

**Junior Center
of Art and
Science
ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025**



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we close the chapter on another transformative year at the **Junior Center of Art and Science**, I am reminded of **the power of a place**—especially when the world around us can feel uncertain and divided. This past year was about a triumphant **return to Lake Merritt**. It was about breathing new life into our home space and welcoming a community back into a place devoted to creativity, exploration, and belonging.

Our first full year back in our newly renovated building, came with renewed energy and purpose. Our studios, classrooms, and galleries have come alive with the sounds of our after-school programs, the energy of school partnerships, and the joy of public workshops. **Every moment has been an invitation to discover, build, and connect.** We have experimented with paper marbling, edible pigments, music prototyping, and 3D printing, our hands-on programs have offered youth a chance to freely express their ideas and find their voices. **These are not just enrichment activities; they are opportunities for young people to lead their own learning and develop the confidence to make meaning of their experiences.**

We have also taken a significant step forward by embracing our role as a truly multigenerational hub. New offerings like our **Gallery Shows** and **Community Craft Nights** have brought together students, families, educators, artists and neighbors for fun and creativity at every age. Our rebranding process has been another major milestone, affirming our commitment to inclusive, inquiry-based learning that extends beyond a youth-only focus. Our refreshed identity is rooted in the same values that have guided us for over 70 years, while expanding our reach and relevance for the decades ahead.

Looking ahead to 2026, our focus is on stabilization and growth. We will work to strengthen our operations, deepen our community partnerships, and expand our offerings to ensure the Junior Center is recognized as a cornerstone for creativity in Oakland.

None of this would be possible without the incredible support of our teaching artists, staff, families, partners, donors, and funders. Thank you for being part of this community. **Your belief in our mission is what keeps creativity, exploration, and joy at the heart of everything we do.**





MISSION

The Junior Center of Art and Science (JCAS) cultivates curiosity and creative exploration for youth through the arts and sciences. Located in the heart of Oakland on the shores of Lake Merritt, the Center is dedicated to providing equitable access to our programs for all youth and their families throughout Oakland and the greater East Bay Area. We harness the power of creativity and experiential learning to inspire big ideas and illuminate the everyday connections between art and science.


VISION

Creativity and exploration belong to everyone in the East Bay, where an environment of boundless self-expression is available to all.

VALUES

We value the necessity of equity and representation in the fields of art and science and invest in the future of these fields by providing equitable access to our programs.

We value creativity and imagination – two cornerstones in art and science exploration. We design our programs to support innovation and creative inquiry.



IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

This past year, we focused on rebuilding our community and expanding our reach. The data below illustrates the tangible impact we've had on youth, families, and the wider community through creative technology, art, and science.

Expanding School and Community Partnerships

In FY2025, our work in schools and the community grew significantly, bringing hands-on learning to more students than ever before.

- We partnered with 9 Title One schools across Oakland and West Contra Costa, providing over **23 weeks of in-depth programming to 950+ students**.
- Our participants were incredibly diverse, with 82% of students from underserved communities and 96% identifying as BIPOC.
- We delivered **45 hands-on workshops to 720 students at 5 different schools** in Oakland.
- The Junior Center **increased its community reach by a remarkable 35%** over the previous year, participating in 11 free community events across Oakland.

Program Growth & Access

We are proud to have brought back our core programs and made them more accessible to all families.

- Our after-school enrichment programs at the Center saw an impressive 55% increase in enrollment.
- Across **22 thematic camps, we reached over 270 families** during our summer sessions.
- We made creative learning more accessible by offering 20 free or low-cost classes at the Center, ensuring no one was turned away for lack of funds.
- We worked with over **30 teen interns** in our summer camp program.
- Our commitment to equity was a top priority: **71% of all families participating in our classes and camps received financial assistance** through sliding scales and scholarships. We also increased our total scholarship funding by 25% in 2025.

A Thriving Creative Community

Our achievements are a testament to the talent and dedication of our teaching artists and the vibrant community we foster.

- A team of 11 teaching artists provided engaging **creative projects to more than 6,000 students, families, and community members** across the East Bay.
- We provided a valuable platform for local talent by hosting **5 gallery shows in our newly renovated Gallery space that featured the work of 17 local emerging artists**.

