





## ABOUT/MISSION

Project STEP (String Training Education Program) violin, viola, cello, and double bass

While many educational programs in New England offer music training for children, few match Project STEP's comprehensive approach, which provides high-quality, long-term training, support services, and scholarships specifically designed for children from backgrounds underrepresented in classical music. Our program empowers students to overcome socio-economic barriers, enabling them to excel as musicians, become confident and creative learners, and thrive as successful young adults.

Students engage with Project STEP for up to 12 years, during which they are consistently challenged to achieve and sustain high levels of musicianship. Throughout their journey, they develop perseverance, social and leadership skills, self-discipline, confidence, problem-solving abilities, and a strong work ethic. These qualities are invaluable both in their musical careers and beyond.

By participating in Project STEP, students acquire not only deep musical skills but also a wealth of learning and career opportunities. This growth positions them as role models and mentors within their families and communities, fostering a ripple effect of positive influence and inspiration.

## MISSION

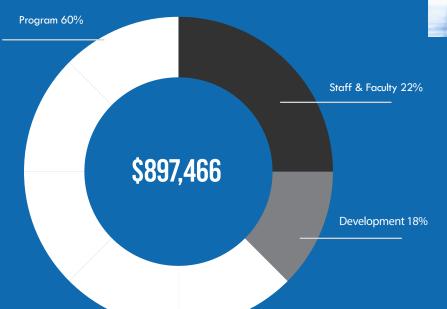
Project STEP champions equitable access to comprehensive music education for students from racial and ethnic backgrounds underrepresented in Western classical music.

We acknowledge and address the unique challenges that Black and Latino students can face as we nurture all of our students' musical growth.

VALUES: Community | Collaboration | Excellence

## FY2023 **EXPENSES**





Every Project STEP graduate has attended college or conservatory.

\_ 100%

FOCUS PROGRAM: Early access to musical training, exposing children to different types of music and instruments. This program is offered for free to students in kindergarten/K2 who identify as underrepresented in classical music.

Project STEP works with the top musicians in the field to provide the very best education for our students. We have over 30 teaching artists from esteemed partnerships with NEC, BSO, A Far Cry, and Rivers Conservatory.

**CORE PROGRAM:** Provides students in grades 1-12 with a comprehensive classical string education. STEP offers up to 12 years of instruction and students receive an instrument, participate in workshops, masterclasses, a summer music camp, and orchestra. They benefit from numerous enrichment opportunities. The program provides ongoing, informed guidance tailored to each student's individual needs. Recruitment is through our introductory FOCUS program or by audition.

## ■ DID YOU KNOW?

African American/Black musicians account for only 1.2% of our nation's orchestras and Latinx musicians make up only 1.6%. League of American Orchestras

Approximately 60 % of our graduates go into the music profession while others go into esteemed career paths such as engineering, mathematics, and healthcare.

Every student in the Project STEP program is able to use an instrument from our collection throughout their twelve years of musical training. Like Goldilocks, we have to find the right instrument for the right student, considering age, size, experience, and use. As the student grows, so does their instrument, and it is exchanged for the next perfect fit.

## IMPACT STATEMENT

- 1.) Our students become well-rounded individuals who are empowered to pursue their goals and dreams within and beyond music, serving as role models for young people, especially Black and Latino youth.
- 2.) Our students' families benefit from a life-long support system as they navigate the field of classical music.
- 3.) The Greater Boston community embraces and benefits from a more diverse and accessible field of Western classical music.
- 4.) The field of Western classical music becomes more accessible and relevant.



85% Individual, Foundation, Government, and Corporate Support

1% Earned Revenue

7% In-Kind Contributions

7% Net assets released from restrictions

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# 2022 - 2023 Highlights

## Celebrating Four Decades of Equity in Music

YEARS! Project STEP continues to advocate for early and long-term access to high-quality classical string training for our student musicians, providing a creative and safe learning environment for a successful future.

In 2023 we celebrated incredible milestones including Project STEP's 40th anniversary, appearing on the nationally televised Kelly Clarkson Show, a continued collaboration with Grammy-nominated A Far Cry, and more!

### Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Concert

Project STEP students performed a commemorative communicative concert for over 200 guests in memory of Dr. King at Dorchester's Salvation Army Kroc Center.

#### Sphinx Competition

Njioma Chinyere Grevious, Project STEP alumna (violin, 2013), won first place in the finals of the 2023 Senior Division Sphinx Competition.

#### Malik Williams II

Malik "Mason" Williams II (cello, grade 4) gave a solo cello performance at the inauguration of State Auditor Diana DiZoglio who was sworn in by MA Governor Maura Healey.

#### Fauity Arc National Pathways Festival

Project STEP students Caleb Graupera and Xavier (both grade 12, cello) were accepted into the Equity Arc National Pathways Festival. Equity Arc is focused on creating a level playing field for BIPOC classical musicians around the nation.



Project STEP performed with Castle of Our Skins at Rockport's Shalin Liu Performance Center. This incredible concert quickly became a favorite among our friends and patrons.

#### A Spiritual Fantasy

STEP students played a BSO pre-concert performance with Castle of Our Skins. *A Spiritual Fantasy* highlighted African American composers.

#### A Far Cry

Alba Gilabert Reid (grade 9, violin) and Suubi Laurent (grade 11, cello) performed with Grammy-nominated orchestra A Far Cry (AFC) in a concert featuring all women composers. STEP's Honors Quartet also performed Quinn Mason's String Quartet No. 2 with AFC.

