



2019 IMPACT REPORT



.RUCKUSROOTS.ORG

LOS ANGELES, CA

**UNVEILING THE CREATIVE
SIDE OF SUSTAINABILITY**

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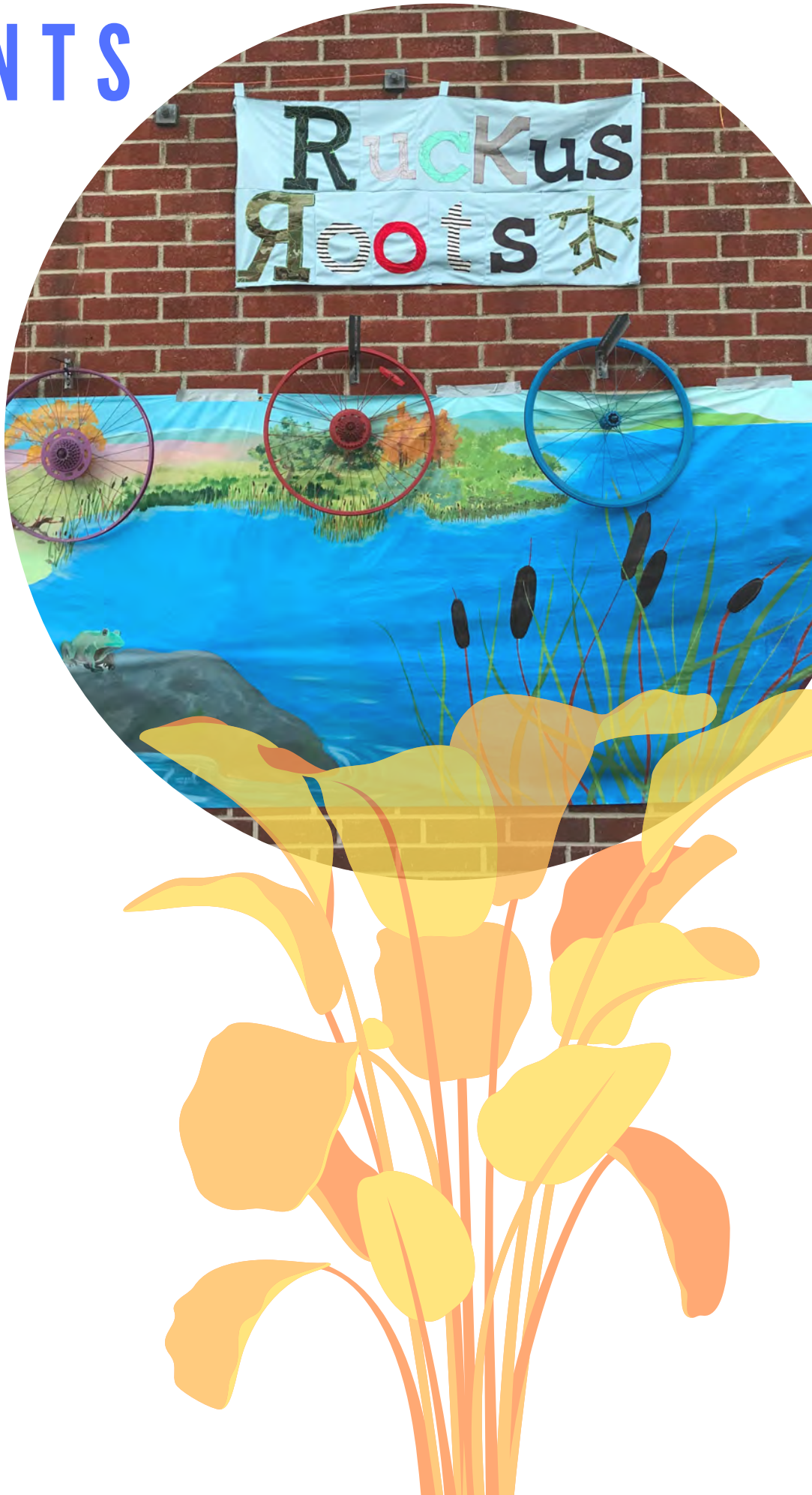
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01 FOUNDER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

