



2022-23

ANOTHER CHOICE YOUTH AND FAMILY OUTREACH INC.



Another Choice Theater and Center for Solutions



AT MOUNT ZION A.M.E. CHURCH

PROGRESS REPORT

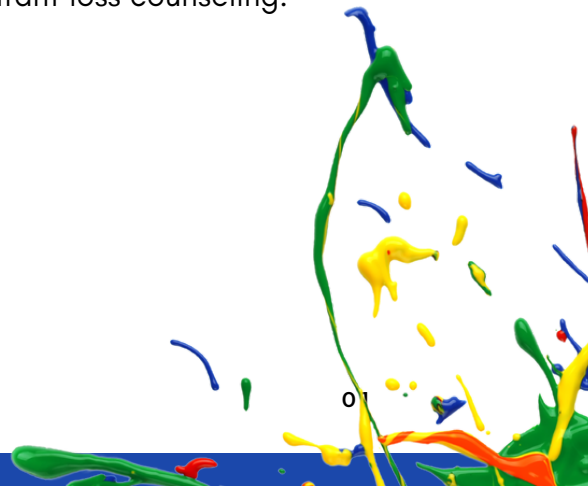
OUR MISSION

Another Choice Youth and Family Outreach, (ACYFO) is an East Harlem based nonprofit organization dedicated to providing supportive services to local youth and families, as well as citizens returning from incarceration. We use evidence-based interventions to engage the community in violence disruption, combating poverty, and promoting public safety.

Our programs use a holistic approach to service delivery, ensuring that participants have access to a diverse catalog of training and educational opportunities. We provide professional development and job training, artistic literacy and expression, and community service learning. We operate a food pantry to address food insecurity in the community.

Through our programs we offer a bio, psycho, social, spiritual (holistic) approach to quality of life enhancement. This includes free professional development workshops, artistic literacy courses, and community service learning initiatives. We strive to offset food insecurity through our food pantry, which operates weekly where community members receive a nutritionally balanced supply of fresh, frozen and shelf stable food items to feed an individual or family, three meals per day for three days.

The severity of the opioid epidemic has resulted in high numbers of opioid overdoses in East Harlem. As a result, we have partnered with East Harlem Educators from Weill Cornell Medicine Center who provide harm reduction education, training and distributes free Narcan kits during our Food Pantry hours. We also provide monthly non medical birthing support and training to women and young mothers, which includes birthing education, postpartum support, and pregnancy and infant loss counseling.



HOW WE WORK

We execute our mission through three key components:

01

Research and advocacy

In order to foster informed solutions in East Harlem to offset poverty and incarceration we conduct community- centered research with youth and adult participants. The information gathered is directly useful to impacted individuals, their communities, policy makers, academic institutions, nonprofits and beyond.

02

Building relationships

We form relationships to build our individual and collective capacity to be change agents. ACYFO is a safe space for community members to seek direct and referral social-psychological support. We have ordained ministers and licensed social workers with lived-experience on call to support community members with mental wellness coaching, individualized mentorship, and referrals for mental health services.

03

Galvanizing and mobilizing people

We execute our mission by forming strategic collaborations enabling multi-dimensional advocacy and educational strategies. We believe that there is strength in numbers. In 2022 we brought community stakeholders together for community symposiums and discussions about fostering and implementing community-based solutions to promoting public safety and reducing poverty in our communities.

OUR PROGRAMS

01

ACYFO FOOD PANTRY

In 1996 Mount Zion A.M.E. Church opened our weekly Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry programs, offering community members the opportunity to receive a nutritionally balanced meal and the opportunity to receive a monthly nutritionally balanced food package that provides three meals for three days for an individual or family (based on household size). To empower community members in making responsible and healthy food choices we utilize a client choice format where individuals are able to select food items from a variety of healthy options. We continue to partner with the Food Bank of NYC, Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) and Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance (HPNAP) to provide resources to the community.

