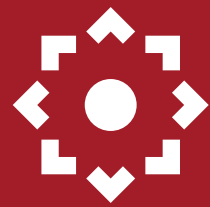


2025 Impact Report



KOLOVITA
Future Heritage. Built Together.



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LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER



2025 was a year of opening doors, and of discovering just how many people were ready to walk through them.

Dear families, friends, and partners,

In Ukrainian tradition, guests are welcomed with bread and salt, a symbol of hospitality, respect, and shared humanity. This spirit guided Kolovita as we brought together families, partners, and communities across Central Oregon — creating spaces where culture is honored and people feel seen.

This year also made something very clear: the need is real. Many immigrant and refugee families are navigating complex systems without the support or cultural bridges they deserve. Kolovita exists to meet that moment through the arts, storytelling, and community connection that strengthens both belonging and access. What we are building is growing — shaped by trust, partnership, and the courage of the families we serve. Thank you for being part of it.

Mila Shelehoff

Founder and Executive Director

Who We Are and Why It Matters

Kolovita is a program of Art Sprouts, Inc., an Oregon-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization advancing cultural equity, community wellbeing, and inclusive engagement in Central Oregon.

Immigrant and refugee families and communities often face barriers to access and belonging. Kolovita creates culturally responsive spaces through arts, storytelling, and partnerships — strengthening connection, participation, and shared community life.

Our Mission

To empower underrepresented communities through cultural stewardship, collaboration, and innovation — fostering connection, equity, and resilience while co-creating living traditions of belonging and care.

Our Vision

A world where Ukrainian heritage and diverse cultural voices flourish as living forces for healing and renewal. By honoring Indigenous land and the communities that receive us, we co-create Future Heritage, built through collaboration.



Six Defining Moments



The Table Comes First

A shared meal sparked Kolovita, rooted in connection, conversation, and community presence.



City of Bend Welcoming Week

Ukrainian and Indigenous music came together in a citywide celebration of inclusion and connection.

Ukrainian Christmas Carols

Ancestral carols filled winter with warmth, introducing Central Oregon audiences to Ukrainian traditions.



REDdress + WHITEdress

A powerful installation invited reflection on resilience, memory, and presence.



Vinok Workshop

Spring gatherings offered hands-on connection to heritage through weaving and ritual.



Yagódy at Tower Theatre

A sold-out performance demonstrated strong demand for culturally specific programming.

CITY OF BEND WELCOMING WEEK

Inclusion and Connection



During City of Bend Welcoming Week, the need for deeper cross-cultural connection became clear. Too often, immigrant and Indigenous stories exist in separate spaces rather than in relation to one another. Kolovita created a shared space where these histories of resilience could meet, be witnessed, and honored together in meaningful, intentional ways.

We hosted Threads of Belonging, a multimedia experience blending Ukrainian and Indigenous music and arts. Performances by Brothers Ivan, ethno-singer Inna Kovtun, and Warm Springs artist Scott Kalama (Blue Flamez) formed a connective thread. The REDdress + WHITEdress installation centered women as keepers of cultural memory, continuity, and communal strength.

The Impact

The event increased cross-cultural engagement by bringing diverse audiences into shared space, sparking dialogue and new relationships. Participants reported a stronger sense of belonging and cultural understanding. The program strengthened partnerships between immigrant and Indigenous artists and organizations, demonstrating a replicable model for inclusive, community-centered cultural programming in Central Oregon.

CITY OF BEND WELCOMING WEEK

Kolovita enriches our cultural landscape and showcases Bend as a dynamic place to live and visit.

Kolovita's work reflects Bend's commitment to being a welcoming and inclusive community. Through cultural programs, performances, and partnerships, Kolovita highlights the contributions of Bend's Ukrainian community while strengthening the cultural vibrancy of our city. By creating opportunities for residents and visitors to experience music, cuisine, heritage, and shared traditions, Kolovita helps deepen connections across the community. Their work enriches Central Oregon's cultural landscape and positions Bend as a dynamic and culturally rich place to live and visit.