This picture is one of my favorites from 2019 because it encapsulates the connections that RuckusRoots creates in our communities. It was taken at our Kites for a Cause program, which offered free, summertime art-making workshops and litter clean ups along the Los Angeles River. Anthony was riding by on his bike and decided to join in, while Tahli was a repeat visitor who enjoyed perfecting her art piece each week.



These two didn't know each other previously and have a huge generational gap between them. They come from vastly different socio-economic backgrounds, and yet they sat next to each other for more than an hour, joking, creating, laughing, and eventually fist-bumping.

RuckusRoots is about empowering our communities, creating connections, and making sustainable artistic experiences accessible for all. Anthony and Tahli are just one small (but incredibly cute!) example of how we did that this year.

Our 2019 programs provided opportunities in both classrooms and public workshops to empower Angelenos of all ages in three areas: visual arts, ecology and creative reuse.

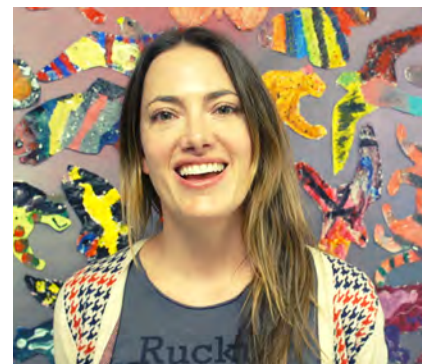
You'll see in this report the power of these hands-on experiences to create lasting change. We believe that the more we can educate citizens that their actions matter, the more we can shift their values. The more quality arts experiences we have, the more empowered we feel as individuals to express those 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Spehar'.

Christine Spehar
Founder and Executive Director



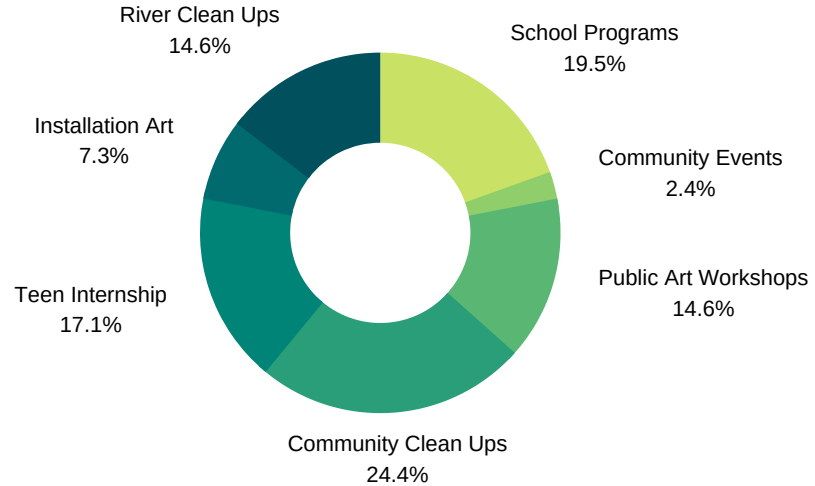
**"RUCKUSROOTS IS AMAZING!
THEY'RE TRULY DEDICATED TO
THEIR IDEALS, AND THEIR
PROGRAMMING IS SENSITIVE,
RELEVANT, AND FUN.**

**THEY EXCEL AT BRINGING A REAL
SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND
CONNECTION TO THEIR
WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS. I FEEL
SO LUCKY TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO
WORK WITH THEM."**

NISHA, VOLUNTEER



2019 AT A GLANCE



42	Unique Sessions
304	Artworks Created
250	Lbs of Trash Collected
377	Youth Impacted
1520	Total Participants

WE'RE ON A MISSION

Founded in 2010, RuckusRoots aims to tackle two problems facing Los Angeles: a lack of arts education and a lack of awareness and action around sustainability issues that impact both our city and the global fight against climate change. Examples of these include litter, illegal dumping, single-use plastics, pollution & wildlife conservation.