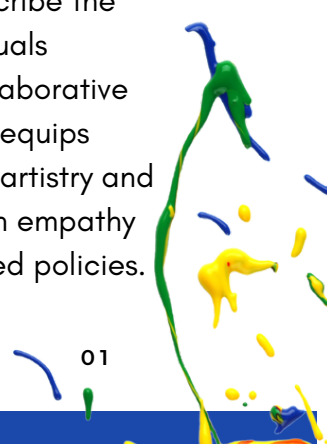


02

THE CONFINED ARTS (TCA)

In 2022 we partnered with Isaac's Quarterly LLC (IQ) a multimedia art, and consulting company founded by Rev. Isaac I. Scott. IQ's mission is to center the divine principles of unlimited love for humanity by fostering the transformative power of strategic arts engagement at every level from research and education to exhibition and performance. ACYFO ratified a MOU to provide fiscal sponsorship to IQ's subsidiary charitable program The Confined Arts.

The Confined Arts (TCA) is a program that cultivates and showcases the talents and creative voices of artists directly impacted by mass incarceration and intersecting social justice issues. TCA enables artists to express their voices through the visual and performing arts, poetry, and music as a means to abolish inhumane narratives and socially degrading stigmas that are used to describe the past experiences and limit the futures of individuals impacted by incarceration. Through artistry, collaborative activism, research, education and training, TCA equips artists to influence policy change, and use their artistry and knowledge to advocate for a world anchored on empathy and saturated with healing and prevention-based policies.



OUR PROGRAMS CONT.

03



REENTRY THEATER OF HARLEM (RTH)

Re-Entry Theater of Harlem is a justice-oriented rite of passage program for individuals who are justice-involved. Inspired by the insight that the transition from prison back into the community can be supported through community-based rites of passage performances, RTH utilizes art, theater, improvisation, mindfulness exercises and storytelling to help individuals address and overcome the shame, stigma, and trauma of incarceration. Ultimately, participants devise and enact a theatrical rite of passage performance to formally mark the transition into a new stage of life. RTH is designed to scale by training participants who have completed the program and committed themselves to facilitating rites of passage cohorts in their communities. The program was started by Alexander Anderson, who is a LMSW/CASAC and a person with lived experience in the NYS penal system. The idea for the creation of RTH was sparked by his love for performing arts and his experience as a returning citizen.

04

MY ANGEL DOULA ALLIANCE

To address the disparity in maternal and infant mortality rates in communities of color, this year ACYFO partnered with Jessica Maldonado, Founder of My Angel Doula Alliance to provide pre and post natal support to new families. Doulas are trained professionals who provide continuous physical, emotional and informational support to their new families before, during and shortly after childbirth. Together we will be able to provide services including, birthing education, postpartum support, and pregnancy and infant loss counseling. The goal is to improve the quality of care of reproductive health, maternal and infant health, mental health, physical health, prenatal nutrition, environmental stress and other factors that have impacted low income and marginalized families for centuries.



PROGRESS REPORT

The Confined Arts



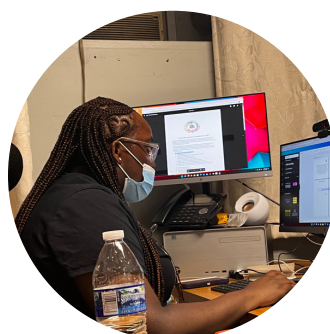
Community Service Learning (CSL) initiative

In the summer of 2022 we launched The Community Service Learning (CSL) initiative which introduces youth and young adults ages 16–24 from the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) to community service and mobile media skills by fostering community engagement and documentary research opportunities. Throughout the six-week employment phase, participants were taught the skills and techniques of documentary filmmaking, graphic design, public speaking and community engagement.

Through the following four components, the CSL initiative fostered dialogue among youth and young adults around collaborative solutions to the critical issue of violence in our city and nation. They unpacked their perspectives on public safety, and identified resources, tools, or skills they felt are needed for youth and young adults to protect themselves from law enforcement and the legal system and be able to thrive in life.

1. **Self-affirmation Poem:** This multidisciplinary creative writing, public, speaking, and media exercise, offered young people the opportunity and platform to express how they felt about themselves, their goals and their personal strengths. See final assets here: <https://youtu.be/5uPcXIHsMl0>
2. **You May Think:** this media project asked youth and Young adults to explore and express common misperceptions and misconceptions that they have experienced in their lives. Young people, highlighted, that they were commonly misperceived and shared those misperceptions through visual artistry and creative writing. See final assets here: <https://youtu.be/tBgzbPbdGwc>
3. **Dear Parents:** In this media project, youth and young adults each wrote letters to their parents, explaining what their perspectives were regarding the way they were being raised and treated as young adults. This project offers a lens into the thought process of young adults in challenging in-home domestic situations. See final assets here: https://youtu.be/bf5_DlabBwU

ACYFO organizational logo was conceptualized, designed and voted on by the summer 2022 cohort of youth and young adults.



