



Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center 2024 Annual Report

Arte, Cultura y Comunidad

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2024 ANNUAL REPORT



LETTER FROM LETI



LETITIA LOPEZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What a year we had at Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center! We are so proud of the progress, partnerships, and possibilities that shaped our work.

2024 was a year marked by milestones that expanded our reach and deepened our impact. We completed an 18-month institutional and artist residency at moCa Cleveland, an extraordinary opportunity for our center and for more than 40 Latino artists who gained visibility, professional development, and a dedicated space within a major contemporary art institution. Through this residency, we were able to engage with thousands of people, connecting them to the richness and diversity of Latino art and culture. We also made history by presenting the first-ever Hispanic Heritage Month exhibition at Cleveland City Hall, showcasing the breadth of Latino talent in our region and setting a new precedent for cultural representation in civic spaces.

Alongside these achievements, we continued to deliver high-quality programming that connects our community through the arts. Our work is not only about preserving culture, it is about sharing it. From student performances to family workshops, our focus remains on offering culturally rich experiences that celebrate identity, encourage creativity, and strengthen community ties.

These accomplishments would not be possible without the support of our donors, partners, artists, volunteers, and dedicated staff. Your investment in our mission allows us to grow while remaining rooted in the values that have guided us since our founding.

As we look toward the future, we remain committed to uplifting Latino voices, expanding access to the arts, and serving as a cultural anchor in our community.

Thank you for being part of this ongoing journey.

En comunidad y creatividad,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lopez'.

ABOUT US

For over 35 years, Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center has been a cornerstone of Cleveland's Latino community, transforming lives through visual, literary, and performing arts.

This year we have hosted and participated in over 100 events, workshops, and programs dedicated to preserving and celebrating Latino culture in all its rich history and artistic expression. Our commitment to the arts ensures that the traditions and stories of our community are not only remembered but also lived, experienced, and carried on by our future generations.



OUR CAMPUS





CREATIVITY

At Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center, we embrace creativity by providing opportunities for all ages to learn and share their artistry, creating a close-knit community of painters, dancers, and everything in between.

CULTURE

We are committed to preserving Latino culture across generations and artistic disciplines. Through our dance classes, students of all cultural backgrounds and ages learn dance styles such as salsa, merengue, and flamenco.



COMMUNITY

We believe in building a strong, inclusive community by sharing our heritage with the wider community.

Our annual events, including ¡Celebrando! Hispanic Heritage Month and Parrandón Navideño, are open to the public for all to enjoy the beauty of Latino culture.

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

DANCE

This year we continued to offer year-round dance classes of different styles to all ages, in partnership with **Abrepaso Flamenco** and **North Pointe Ballet**.

Our quintessential **Latin Social Dance** class focuses on traditional Latin dances such as plena, salsa, and merengue. Our traveling groups Grupo Coquí and Sabor Latino performed at various community events throughout the year.



VISUAL ART

Families and artists of all ages got in touch with their creativity in a variety of art workshops led by community members.

We explored our creativity through workshops like **Art with Andrés Giménez** thanks to the Cleveland Guardians, **Painting the House** with Nathalie Pineda Bermudez, **Taller de Pintura** with the Vera Twins and moCa Cleveland, **Photography** with Mark Zannoni, as well as cultural arts like **Creating Chiclana Dolls** with Alice Blumenfeld, **Embracing Grief Through Art** with Brianna Hernandez, and **Que Lindos Recuerdos** with Julissa Bruno.



CLASSES & WORKSHOPS



HEALTHY HEARTS

JDBCAC prioritized mental and physical wellness through partnerships like **Youth Outdoors**, where our students go on monthly field trips to learn about the environment and get active with the **Cleveland Metroparks**. We hosted Walter Patton and the first ever **Ghetto Therapy** community event on the West Side, in collaboration with the **Cleveland Clinic**, where attendees were welcomed with open arms and connected to valuable mental health services.



MUSIC

In partnership with the **Cleveland Classical Guitar Society**, our students participated in free guitar lessons throughout the year and performed a recital for friends and family. We continued our summer tradition of hosting the **Amistad Caribbean Arts Camp**, culminating in a beautiful celebration of Afro-Caribbean music and culture in our performance space. We also hosted the **Refresh Collective**, who use hip hop culture as a means to build up professional skills in youth.



LITERATURE + THEATRE

Words were put to the page through programs like our **JDBCAC Book Club** led by Nahomy Garcia who met bimonthly to discuss books by Latino authors, and **The Sound of Us** audio storytelling workshop series led by Ideastream Public Media. Drama also flourished at JDBCAC as **¡Teatro Kids!** was led by Melanie McCarter. The center was home to many rehearsals, including **The Greenhouse**, **El Romántico**, and **The Very Lonely Dinosaur**.