Today, we continue our commitment to finding solutions that address the root cause of these problems.

To do so, we focus our programming on marginalized groups and underrepresented communities, which often lack the resources and infrastructure necessary to address the systemic obstacles they face.

We work hard to provide the greater Los Angeles area with accessible and empowering experiences that foster creativity and build connections. With programs that amplify youth voices while helping develop transferable life skills such as leadership and collaboration, we aim to prime our participants for meaningful engagement in their communities and beyond.



IMPACT HIGHLIGHT:
Each 2-week program successfully diverts and repurposes between 300 and 500 plastic bags from streets, rivers & landfills!

WILD ART

This integrated arts curriculum blends traditional visual arts lessons with ecology and conservation education – all focused on local wildlife.

Led by professional artists and wildlife scientists, each student's final projects is a painting of a threatened wildlife species that will become part of a larger installation.

Using our pioneering technique, students learn to transform single-use plastic bags into paintable canvas. Through this process, artists see the ecological impact of their project and become more aware of their plastic use. The resulting creation is durable, waterproof, handmade and unique to the student-artist who made it, honoring an endangered species native to the L.A. area.

...A GROWING PROGRAM!

In 2019, we continued our partnership with Eucalyptus Elementary School in Hawthorne, CA by repeating the program with the next year's set of 4th graders. It began with the installation of our beautiful wildlife mural in the school cafeteria...

...and continued with more Wild Art sessions in the Fall, carrying on into 2020.

In 2020/2021 our goal is to expand Wild Art to include a Level 2 program for 5th graders that builds upon the 4th-grade program, incorporates lessons from the school garden and gets students outside and into nature!



THE MURAL

Installed in the school cafeteria in March of 2019, our mural is 14 feet long and 4 feet high. It contains 200 wildlife paintings created by 4th graders in 2018 and was revealed at a community event with students, families and local news crew present! The mural is fully modular, so we can continue adding to it in 2020 with new paintings from our most recent batch of 4th graders.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHT:

The mural, installed in Spring 2019, contains art made from 4,000 plastic bags. Our 2020 additions will divert up to 4,000 more!



THE NUMBERS

Unique Artworks	200
Plastic Bags Used	4000
Youth Impacted	200
Teaching Artists Employed	3

SCHOOL SESSIONS



Evaluations revealed:

