Muse machine

2026-2029

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Next Act

ABOUT MUSE MACHINE

VISION

We envision students and their teachers engaged as lifelong arts makers, learners, and audience members.

PURPOSE

The arts are essential for unlocking creative and learning potential.

MISSION

Transforming the lives of young people through the arts.

WHO WE ARE

Muse is a nationally recognized arts organization annually serving 65,000 students and their teachers in 8 counties in southwest and central Ohio. From preschool through high school, Muse uses the arts as a means of creative and personal growth and to illuminate classroom curriculum. Students are engaged through artist residencies and performances in the schools, professional productions, a winter musical and summer concert, and other partnership activities. Teachers are supported through year-round professional development, which strengthens their understanding of the arts so that they might embody these experiences as outstanding instructors.

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2026-2027

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Muse Machine
126 N Main Street
Suite 310
Dayton, OH 45402

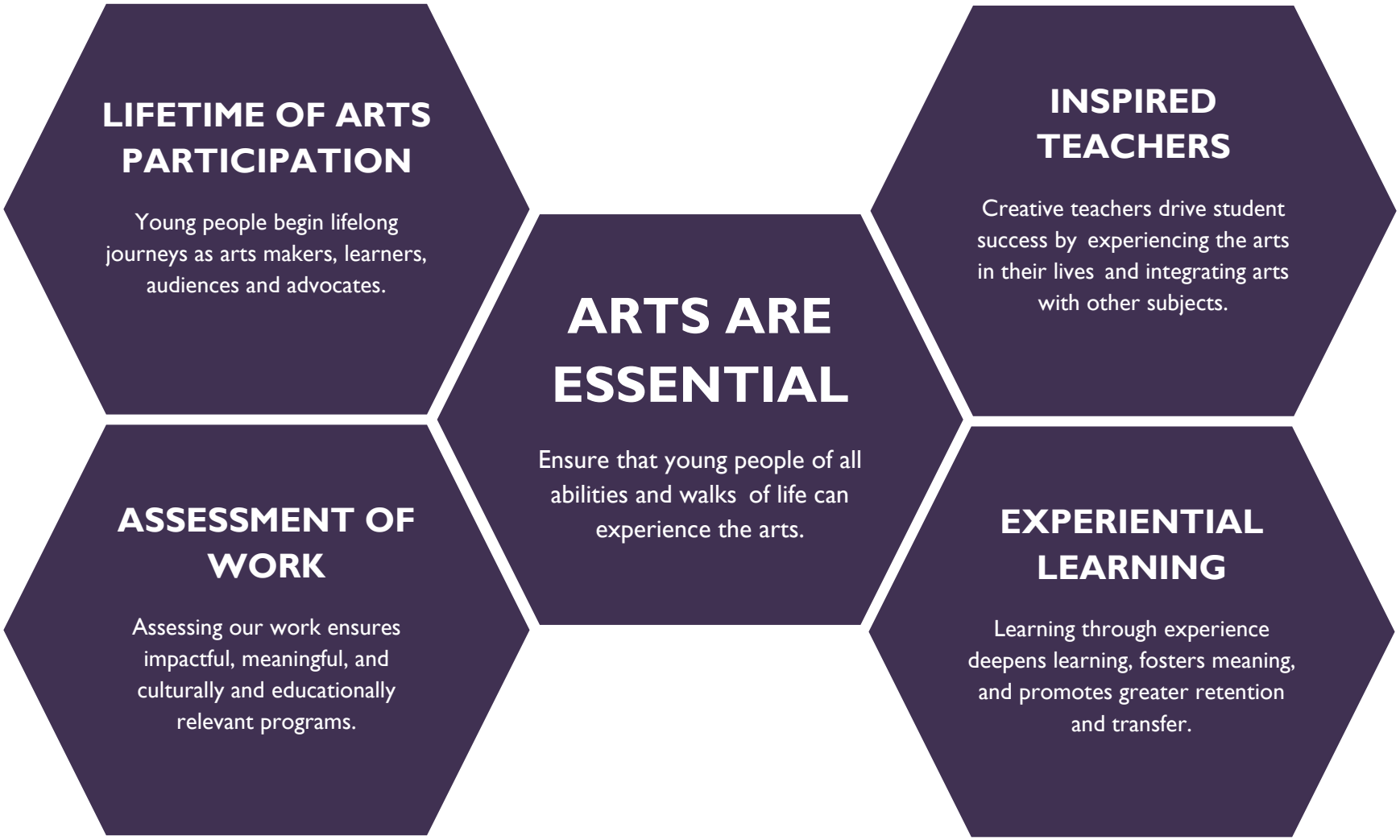
937-222-MUSE (6873)

musemachine.com

FOUNDER
Suzy Bassani

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Ruth Reveal

CORE BELIEFS



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Through Muse Machine's coordinated programming among Dayton's arts organizations, professional artists, and area schools and teachers, young people PreK through Grade 12 are encouraged to make the performing and visual arts a vital part of their lives and, in the process, develop their ongoing commitment to attending and supporting the arts. In the 2025-2026 school year, Muse programming served 56,000 people and 100 schools in 10 counties.