PROGRESS REPORT

The Confined Arts cont.

Strategic Arts & Education (SAE) initiative

In September 2022 The Confined Arts was awarded a grant from The Ford Foundation in partnership with Another Choice Youth and Family Outreach, Inc. the Strategic Arts & Education (SAE) initiative. The goal of the SAE is to provide free artistic literacy, professional development, and capacity-building to new as well as existing community-based artists, students, and advocates including justice-impacted people. The SAE also works to engage participants in utilizing the arts as a means to mitigate the imprint of the criminal legal system.



Youth Action YouthBuild

In January 2023 ACYFO partnered with Youth Action YouthBuild to provide their students with professional development training offered through The Confined Arts. Over the course of the next year, we look forward to providing YouthBuild students with professional development training weekly through 2023.



PROGRESS REPORT



Reentry Theater of Harlem

- In 2022, RTH continued its partnerships with ACYFO, the Coming Home program at Emmaus House, Stella Adler Center for the Arts, Central Synagogue, Who Decides, Inc. and Humanities NY.
- In 2022, RTH produced three justice-oriented performances. In April, RTH performed a play called "We wear the Mask" at Central Synagogue and was hosted by Brian Stevenson.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lHrpOe5WF';;;;GzCZc_a7l_8MXHu6qJTxxgq/view?usp=drive_web

- In June, RTH partnered with artist Rowan Renee to teach participants the art of "loom weaving" and understanding weaving as a metaphor for unity and community building. We also produced and performed a play called "Weaving a Community" to celebrate the graduates.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jzx54QUdso79kazAyNf9a4pOqw2Q4XY7/view?usp=share_link

- In September, RTH partnered with the artist Kenneth Reams, founder of Who Decides, Inc., who spent two decades on death row and is now held in solitary confinement for more than ten years.

- In January 2023, RTH co-produced with Tom Oppenheim, Arts Director of Stella Adler Center for the Arts, a Kenneth Reams art exhibition and performed a drama that was written by men incarcerated in Arkansas's deathrow prison. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1X-27a4RPRFsg-TweH23ulabbW5JRQPV3/view?usp=share_link



My Angel Doula Alliance

We discuss topics around, reproductive health, maternal health and wellness, childbirth education, postpartum care, lactation counseling, newborn care, housing, mental health, mental wellness, dating violence, healthy relationships, parenting, financial literacy, education, entrepreneurship, and more.

We recently launched our first Maternity Pantry providing maternity essentials to young expectant mothers, and moms in need. The Maternity Pantry is a safe space where young mothers are able to drop in to get the support they need through workshops, peer engagement, and other resources. Mothers are able to connect with a doula and are provided with a hospital birthing bag.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

HARLEM W.O.K.E, (9/21/23)

(WISDOM * OPPORTUNITY * KNOWLEDGE * EDUCATION.)

One-day community empowerment conference. Through a one-day hybrid conference we identified and explored community based solutions to offset poverty and community violence in Harlem. This community enhancement symposium featured speakers, live performances, facilitated workshops, and visual art. Our primary goal is to reduce the communities reliance on politicians and lawmakers by centering community-fostered solutions. Discussions Included:

SYMPOSIUM ON POVERTY AND GUN VIOLENCE

Moderator: Isaac I. Scott, Isaac's Quarterly

Speakers Included:

Rev. Brandon J. Smith, Mt Pisgah Baptist Church

Jackie Rowe, Harlem Mothers Save

SYMPOSIUM ON YOUTH AND FAMILY OUTREACH

Moderator: Isaac I. Scott, Isaac's Quarterly

Speakers Include:

Rev. Dr. Sanayi Beckles-Canton, Chloe Day School & Wellness Center

Dr. Cory Green, H.O.L.L.A!