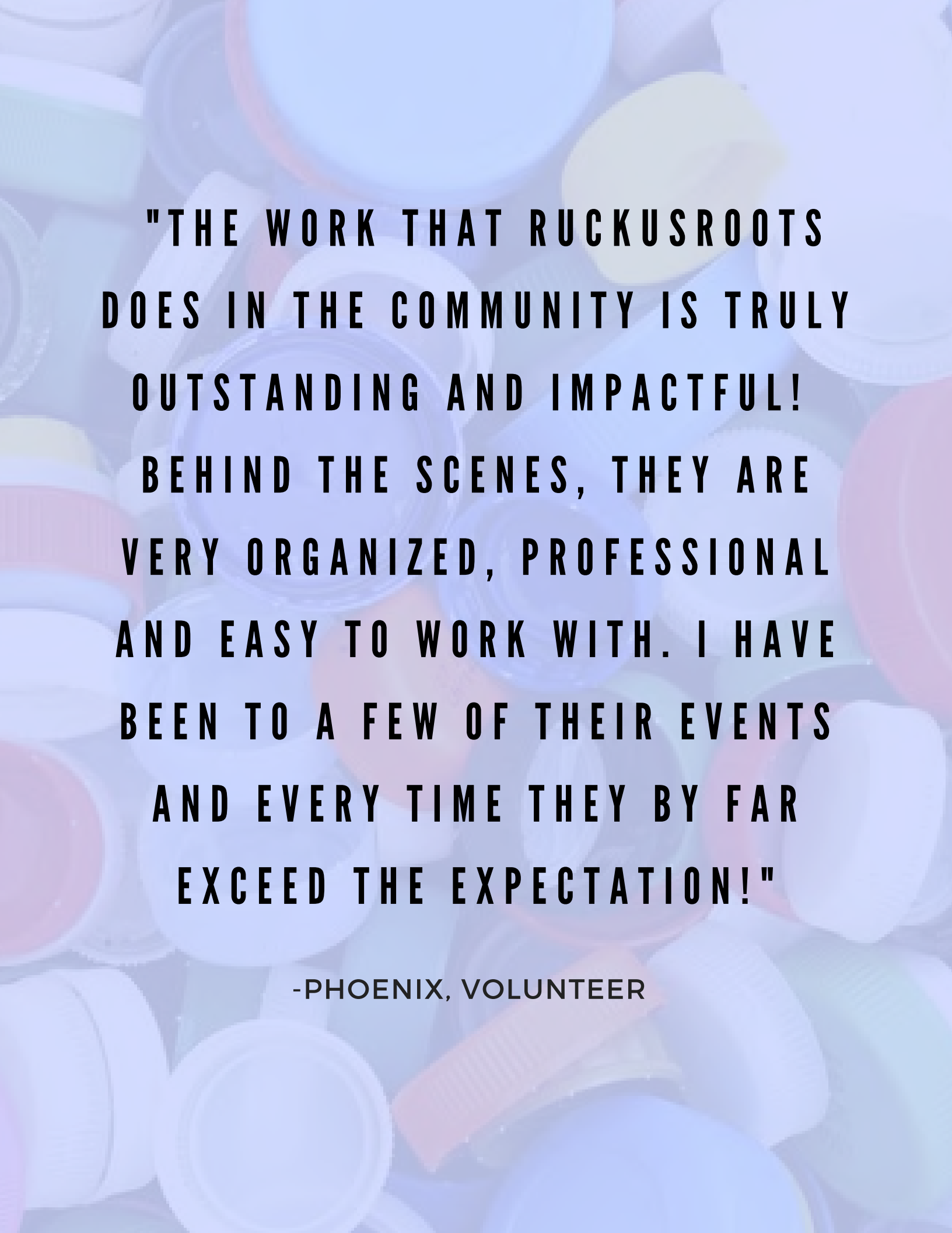
- 67% improvement in drawing and painting techniques
- 50% increase in sustainability knowledge
- 50% improvement in creative reuse techniques and methods
- 88% increase in wildlife and ecology knowledge
- 88% of teachers believe the program laid the foundation for students to become effective change-makers

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS:

Unique Artworks	32
Plastic Bags Used	640
Youth Impacted	32
Teaching Artists Employed:	1

With more sessions continuing in 2020!





**"THE WORK THAT RUCKUSROOTS
DOES IN THE COMMUNITY IS TRULY
OUTSTANDING AND IMPACTFUL!
BEHIND THE SCENES, THEY ARE
VERY ORGANIZED, PROFESSIONAL
AND EASY TO WORK WITH. I HAVE
BEEN TO A FEW OF THEIR EVENTS
AND EVERY TIME THEY BY FAR
EXCEED THE EXPECTATION!"**

-PHOENIX, VOLUNTEER



KITES FOR A CAUSE

Our public program, Kites for a Cause, explored fabric and fabric arts as a symbol for the interwoven communities that make up our sprawling home of Los Angeles. Pairing street and river clean-ups with sustainability education and art workshops, the program gave Angelenos a free direct-action opportunity for art making and community improvement.