PRESCHOOL & ELEMENTARY

Muse Machine brings learning to life through arts-integration residencies in schools across the region. Teachers, artists, and students work together to create a curriculum-illuminating piece of art that communicates new knowledge using the art form's tools.

PRODUCTIONS

Muse Machine's annual student musical and biennial summer concert bring together over 100 students from across the region to perform as cast, crew, and orchestra for one of Ohio's largest pre-professional productions.

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Muse introduces middle and high school students to a diverse range of artists and art forms both in their schools and on mainstages across Dayton. Muse partners with independent artists and local professional arts organizations including Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Dayton Live, Dayton Performing Arts Alliance, Human Race Theatre Company, and more!

EDUCATORS

Muse celebrates and challenges teachers by putting them face-to-face with remarkable thinkers, artists and educators from across the globe. Professional development opportunities happen throughout the school year, in curriculum workshops and monthly advisor meetings, at our Summer Institute for Educators and even during several unbelievable days in New York City.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

For more than four decades, Muse Machine has connected young people with the arts in ways that inspire discovery, encourage creative expression, and open doors to new possibilities. Every program, performance, and partnership creates an opportunity for students to see themselves and the world differently. As we look to the future, we see opportunities to deepen our impact on students and teachers and ensure Muse remains responsive to the needs of our schools and community.

The development of our 2026-2029 Strategic Plan was guided by reflection, evaluation, and input from across the Muse community. Our process included:

- Review and analysis of organizational data, including survey results, program evaluations, testimonials, financial reports, and other information to assess our reach, impact, strengths, and opportunities for growth
- A large-scale context evaluation survey that gathered more than 300 responses
- A community listening session that brought together 50 participants to share perspectives and ideas
- Input from a broad cross-section of our community, including current and retired teachers, students, parents, school administrators, arts partners, donors, and other community members and friends of Muse.

Together, the information and perspectives gathered helped us reflect on our strengths, consider how the needs of students and educators continue to evolve, and identify opportunities to deepen our impact.

The plan reflects both our ambitions and our commitment to thoughtful, sustainable growth. From expanding access to arts experiences to strengthening the relationships and resources that sustain our work, these priorities will guide how Muse moves forward.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time and ideas to this process. Their input reinforces that Muse's impact has always been a collective effort. We are committed to working alongside our community to expand opportunities and transform young people's lives through the arts.

Ruth Reveal
Executive Director

STRATEGIC GOALS

> *I participated in the musicals through high-school and am proud to support a stellar organization. While my career has not taken me into the arts, the experience and skills gained from participating continue to enrich my life today.*
>
> Michael Franko
> Denver, CO