Shatia Harris, Youth and Family Organizer

SYMPOSIUM ON REENTRY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Moderator: Isaac I. Scott, Isaac's Quarterly

Speaker Include:

Ibrahim Rivera, Associate Director of Community Based Programs, Exodus Transitional Communities

Alpheaus Marcus, Urban Non-Partisan Club

Jason Clark, President of Black Bar Association

VIEW FULL PLAYLIST HERE:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLILxBDqhbBHLyHjWvOtv5F9QX_X8TBYiV

LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED AT:

WWW.ANOTHERCHOICENYC.ORG

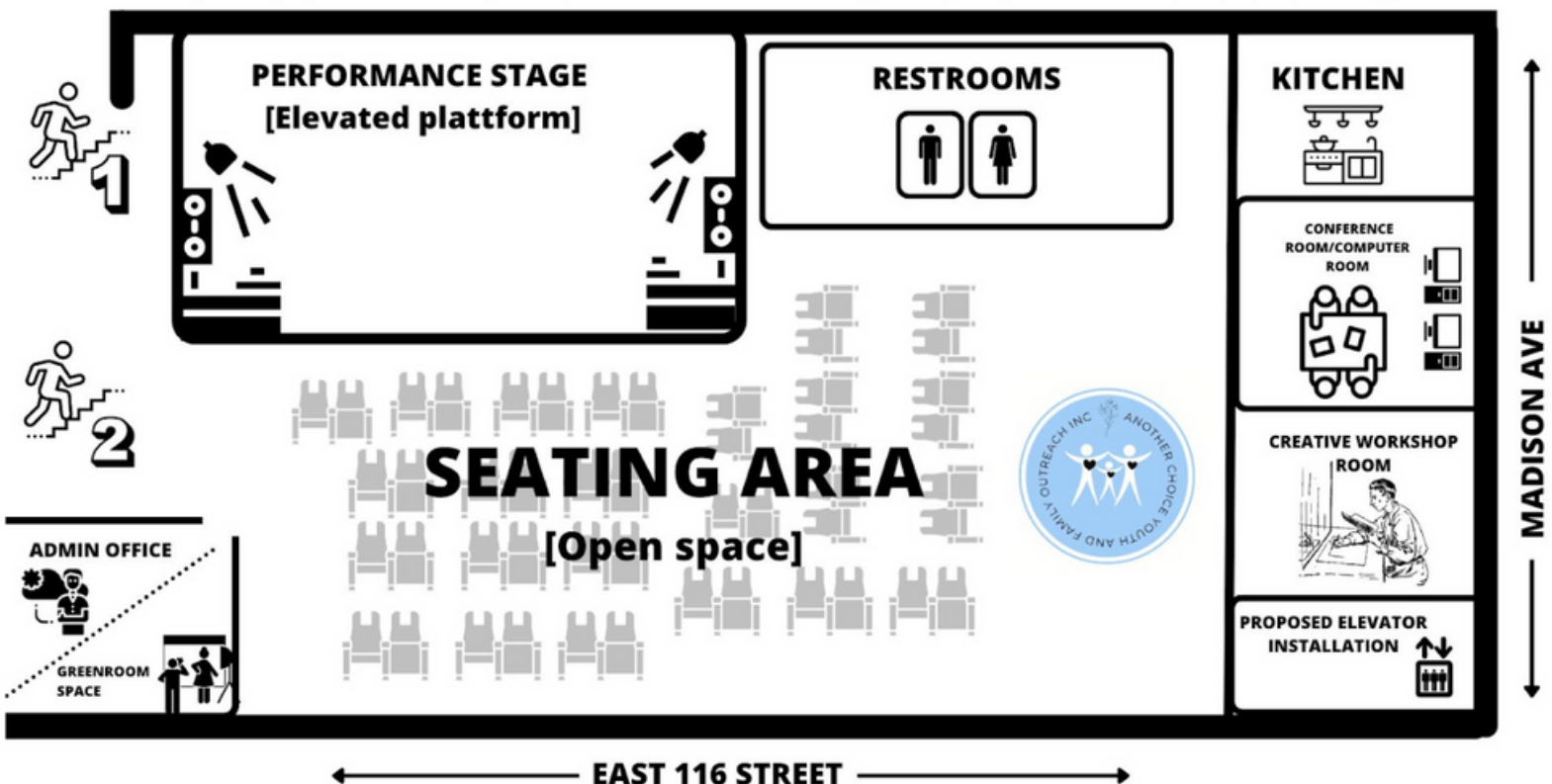
REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

We believe the fight for social change will end at the intersection of analyzing and subsequently enacting social change with clear collective action, this is why we have conceptualized a community solution center for the East Harlem Community. We believe that collective action through artistic expression, and community empowerment, will advance real social change to reduce poverty, end mass incarceration, and improve outcomes for low-income communities.