We determined from our initial clean-ups that fabric was one of the biggest sources of litter in the river, and so we decided our art making workshops should incorporate this material and explore the pitfalls of fast fashion; hence the name, "Kites for a Cause."

MORE ABOUT KFAQ

Using the river as a unifying force, a combination of local artists and sustainability experts led this series of public workshops on the river-adjacent bike path between Frogtown and Atwater Village, encouraging participants and passers-by to join in clean ups followed by fabric arts and found-materials art-making demonstrations. Techniques explored included assemblage, collage, patchwork, embroidery, fabric painting and scrap-map-making. Participants created their own flags, kites and/or scrap-map inspired by their neighborhoods and local habitat.





IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS:

Direct Participants	80
Community Reach	600
Waste Collected	75
Artworks Created	45
Neighborhoods	16
Artists Employed	2

Surveyed Participants Said:

- 95% → This activity creatively engaged my family and me.
- 100% → This activity was culturally enriching
- 99% → This activity helped me connect with my community
- 100% → This activity helped me learn about sustainable materials
- 100% → I am more likely to clean up litter in my own neighborhood



MÚCARO FOR PUERTO RICO

We continued our support of this latest version of Burning Man art piece: MÚCARO by Puerto Rican artist NiNo Alicea. In addition to offering fiscal sponsorship, we also provided curriculum development for the programming that will be hosted on site, on the island of Puerto Rico. This public sculpture and community space will be used as a classroom to teach practical skills for rebuilding after natural disasters like Hurricane Maria (ie: roofing, solar panel installation, etc). In addition, we hope to foster relationships with local artists and community members who can offer their skills and creativity to others in a variety of contexts.



IMPACT HIGHLIGHT:

The initial MÚCARO installation was a 2017 Burning Man Honorary Art Grant recipient, representing the first full-scale piece to show and burn on Playa by a Puerto Rican artist!

In 2019, we relaunched our internship program in cooperation with Highland Park-based charter school, Academia Avance. Two East L.A teens are working with us through the spring semester of 2020 to learn sustainable creative skills, business tools and non-profit job experience with our staff.

This is an intensive, hands-on opportunity for young people who have expressed an interest in sustainability, social justice and community-based programming as a potential career path, with training and experience both on and offsite. We have been loving our work with these two high-school seniors, Yaire and Anthony, and are so excited to see what they do after graduation in June!

STRONG ROOTS INTERNSHIP





COMMUNITY PARTY

We wrapped up the summer with a culminating event to celebrate Kites for a Cause at the program's host location, Spoke Bicycle Cafe in East L.A's Frogtown neighborhood.

Our Community pARTy was a great success with program participants, volunteers, supporters and donors all in attendance to see the flags and kites displayed as part of our onsite art installation. In addition, our gathering included an interactive mural activity, raffle, dance party and meet-n-greet with artists Sarah Farmer and Robin Banks.