Mike Riley

Bend City Council



YAGÓDY AT TOWER THEATRE

A Sold-out Performance



For the Ukrainian community in Central Oregon, opportunities to reconnect with cultural roots have been limited. While Bend's arts scene continues to grow, it has historically lacked diverse, representative programming from Ukraine — leaving many with a quiet longing for the melodies, language, and traditions that define home and cultural continuity.

To help bridge this distance, Kolovita served as co-host and cultural steward, working alongside PRAX (Patricia Valian Reser Center for the Creative Arts at Oregon State University) to support a Bend presentation of the Ukrainian folk fusion ensemble Yagódy at the Tower Theatre, grounding the experience in authentic cultural context and meaningful community connection.

The Impact

At a sold-out Tower Theatre, music became a shared language. Ukrainian attendees reconnected with heritage and memory, while broader audiences encountered a vibrant, living culture. The performance demonstrated strong regional demand for culturally specific programming and marked a meaningful step toward positioning Bend as a destination for international arts and music.

YAGÓDY AT TOWER THEATRE

The symbolic bread and salt ceremony was a deeply touching moment for our ensemble.

The atmosphere of the concert moved us deeply, and the opening bread and salt ceremony was especially meaningful for our ensemble. It meant a great deal to share our music and Ukrainian culture with such an open and attentive audience. We sincerely thank Kolovita for creating this opportunity and for the care and support shown to our ensemble.

Zoryana Dybovska

Founder, Yagódy



Measured Growth and Stewardship



Kolovita has grown from a grassroots initiative into an early-stage program, expanding from under \$900 in 2024 to approximately \$90,000 in managed project resources in 2025. This growth reflects a disciplined approach to funding, aligned with mission, organizational capacity, and a commitment to long-term sustainability and responsible program development.

The Funders

In 2025, Kolovita secured support from the **Bend Cultural Tourism Fund**, the **City of Bend**, and the **Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation**, along with its first State of Oregon contract through the ORCAS program of the **Oregon Department of Human Services**. Kolovita also serves as a community program facilitator with the **Oregon Health Authority** and the **Oregon Department of Education**.

The Impact

Kolovita's growth has strengthened its capacity to deliver culturally responsive programs, expand partnerships, and increase community reach. This momentum has positioned Kolovita as a trusted partner in serving refugee families, while its lean, accountable model ensures efficient resource use and sustained, measurable impact throughout Central Oregon communities.

LOOKING AHEAD

Learnings and Strategic Growth

In 2026, Kolovita aims to bring more internationally acclaimed Ukrainian artists to Central Oregon through concerts, workshops, and cultural gatherings. This work is intended to expand access to globally recognized Ukrainian artistry, support Bend's cultural tourism sector, and create opportunities for community connection, cultural visibility, and shared economic benefit across the region.



Photo by Artem Galkin and Nasya Mantach

Trust grows through presence

Sustained, relationship-based engagement builds deeper, more meaningful connections than one-time programs, strengthening trust across communities and partners.

Culture is a powerful bridge

Music, storytelling, and shared traditions create spaces where diverse communities meet with curiosity, respect, and a willingness to connect across lived experiences.

Youth leadership matters

Young people serve as essential cultural connectors, bridging families, institutions, and peers while shaping more inclusive and responsive community spaces.



GRATITUDE AND CONTACTS

The Community Behind the Work



Our work is collective, built on trust, partnership, and shared vision. We are deeply grateful to the families, friends, and partners, who helped create belonging and connection this year. Your support is the heart of Kolovita, with special thanks to the City of Bend.



Kolovita

www.kolovita.org

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Bend, OR 97709

Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility

Kolovita, advances cultural equity, community wellbeing, and resilience.

We create spaces where diverse stories and identities thrive. We are committed to inclusion, accessibility, and dignity, and actively work to reduce barriers to participation.