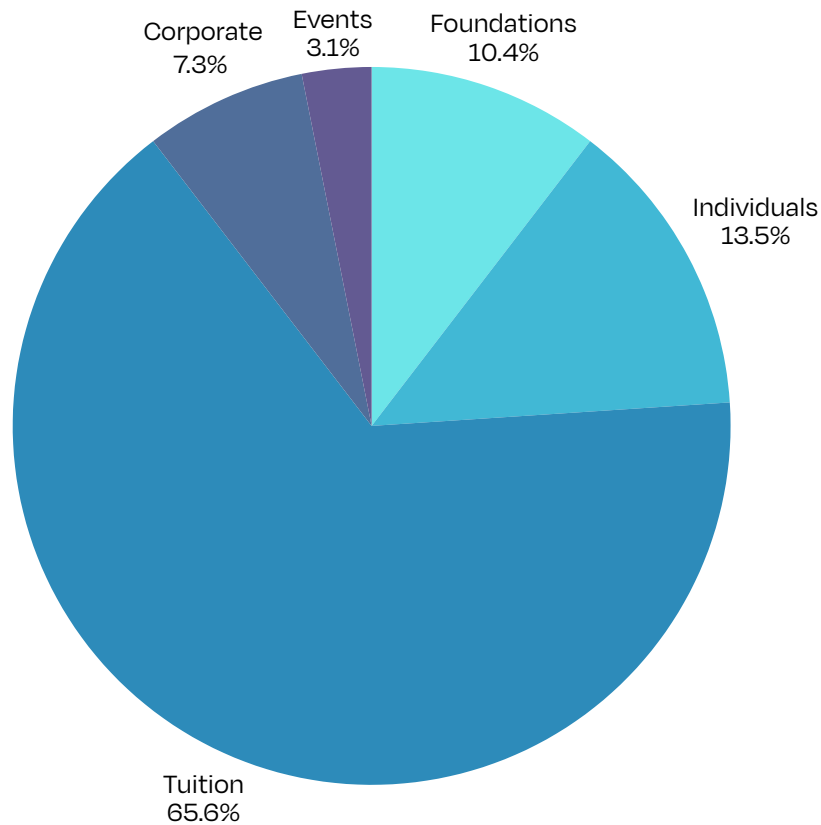
PHOTOS FROM CAMPS, CLASSES AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS



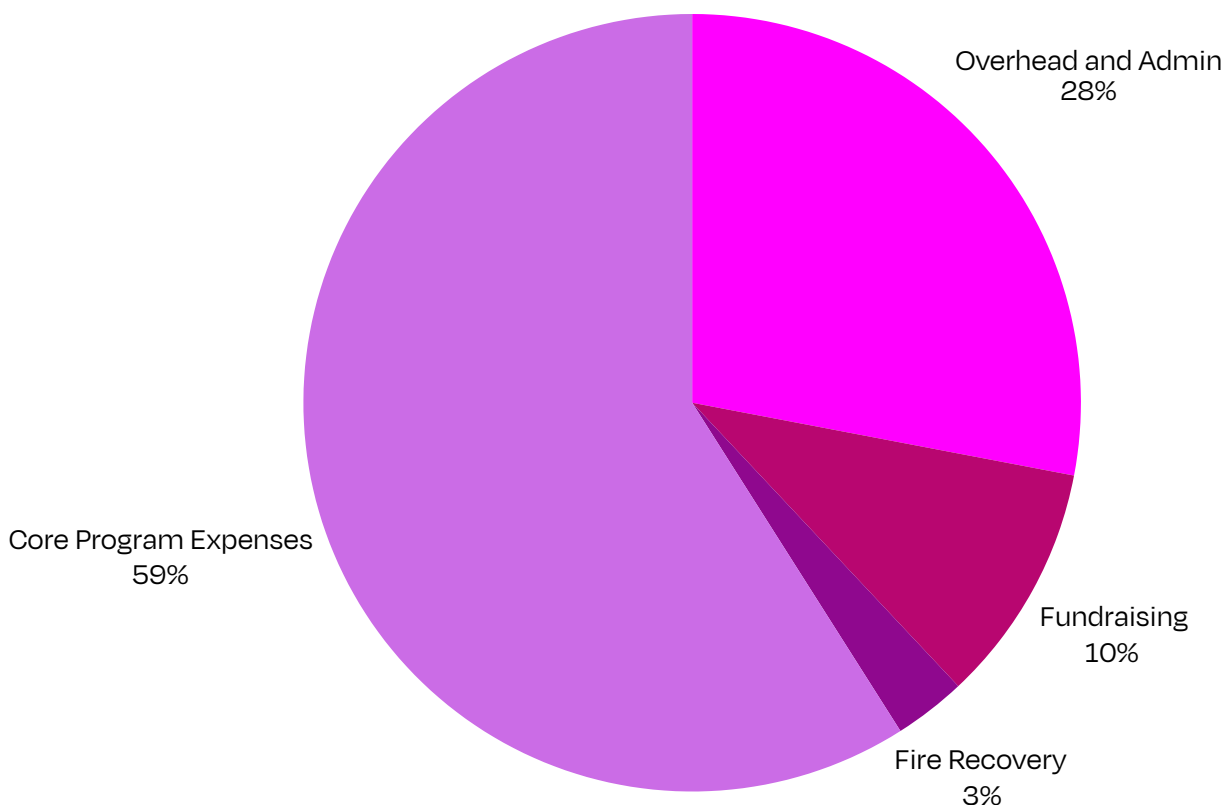
"Lea absolutely loved carpentry camp. It was her first time ever trying carpentry and every single day she came home saying it was her favorite. She rated it 5 stars and was obsessed with planning out all her projects each week. She really appreciated Bill's energy and sense of humor which really made her super comfortable trying this new thing. From the first day she's been asking me to sign her up again."