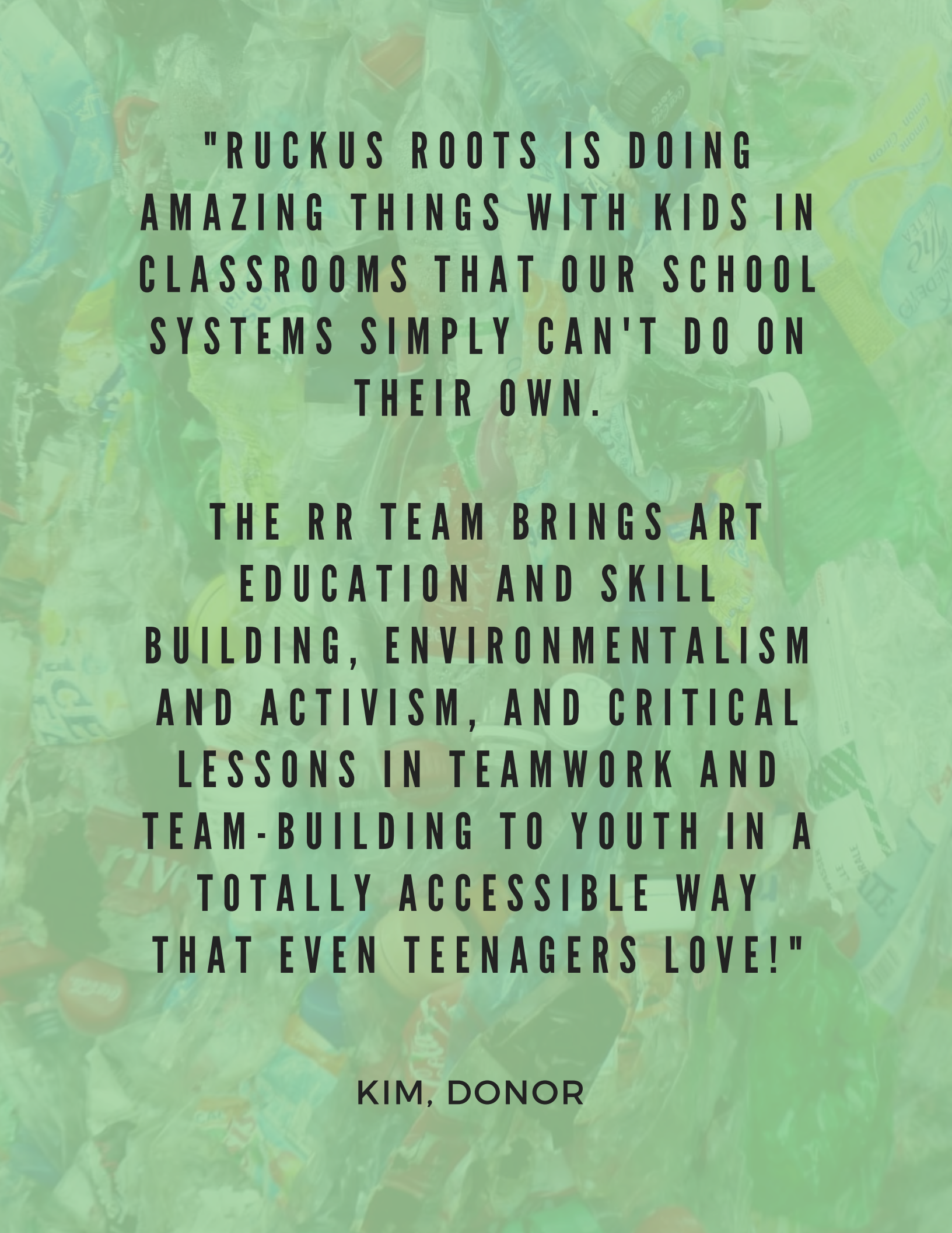
IMPACT HIGHLIGHT:

Clean-ups in 2019	20
Lbs of trash collected	250

COMMUNITY & RIVER CLEAN-UPS

Thanks to our partners at Glassell Park Neighborhood Association, Spoke Bicycle Cafe and Friends of the L.A River, we participated in 20 clean ups and helped collect 250 lbs of trash in 2019.





