



# **Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center**

# **2023 Annual Report**

Arte, Cultura y Comunidad

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# LETTER FROM LETI



**LETITIA LOPEZ**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I reflect on the past year at Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center, I am filled with pride and gratitude. This year has been marked by vibrant artistic expression, cultural connections, and a deepened sense of community. Our unwavering support for Latino artists has been central to our mission, and the impact of the moCa residency on our organization has been profound, elevating our creative reach and community engagement.

One of the most rewarding aspects of our work is witnessing the transformative power of the arts on our students. They grow in confidence, develop a deep pride in their cultural identities, and showcase their talents through performances that bring families together. The joy on their faces, the applause from proud families, and the sense of accomplishment they display are testaments to the impact of our programs. I am incredibly grateful for the support of our donors, volunteers, and partners. Your dedication has enabled us to make a lasting impact in our community. As we look ahead, we remain excited about the possibilities and committed to celebrating and empowering our community through the arts.

Thank you for being a vital part of our journey.

Warm regards,

Letitia Lopez



# ABOUT US

For over 30 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 and experienced by 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 **North Pointe Ballet**, **Abrepaso Flamenco**, and the **Cleveland Tango School**.

Our quintessential **Latin Social Dance** class focuses on traditional Latin dances such as bomba, 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.

Workshops included crafts like **Ceramics** with Alberto Veronica Lopez, **Hanging Planters** with Yanilka Norma, and **Stamp Making** with Tahm Lytle, as well as cultural arts like **Sawdust Carpets** with Comité Mexicano de Cleveland, Puerto Rican **Veijgante Masks** with Becky Aviles, and Mexican **Nicho Boxes** with Marilyn Oliveras de Ortiz.





# CLASSES & WORKSHOPS



## HEALTHY HEARTS

JDBCAC prioritized mental and physical wellness through partnerships like **Youth Outdoors**, where students ages 8-11 go on monthly field trips to learn about the environment and get active with **the Cleveland Metroparks**.

We hosted the first ever **Love Yourself** community event, in collaboration with organizations like **Cleveland Clinic - Lutheran Hospital** and **Cleveland Play House**, where attendees used the arts to express self-love.



## 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.



## LITERATURE

Words were put to the page in poetry and prose through workshops like **Rhyme and Reason**, led by Gemini Jae and JP Hernandez, and **Spoken Word Poetry**, in collaboration with **Hasani Management and FranCeJone' Institute of Art**.

Our **JDBCAC Book Club** led by Nahomy Garcia met bimonthly to read and discuss books of different genres by Latino authors.

# 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**

The program, led by Yasin Cuevas since 2010, continues to grow every year thanks to the help of our volunteer staff.

**At the start of the program, each young woman is presented with a value they will embrace throughout the year (pictured).**



**13**

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

**242**

**program graduates to date**

**15+**

**community engagements**

**In 2023, our young leaders learned the importance of community service by participating in local events including...**

## **Mi Voz Fashion Show**

Raquel Ortiz's Family Bombazo

## **Rock & Roll Hall of Fame's Hispanic Heritage Celebration**

City of Cleveland's Hispanic Heritage Month Closing Ceremony

## **Parrandon Navideño**

Cleveland Museum of Art's Parade the Circle

## **Young Latino Network's Noche De Guayabera**

India Fest USA

77th One World Day Parade

## **MetroWest's Stockyard Bike-A-Thon**

Día de Reyes at Cleveland Museum of Art Community Arts Center

## **Cleveland Play House's Women's History Month Celebration**

Esperanza's 13th Annual Back to School Celebration

## **1st Dominican Cultural Festival**

IRTF Liberation Lab

**They explored the city, visiting...**

Cleveland Play House

Cleveland Metroparks

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Tour

Sabor Miami Cafe

**and were showcased in...**

La Mega Nota, AfroLatinidad 2023 "Reinas Afrolatinas en Cleveland"

Vida Latina 2023 "Miss Latina Image 2023"

Noticias Telemundo Cleveland



# UNIDOS POR EL ARTE

An artist initiative empowering Latino artists in Northeast Ohio

## SUPPORT FOR ARTISTS GRANT

2023 marked the fourth cycle of our Support for Artists grant. With funding received from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and Assembly for the Arts, we awarded 10 deserving artists \$5,000 each to complete a proposed project in their chosen discipline within their three-month residency. The projects culminated in individual showcases at our Celebrando! Hispanic Heritage Month event.



## 2023 GRANT RECIPIENTS

### **Alberto Ramos Cordero** | Tango & Music

As a founder of the Cleveland Tango School, Alberto rebranded their tango salon, La Tertulia, fostering cultural exchange through dance, music, poetry, and visual arts.