Expand Access

Remove barriers so more schools can participate

Deepen the Student Journey

Create connected experiences that lifelong engagement in the arts

Empower Teachers & Schools

Strengthen educators, artists, and school partnerships

Cultivate Muse's Community

Deepen relationships with donors, alumni, partners, and the broader community

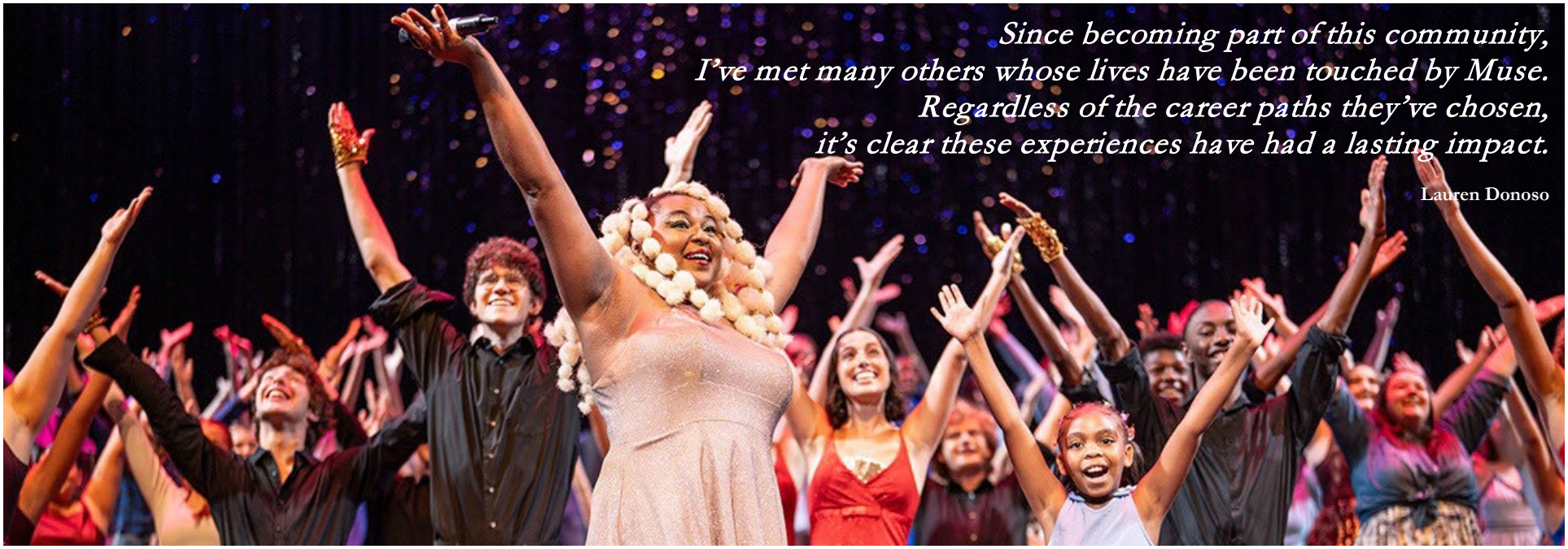
Strengthen Our Foundation

Strengthen internal systems and organizational culture and use data to make programmatic and operational decisions

A CLOSER LOOK

Priorities	Objectives	Initiatives
Expand Access	Financial barriers for school participation are reduced	• Sustain and expand financial assistance models that support student access to out-of-school activities • Build partnerships and secure resources that expand access for under-resourced schools and communities
	Sustainable funding models ensure long-term access to secondary programs	• Evaluate sustainable funding models for secondary programming, including an endowment focused on artist compensation, performance development, and accessible pricing structures • Develop recommendations for the future of secondary programs based on student needs, school and arts organization partnerships, and organizational capacity
Deepen the Student Journey	Students experience connected opportunities across grade levels and throughout the school year	• Create a more intentional continuum of Muse experiences from elementary through secondary programming • Expand student opportunities to participate in educationally rich out-of-school artistic experiences
	Students explore pathways to lifelong engagement in the arts	• Expand career exploration experiences with arts professionals and Muse Machine alumni • Develop opportunities for students to explore technical theatre, performance, production, and creative careers • Assess regional student performance opportunities to identify unmet needs and opportunities for Muse to contribute
Empower Teachers & Schools	Advisors are equipped and supported as ambassadors for Muse	• Expand ongoing support offerings that prepare teachers to advise a Muse club • Create opportunities for experienced advisors to serve as mentors and leaders
	Teaching artists are prepared and supported	• Build a sustainable pipeline of teaching artists through intentional recruitment, onboarding, training, and mentorship • Develop succession plans for key artistic roles within student programming • Cultivate trusted, ongoing partnerships with partner arts organizations through regular touchpoints and open communication
	School leaders understand and champion the value of Muse	• Engage and equip school administrators with the information they need to build the case for Muse Machine's value to their school • Create opportunities for administrators to experience Muse programming firsthand
	Teachers confidently infuse the arts into learning	• Deepen educators' understanding of the continuum of arts-based learning possibilities • Develop resources and support systems that help teachers extend arts-based learning beyond residencies and performances • Establish structured opportunities for continued teacher learning and peer collaboration
Cultivate Muse's Community	Muse has tools to communicate its mission and impact with the broader community	• Develop a consistent storytelling strategy that highlights student impact, educator experiences, and community outcomes • Refresh public-facing materials that communicate Muse's full range of programming and impact • Create systems to regularly share stories and successes across audiences
	Donors experience meaningful, lasting relationships with Muse	• Develop intentional stewardship strategies based on donor engagement and giving levels • Create opportunities for deeper donor connection and mission engagement • Strengthen legacy giving and long-term investment in Muse's future
	Alumni remain connected and engaged after high school	• Establish a sustainable alumni engagement strategy • Create opportunities for alumni to reconnect, celebrate Muse's legacy, and support current students
	Community partnerships expand Muse's opportunities, resources, and impact	• Cultivate strategic partnerships that expand or deepen opportunities and artistic resources for Muse students and teachers. • Expand and deepen relationships with funders and community partners that provide financial resources for Muse's mission. • Identify opportunities for collaborative programming and shared advocacy for arts education.
Strengthen Our Foundation	Technology and systems support Muse participants' experience	• Implement technology solutions that improve registration, payment, communication, and internal data infrastructure • Develop a long-term CRM strategy that supports student engagement, school relationships, alumni connection, and fundraising
	Organizational capacity grows alongside programming	• Cultivate a connected, collaborative organizational culture that supports communication, trust, and shared ownership • Expand staff development and leadership growth • Standardize and document internal workflows and systems for program delivery • Review and adjust staffing structures and resources with organizational growth and strategic priorities
	Data is used to improve programs and operations	• Establish consistent practices for collecting, evaluating, and reporting program data • Build organizational practices that use data in programmatic and operational decision-making

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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