UNIDOS POR EL ARTE

Powering the Next Generation of Latino Artists



Unidos por el Arte is a dynamic initiative of Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center that uplifts and connects over 260 Latino artists. Through curated opportunities, events, and access to vital resources, the collective supports creative growth and professional development at local, regional, and national levels. Unidos por el Arte champions Latino artistic expression while advancing community empowerment through the arts.

ARTSRX

This year, we joined efforts with MetroHealth for ArtsRx, a unique collaborative wellness initiative designed to support healing through creative expression. This innovative project offered free arts-based experiences—ranging from hands-on workshops in music, movement, writing, and visual arts—to foster community connection and well-being through the power of the arts.

- MIXED MEDIA SELF PORTRAITS with Arcelia Gandarilla
- SELF-AWARENESS, ART & DANCE with Luz Emma Cañas
- PHOTOGRAPHY with Mark Zannoni
- TRANSFORMATION THROUGH POETRY with Bonafide Rojas

- WEARING YOUR JOURNEY with Mary Luz Vazquez
- FIBERFLOW ARTS with Melanie Guzmán McCarter
- STEPPFWD MOVEMENT with Kimberly Ocampo
- PAPER CRAFTS with Alberto Veronica Lopez



EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHT

During the summer, we celebrated our Latino LGBTQ+ community with the exhibition *Orgullo*, featuring works by El Arvizu, Jessica Cancel, Luz Emma Cañas, Priscilla Florin, Jenna Martínez, Kenron Morgan, and James Negrón. The show uplifted stories of identity, resilience, and creativity. We honored the life of Omar Capo—a beloved JDBCAC dancer and Pulse tragedy victim—whose legacy continues to inspire.

UNIDOS POR EL ARTE

SUPPORT FOR ARTISTS GRANT

2024 marked the fifth and final cycle of our Support for Artists grant. With funding received from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and Assembly for the Arts, we awarded 10 outstanding artists \$5,000 each to complete a proposed project in their chosen discipline for a three-month residency. The projects culminated in individual showcases at our ¡Celebrando! Hispanic Heritage Month event.



2024 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Gabrielle Banzhaf | Chicken Coop Installation
As co-founder of SHED Projects, she honors her Peruvian roots through community-based works. Her latest projects, a chicken coop and a family recipe book inspired by her uncle, symbolize cultural preservation.

Hector Castellanos Lara | Alebrijes Workshops
is an artist whose "Alebrijes Workshops" guided participants in creating colorful sculptures using a variety of materials. His 10-session series invited community engagement to explore cultural storytelling and creativity.

Priscilla Florin | Painting
created a series of paintings examining queerness in Puerto Rican culture, focusing on pre-colonial Taino society and the erasure of Indigenous identities. The project included a community class on painting techniques and Taino history.

Higo Gabarron | "Putting The Pieces Back Together"
creates puzzle tools inspired by famous artworks to support women with breast cancer. Featuring altered classic pieces that incorporate breasts and scars, the project celebrates resilience and beauty.

Camilo GB | Photography
created a series of portraits of Hispanic families in northern Ohio, focusing on grandmothers. The portraits highlight multiple generations together, honoring the wisdom and influence of grandmothers in Hispanic culture.

James Negron | "Restoring Memory"
features screen-prints on silk and hand-embroidered flags celebrating Puerto Rican and Ecuadorian heritage. The project reflects on family and culture, honoring both personal and cultural connections.

Maya Peroune | Photography
documented the fading traditions of her family's elders, reflecting on legacy in a rapidly changing world. Her portraits capture the remaining Silent Generation's traditions, lessons, and messages for future generations.

Cierra Rembert | Mixed Media & Sculpture
is a visual artist whose mixed-media paintings and sculptures celebrate Black and Brown bodies. Her new project, a sculpture, invites community engagement to explore identity and storytelling.

Yoly Rodriguez | Bilingual Cricut Workshops
designed bilingual Cricut workshops to bridge technology and art by teaching her community customization techniques. Through five classes, the project empowered participants with instruction and hands-on practice in crafting.

Martha Sofia | Brazilian Axé Dancing
developed a 10-minute axé dance choreography and taught it in a five-week workshop for ten participants. The project celebrated Latino diversity, bridged cultural gaps, and affirmed participants' cultural heritage.



INSTITUTIONAL RESIDENCY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Where Community Meets Contemporary: JDBCAC and moCa Cleveland in 2024

This year, our collaboration with moCa Cleveland deepened through a shared residency that culminated in three powerful exhibitions: **Street Art in the Latino Community, Returning Home**, and the BlackBrain mural **SCRD GRDN** led by artist Ariel Vergez.