**"RUCKUS ROOTS IS DOING
AMAZING THINGS WITH KIDS IN
CLASSROOMS THAT OUR SCHOOL
SYSTEMS SIMPLY CAN'T DO ON
THEIR OWN.**

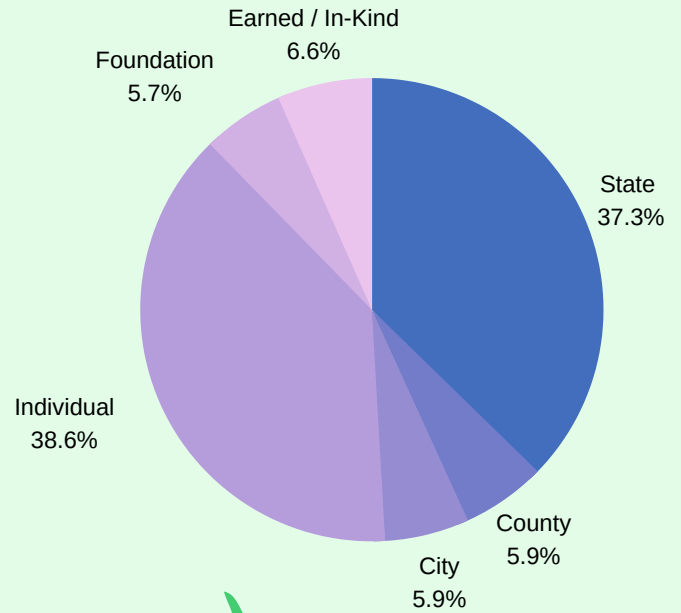
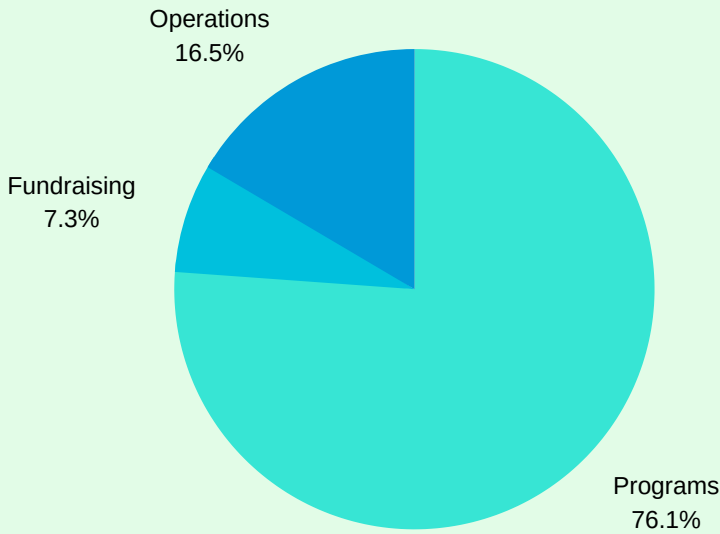
**THE RR TEAM BRINGS ART
EDUCATION AND SKILL
BUILDING, ENVIRONMENTALISM
AND ACTIVISM, AND CRITICAL
LESSONS IN TEAMWORK AND
TEAM-BUILDING TO YOUTH IN A
TOTALLY ACCESSIBLE WAY
THAT EVEN TEENAGERS LOVE!"**