Through our Reclaim the 2nd Floor Space project, we will create the ACYFO Center for Solutions and Performance Space?). With a physical space designed for our programmatic needs, we will be able to harness the transformative power of strategic arts engagement to address and to mitigate the impact of poverty, domestic violence, re-entry, and recidivism.



Another Choice Theater and Center for Solutions



CENTER FOR SOLUTIONS



The Center for Solutions will provide accessible theater, workshop, and conference space to local artists, community advocates, and entrepreneurs in East Harlem.

The Black Box Community Theatre will function as a culturally responsive, socially concerned, liberatory artist-led performing arts venue. We see to offer rental space to promote film, media, and performance projects from change agents, innovators, and artists who seek to produce artistic content that confronts stereotypical mainstream media misrepresentations of poverty, race, culture, group identification, and social injustices by centering the voices of those people who are physically and socially impacted from the inside out.

Our target audience for the center for solutions includes but is not limited to:

- Children & young adults
- Mothers & families
- Men, Fathers, and Young Fathers
- Returning citizens
- Lay community members/residents/advocates
- Faith leaders/faith-based organizations
- New and existing local artists, influencers and change agents
- Social entrepreneurs



STRATEGIC PARTNERING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

GOALS

- Promote public safety through community-based interventions via free training and capacity building tools to offset social inequalities.
- Offer free artistic literacy and capacity building training for people who are justice involved and at risk of future re-offending.
- Liberate the community and church by offering referral and direct opportunities and social services to young adults and families most vulnerable to the carceral system.
- Provide reentry resources, referral services, social support services to people returning home from incarceration.
- Galvanize and organize ACYFO to build sustainable relationships with local organization and East Harlem residents
- Create a sustainable stream of income for ACYFO by offering theater, workshop, and conference space at an affordable rate to local artists, community advocates, and entrepreneurs in East Harlem.



GOBJECTIVES

- Community-based artists and entrepreneurs are better equipped to express themselves, advocate for the needs of their communities, and galvanize resources to address those issues.
- More community-based advocates and entrepreneurs are provided with the tools that they need to become socially and financially sustainable in their personal and professional lives.
- ACYFO will be in a position to scale it's positive impact on the East Harlem community by providing a space for culturally sensitive arts engagement and social service programming .
- Reduce recidivism and position people returning home from incarceration to become productive members of their community
- Position ACYF to become a liberatory asset to residents and local advocates through referrals and strategic partnering
- Position ACYFO to have more financial flexibility to meet the day-to-day needs of East Harlem residents, such as health and human service needs.



ANOTHER CHOICE THEATER AND CENTER FOR SOLUTIONS



AT MOUNT ZION A.M.E. CHURCH

With your support we will be in a unique position to host services provider's in our space in order to expand our holistic approach to personal and professional development. This would include the following services and opportunities:

Social Services

[Peer Solutions]

- Therapy (Group and Individual)
- Focus Groups
- Parenting Workshops
- Family Building Workshops
- Health & Wellness Workshops
- Rape Counseling
- Domestic Violence Counseling
- Self-care & Empowerment
- Spiritual Counseling

Professional Development/Trainings

[Capacity Solutions]

- Financial Development
- Legal Literacy
- Technology Literacy
- Employable Skills Building (Hard & Soft)

Resources/Referrals

[Sustainability Solutions]

- Housing/Shelter
- Job Placement
- Food/Pantry
- Out-Patient Mental Health Support Services

Creative Activities/Art Therapy

[Alternative Solutions]

- Arts-based programming and therapy
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Horseback Riding (Off-site)
- Journaling and Narrative Storytelling

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT 

CONTACT US TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT



Another Choice Youth and Family Outreach

Another choice

anotherchoicenyc.org