## Sphinx Virtuosi

Sphinx Virtuosi worked with Project STEP students Alexander Hernandez Williams (grade 6, violin) Robin Chávez Shirman (grade 8, violin), and Laura Licata (grade 8, violin) during a masterclass.

#### Handel and Haydn

Project STEP students collaborated with Handel and Haydn Society for a performance at Boston Symphony Hall.

### Caleb Graupera

Won Quincy Symphony Orchestra's Eleanor B. Nelson Concerto Competition, the Brockton Symphony Orchestra's 2022 Youth Competition, and was the recipient of a prestigious 2023 Sphinx MPower Artist Grant.

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#### Robin Chávez Shirman

Robin Chávez Shirman (grade 8, violin) performed *Open Your Heart*, a multi-media celebration of immigrant vitality and resilience. Part of a Zumix/Hoopla Production.

#### Geneva Lewis

Kiwi/American professional violinist Geneva Lewis worked with STEP students for a masterclass in collaboration with Ashmont Hill Chamber Music.

#### Senior Students

Congrats to the 2023 senior graduates: Michael Roberson, cello; Rigoberto Rodrigo-Anton, cello; and Xavier Ip, cello. Our program is honored to continue our tradition of having 100% of our senior students attend college or conservatory. Michael is attending Columbia University for Business. He also auditioned into the Columbia University Orchestra, the oldest continually operating university orchestra in the United States (1896). Rigo is attending Tufts University, concentrating on a biomedical/chemistry/pre-med route with computer science, Spanish, and music exploration. Rigo will be joining Tufts Orchestra and Ensemble. Xavier is attending The Cleveland Institute of Music, our very own Executive Director's alma mater.

## Spring Recital & Parent Benefit

The culminating event of our students' intensive music studies and hard work, this community concert at Parish of All Saints in Dorchester, MA, celebrated our students' achievements for the 2022/2023 academic year and was hosted by the Parents' Council of Project STEP. Sponsored in part by the Gregory E. Bulger Foundation and the Parents' Council.

### 40th Anniversary Celebration

In June, over 250 guests joined us at the John F. Kennedy Library & Museum for a very special evening to celebrate Project STEP's forty years of championing equity in classical music. The unforgettable concert featured our student musicians and alumni, including 2023 Sphinx Competition Sr. Division Winner, Njioma Chinyere Grevious, Artistic Advisor and alumna Mariana Green Hill, guest artist-activist Zakiyyah, and keynote speaker Michael J. Bobbitt, Executive Director, Mass Cultural Council. The evening also featured special video messages from Yo-Yo Ma and Governor Maura Healey.

Project STEP was also awarded a citation from Governor Maura Healey for forty years of outstanding community service.

#### Sofia Hernández-Williams

Sofia Hernández-Williams (grade 3, cello) won first prize in the 2023 Richter String Competition, Open division, Elementary School, Rivers School Conservatory (RSC).

## The duFrend Family

Aaron (grade 6, violin) and Aaliyah duFrend (grade 3, violin) performed for Project STEP friends in Jamaica Plain, MA. This incredible outdoor performance was truly magical and a wonderful way to start the summer.

#### Michael Roberson

Michael Roberson (grade 12, cello) performed with Dr. Ian Saunders, double bass, for friends of Project STEP in Boston's Seaport area. An incredible evening of music, the event was instrumental in introducing new friends to the Project STEP mission.

#### Collaborations

Project STEP students continue to learn from and collaborate with several musicians and community organizations including Castle of Our Skins, A Far Cry, Longy School of Music, and Boston String Academy, among others.

## The Kelly Clarkson Show

In April 2023 Project STEP was featured on The Kelly Clarkson Show! Selected as one of Kelly Clarkson's "Good Neighbors," Kelly describes these organizations or individuals as "...folks from across the country who are stepping up in big ways for their local communities and neighbors." The segment featured Project STEP's Artistic Director, Dr. Ian Saunders, in-studio with Kelly Clarkson talking about our program. The show also featured an interview with Project STEP Artistic Advisor - and STEP alumna - Mariana Green Hill, Project STEP Executive Director, Josué González, and a short performance by Project STEP students and faculty. This incredible opportunity also earned us some hometown love with NBC and The Boston Globe.

## Kanneh-Mason

Support for our #givingtuesday2022 campaign allowed us to send our students to attend cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason and pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason's concert at Symphony Hall.

#### The A Team

One of the premier highlights of the 2022-2023 academic year was Executive Director, Josué González, and Artistic Director, Dr. Ian Saunders (photo right), joining the Project STEP family. We could not think of a better executive duo to lead us into next year!









# LEADERSHIP

& Faculty



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Project STEP works with top musicians in the field of music to provide the very best education for our students. We have over 30 faculty artists from esteemed partnerships

including NEC, BSO, and A Far Cry, among other noteworthy institutions.

Hours of Instruction

Students

#### **Artistic Partners:**

A Far Cry, Ashmont Chamber Music, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Celebrity Series of Boston, Castle of Our Skins, New England Conservatory, Rockport Music Umana School, and Trotter School

## **FACULTY**

Jason Amos, Viola & Chamber Music Alexander Badalov, Cello Miriam Bolkosky, Cello Meghan Carye, Cello Maggie Cerjan, Violin Mark Churchill, Cello Miki-Sophia Cloud, Violin & Chamber Music Linda Emmanuel, FOCUS I Jenny Fan, Cello, Suzuki, FOCUS II Emmanuel Feldman, Cello Susanne Friedrich, Cello Melody Giron, Cello

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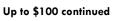
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