"The students in my 4th grade class learned to take risks and leave their comfort zone. Students practiced social emotional skills with each other by authentically and purposefully working together to create a piece of art. Students also developed a sense of what makes a strong artwork and that perseverance is important " Christine Douglas, Franklin Elementary

FY25 Revenue - \$723,272



FY25 Expenses - \$712,368



PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Community Partnerships: Extending Our Place of Learning

A fundamental aspect of our work is partnering with local schools to bring arts and science learning to where it is most needed. For over two decades, the Junior Center has collaborated with the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and other local schools, serving as a trusted partner in providing consistent and high-quality creative programs. This year, our partnerships brought the unique environment of the Junior Center directly to the classroom. **We led 23-week residencies in creative technology and integrated arts and science at Emerson Elementary, Franklin Elementary, and Carl Munck Elementary schools.** By bringing our focus on exploration and **artistic voice** to these campuses, we provide a consistent space for learning where **students can feel seen and heard.** In schools that often lack consistent arts and science programs and funding, our long-term presence has allowed us to forge strong connections with students, watching them grow and develop their skills year after year. For these students, the days when we come to visit are filled with anticipation, as they look forward to an opportunity to express themselves through game design, painting, and so much more.



After School Enrichment

This year marked a joyful milestone: our first full year back in our home at Lake Merritt. After a long period away, our staff and students delighted in returning to the familiar studios and classrooms that have long fostered creativity. Our beloved carpentry instructor, Bill, a teaching artist with over 33 years of experience, was thrilled to set up shop again on the front deck, a sign of our renewed sense of normalcy and creative energy.

Our arts education classes for ages 6–17 came alive, offering a diverse range of options, from creative technology, painting and drawing to carpentry and environmental science. Students, both new and old, returned to a world of hands-on making, building upon their skills and exploring new interests.

We were also excited to introduce two new programs that were met with great enthusiasm: **Showstoppers and Fashion Design/Sewing.** **Showstoppers** empowered young performers to take on every role in a production, from set design and scriptwriting to acting, while our budding designers in **Fashion** discovered the art of garment creation. The high praise and positive feedback for these new offerings have inspired us to continue providing them in the upcoming year.



PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

JCAS Summer Camp

Reaching families across all seven districts of Oakland and beyond, our camps offer a unique, hands-on approach led by professional artists, makers, and scientists. We cultivate enthusiasm and curiosity by exploring our world through multiple creative lenses.