KIM, DONOR

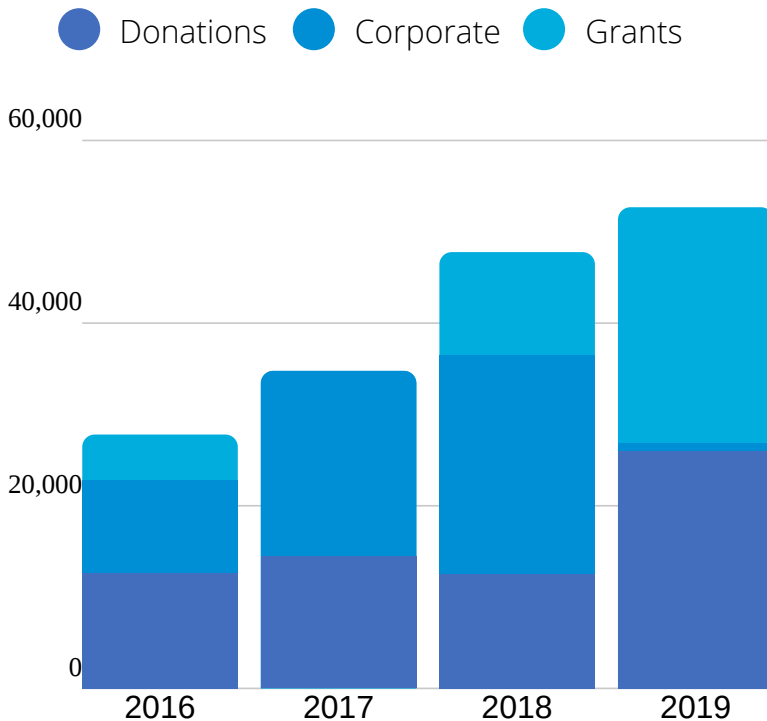
FUNDING SNAPSHOT

2019 Expenses: \$48,900

2019 Revenue: \$52,595



Revenue Trends



THE NUMBERS

Revenue Increase 2018-2019	7.5%
New Funding Sources 2019	3
Successful Grants in 2019	7
2020 Revenue Increase (est)	23%

LEADERSHIP

Executive Director:

Christine Spehar

Programs

& Communications:

Allegra Bick-Maurischat

BOARD

NiNo Alicea

Scott Froschauer

Tommi Iten

Danielle Marquez

Stephanie Spehar

ADVISORS

Erinn Bone

Cecilia Brandt

Ariya Kelly

James Peterson

Beth Pickens

Ruby Roth



TEACHING ARTISTS & SCIENTISTS

Robin Banks

Allegra Bick-Maurischat

Carly Brock

Sarah Farmer

Allison Garcia

Julio Muñoz

Miguel Ordeñana

Luis Angel Zepeda



DONORS & PARTNERS

Thank you to the funders, in-kind donors and program partners who supported our work in 2019!

Thank you to the individual donors who contributed to our crowdfunding campaigns in 2019!

California Arts Council
 Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture
 City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
 LUSH USA Charity Pot Grant
 Burners Without Borders
 Eucalyptus Elementary School
 Spoke Bicycle Cafe
 Heartbeat House Dance Studio
 Friends of the Los Angeles River
 Glassell Park Neighborhood Association
 The Human Be-In
 FEAST for All

Mike and Kathy R.	Gerry and Mary H.
Susan and Gerry S.	William W.
Thomas R.	Dennis M.
Nelson M.	Stephanie S.
Peter B.	Danielle M.
Christine S.	Tommi I.
Travis H.	Nino A.
Alvaro H.	Scott F.
Jess A.	Esjay G.
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Jen B.	Mayra M.
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Marc H.	Dima C.
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Lauren R.	Anne E.
Monica p.	Alex W.
Ko S.	Keith M.
Dulcie W.	Joel S.
Denise D.	Bob P.
Mary C.	Frederic D.



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
 City of Los Angeles



BIG PLANS...



OUR VISION FOR THE COMING YEAR INCLUDES:

- An expansion of Wild Art to include both level 1 and level 2 programs, at Eucalyptus Elementary, where we aim to reach 500 youth, divert thousands more plastic bags from rivers, oceans and landfill by turning them into campus beautifying-art
- A new food-waste partnership in South Central Los Angeles-based organization F.E.A.S.T
- L.A River clean ups and art residencies that offer free direct-action and art-making opportunities for all Angelenos
- Our first satellite program ever will provide 600 underserved students in San Jose, CA with access to the Wild Art program in the Spring of 2020!

HERE'S TO ANOTHER YEAR!

We're continually inspired and awed by the resilience and innovation of the Angelenos we meet through our work. We are prepared to reach even higher and continue to tackle our goals in 2020, empowering our community, deepening our connections and making sustainable creative experiences accessible to all this year!



GET SOCIAL



Stay up-to-date with everything we're out doing in the Los Angeles community!



@ruckusroots
#ruckusroots

And don't forget to sign up for our newsletter...

www.ruckusroots.org



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