Beyond the gallery, JDBCAC and moCa came together to present a series of vibrant community programs, including **Taller de Pintura** with the Vera Twins, **Forming Fearless Faces** with Rubén Ulises Rodríguez Montoya, and the networking event **Café y Conectando**. These creative touchpoints continue to strengthen the bridge between contemporary art and the communities we serve.

New Collaborations throughout Cleveland

This was a year defined by connection, cultural celebration, and creative partnerships across the city. Together with local collaborators, we highlighted the voices and stories of Cleveland's Latino community through memorable events: **Parade the Circle** with Nebeska Aviles, the **La Promesa** exhibition at Cleveland City Hall during Hispanic Heritage Month, and the **Santas of the World** cultural display with lead artist Marylin Oliveras de Ortiz, presented in partnership with the Historic Gateway Neighborhood Corporation



Partnering for Impact: Shared Purpose, Diverse Voices

Through our partnership with The Cleveland Arts Prize's Verge Fellowship Program, we had the honor of welcoming Carol Malone as our featured fellow artist. With support from the Cleveland Foundation and Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, Carol received unrestricted funding and professional development to further her artistic practice—an investment in both creative growth and community impact.

LATINA IMAGE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Our Latina Image Leadership Program builds leaders by inspiring and educating young Latina women to achieve their full potential through the power of sisterhood

Since 2010, the Latina Image Leadership Program (LILP), led by Yasin Cuevas, has empowered young Latina leaders through mentorship, creativity, and community.

In 2024, the program faced a major setback after sustaining significant water damage. Thanks to the unwavering support of our community and partners, we were able to swiftly recover and continue providing a safe, affirming space for our future leaders.



14

**years of changing
young women's lives**

261

**program graduates
to date**

16+

**community
engagements**

In 2024, our young leaders learned the importance of community service by participating in local events including...

Mi Voz Fashion Show

Carnival in the Land

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame's

Hispanic Heritage Celebration

City of Cleveland's Hispanic Heritage

Closing Ceremony

Parrandon Navideño

Cleveland Museum of Art's Parade the Circle

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame

International Women's day

City Hall Exhibition: La Promesa

MetroWest's Stockyard Bike-A-Thon

Old Brooklyn Street Festival

Cleveland Play House's Women's

History Month Celebration

MetroWest's International Women's Day



SIGNATURE EVENTS

¡CELEBRANDO!

Our signature Hispanic Heritage Month event honors the rich cultural heritage of Cleveland's Hispanic Latino communities. Our campus was full of life with arts & crafts for kids, performances through-out, artist exhibitions of all disciplines, a domino tournament, and a delicious meal from Cilantro Taqueria.



400 attendees

PARRANDÓN NAVIDEÑO

This year's Christmas celebration brought together our local Latino community for an evening of joy, tradition, and holiday spirit. Families enjoyed photos with Santa and the Three Kings, free gifts for children, games, raffles, and a festive donut cart from Chocolate Drops. A special visit from the Cleveland Browns mascot, Chomps, added even more holiday cheer



450 attendees



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Each year, we demonstrate our commitment to the community by partnering with local organizations—and 2024 was no exception! This year was filled with exciting opportunities for us to be represented beyond our campus.

DIA DE LOS REYES



MONSTERS GAME



PARADE THE CIRCLE



GUARDIANS NOCHE LATINA



ROCK HALL HHMC



DIA DE LOS MUERTOS



OUR IMPACT

6,942

COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED

56 classes, workshops, and book clubs
24 outreach events
29 organizations hosted on campus

178,600

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENTS

135,000 social views through Instagram and Facebook
30,100 website visitors
11,000 followers & friends on Facebook
2,500 Instagram followers

260

ARTISTS SUPPORTED

38 artist-focused newsletters
27 artist-led workshops
15 exhibition opportunities

FUNDERS



SHERWIN WILLIAMS



PARTNERS

moCa
Cleveland



ABREPASO
flamenco



STAFF AND BOARD

**From the Bottom
of Our Hearts...**

THANK YOU!

We are deeply grateful for the unwavering support from our community, our partners, and our funders. Your involvement, dedication, and continued support are essential to our mission.

While some of our programming is covered through grants, we rely on individual support to help cover operational expenses. This way we may continue to offer our students and families quality programming at no or minimal cost.

STAFF

Letitia Lopez

Executive Director

Gilberto Rivera

Project Manager

Max McMillen

Program Coordinator

Bianca Flores

Latin Social Dance Instructor

Melanie McCarter

Administrative Assistant

Lydia Diaz Torres

Bookkeeper

Gabriela Mazzei

Accountant

Yasin Cuevas

Latina Image Leadership
Program Director

Bridgett Martinez

Creative Fundraising Manager

BOARD

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SCAN THE QR CODE & HELP FURTHER OUR MISSION

Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Your support ensures programs and events remain free to our community whenever possible.