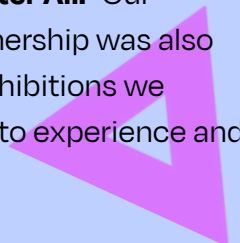
This year, **we served over 270 families across 10 weeks of camps**, with engaging themes ranging from carpentry and virtual world-building to mural-making and nature navigators. We were especially proud to see a high rate of returning campers, eager to continue building their skills in a familiar, supportive environment. This loyalty contributed to a **15% growth in summer camp attendance in 2025**, demonstrating the program's positive impact and strong community. CAMP JCAS remains a space where young people can explore and create in a lively, nurturing environment.



Our Gallery: A Platform for Community and Creativity



This past year, we were proud to not only bring back our gallery exhibitions but also to welcome a dedicated gallery manager to our team. This strategic step was part of our long-term plan to provide a vital space for emerging artists in Oakland and the wider Bay Area. With a focus on creating community through art, we hosted five shows that featured a diverse range of artists working in a host of mediums and concepts. Our exhibitions affirmed the power of a place to foster connection and creativity, and included themes: **"Queer Resistance and Resilience," "Sprout and Bloom,"** and **"Home After All."** Our commitment to accessibility and community partnership was also demonstrated through the four free community exhibitions we hosted, ensuring that everyone had an opportunity to experience and engage with the incredible local talent on display.



Looking Ahead - FY26

Vision for the Future

Our long-term vision is to be a leading creative learning hub for the East Bay, where arts, science, and technology come together to inspire curiosity, innovation, and community belonging. We aim to nurture the next generation of artists, makers, scientists, and problem-solvers while remaining deeply rooted in Oakland's cultural and educational landscape.

Future Goals

As we move into FY26, the Junior Center of Art and Science (East Bay Creative Lab) is focused on strengthening our core programs while building sustainable growth. Our strategic priorities include:

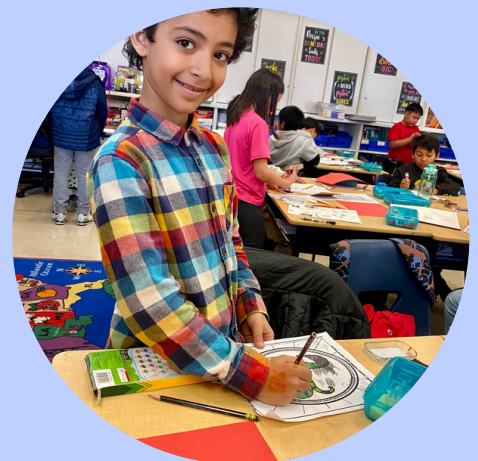
- Expanding scholarship opportunities so that more Oakland and East Bay youth can access our programs regardless of financial need.
- Deepening school partnerships, particularly with Title I schools, to ensure equitable access to high-quality arts and science learning.
- Growing our creative technology and environmental programs, which give young people a platform to express and engage with real-world issues.
- Continuing to remodel and reimagine our Lakeside Park facility as a welcoming hub for multigenerational learning and community connection.

The Strength of our future depends on the collective support of our community

We invite you to:

- Donate to sustain scholarships and expand access.
- Volunteer your time and expertise to support programs and events.
- Partner with us to bring creative learning opportunities to more schools and neighborhoods.

Together, we can ensure that every young person has the opportunity to explore, create, and thrive.



THANK YOU

JCAS is grateful for the support of our generous donors, volunteers, teaching artists, board, and staff. Thank you for your dedication to exploration, curiosity and self-expression.

JCAS Staff

Cybele Gerachis, Executive Director
Elisa Ocegüera, Program Director
Rachel Holmstrom, Operations Manager
Michelle Iki, Office Coordinator

Teaching Artists

Bill, Bocheff, Denise Doyle,
Eric Raygoza, Joseph Rose,
Judit Navratil, Marco Garcia,
Nette Scott, Yael Levy,
Yolanda Jimenez, Zachary Sweet,
Zoe Oliver Grey

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Luminaries \$1000-1999

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Matt & Sha Coleman
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Susan Adams
Shawn Granberry
Terry & Lottie Mazany

Inventors \$500-999

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