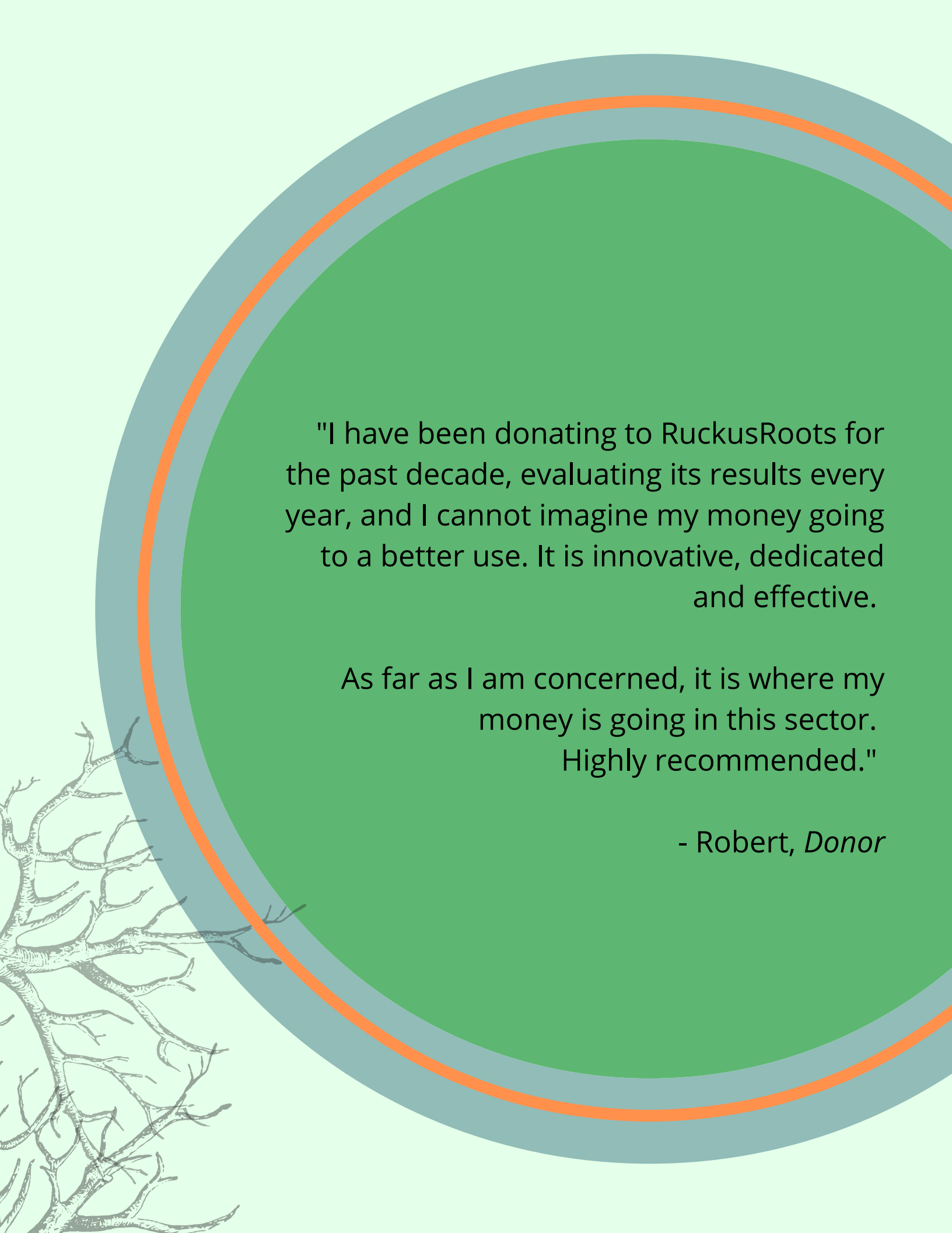


PERENCHIO FOUNDATION
Los Angeles, California



STUDIO TUTTO





"I have been donating to RuckusRoots for the past decade, evaluating its results every year, and I cannot imagine my money going to a better use. It is innovative, dedicated and effective.

As far as I am concerned, it is where my money is going in this sector.
Highly recommended."

- Robert, *Donor*

PLANTING SEEDS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE...

In 2022, we look forward to welcoming another part-time team member, continuing our partnerships with Hungry Gardens Urban Farm, FEAST for All Los Angeles and developing new and exciting partners across the city.

We hope to return to more in-person programming - and the collaborative, inspiring art projects that come with it - as the pandemic wanes.

We believe that individuals who connect with the natural world through positive, creative experiences become better stewards of the environment and more compassionate citizens of the world.

Through equitable arts access and eco-education, we strive to achieve our vision of a creative, vibrant and resilient Los Angeles for all.

We enter 2022 buoyed by the perseverance and innovation of our community. Thank you for your continued support!





Equitable arts access & climate resilience for all Angelenos
www.ruckusroots.org