### **Alberto Veronica Lopez** | Ceramics

is a ceramicist and educator. He hosted a series of ceramics workshops at the Center, focused on creating mealtime vessels from Latino culture culminating in a community meal.

### **Becky Aviles** | Vejigante Masks

is a Puerto Rican mask maker, facilitator, and performer of folkloric art. She completed an intensive training from a Puerto Rican mask maker, learning traditional techniques of mask making. Becky produced dozens of new masks, including an 11-foot Vejigante.

### **Luz Emma Cañas Madrigal** | Installation of *What The Fonk?*

is a multi-disciplinary artist, storyteller and teaching artist. Through interview, research and musical experimentation, Luz's documentary project explored funk beyond the Americas to the African diaspora and the influence of African percussion instruments.

### **Jenna Martinez** | Poetry & Printmaking

is a poet, illustrator and printmaker. With the grant, she created letterblock prints and zines, developed new works of poetry, and led a shape poetry Ofrenda workshop.

### **Miguel Hernandez** | Comic Book

is a storyteller, artist, writer and educator. Miguel completed a self published comic book *The Adventures of Hanzo: Wrath of Winter*, inspired by martial arts and Japanese arts and culture.

### **Ricardo Morales Vivero** | Original Music

is a guitarist and composer. Ricardo completed his first full album of original music. The album, *Introspectiva*, showcases influences of Latin American rock and mirrors his development as an artist.

### **Säber** | Punk Rock Band

is a musician, playwright, and cartoonist zine maker. With the grant, they organized the new punk band Barricade Baby, building a space for rehearsals and purchasing equipment and instruments to produce new music and support live performance.

### **Tahmyrah Lytle** | Zines - prints - button making

is an activist, musician, and multimedia artist. They received one-on-one training from block printing artist Nikita Yogaraj, became a member of Zygote press and secured supplies to lead multiple community workshops about linocut printmaking.

### **Virginia Paguaga** | Photography & Culture

is a Nicaraguan reporter, photographer, video editor and audiovisual producer. For her project, "Centroamerica Existe", Virginia interviewed and photographed Central Americans in the Greater Cleveland area to discuss their experiences.





# INSTITUTIONAL & ARTIST RESIDENCY AT MOCA

This year, Unidos por el Arte artist initiative reached a new level with the opportunity of an institutional and artist residency at Museum of Contemporary Art (moCa) Cleveland. We made a home away from home in the dedicated studio space on the third floor of the museum, serving as an extension of our campus. The space was used as a gallery and for cultural art workshops. Our artist were the first to be featured in the first floor Residency Gallery, opening with a solo exhibition by **Bruno Casiano**.

With the success of our exhibitions, our residency was extended by six months into 2024, officially closing with another solo exhibition by **Ariel Vergez**.



## 2023 MoCa x JDBCAC Residency Cohort

This residency was an exciting opportunity for our artists. Through this partnership, we selected a cohort of six early-career Latino artists that would receive stipends, mentorship, professional development and exposure to new audiences. Their final projects would be the first group exhibit to be featured in the new Residency Gallery at moCa.

**Hugo Juarez** **Camilo Gonzalez Barragan**  
**Nathalie Bermudez** **Kenron Morgan Jr.**  
**Lee Garcia** **Marilyn Oliveras de Ortiz**

4,000\*

visitors  
engaging in  
our activities

40+

Latino artists  
featured

80

artworks  
showcased

*\*plus, thousands more who visited our spaces!*





# SIGNATURE EVENTS

## FERIA DE CLEVELAND

Our annual celebration inspired by Spain's traditional spring festival, in partnership with Abrepaso Flamenco.

At this year's Feria, attendees danced the afternoon away with rumba lessons, participated in fashion and Sevillanas competitions, and enjoyed performances from our Flamenco students!

**100**  
attendees



**400**  
attendees

## PLEIBOL

Pleibol 2023 was a home run! In partnership with the Baseball Heritage Museum, sponsored by the Cleveland Guardians, this fundraiser is an action-packed weekend honoring Black and Latino contributions to baseball. This year, the field lights were turned on for the first time in League Park's history, with Mayor Bibb giving the signal. Attendees ran the bases and enjoyed baseball tournaments, games, and food.

## 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 kids in painting workshops, dancing indoors and outdoors, artist exhibitions of all disciplines, a delicious meal from Cilantro Taqueria, and a punk rock afterparty with Barricade Baby to end the night!

**460**  
attendees



**350**  
attendees

## PARRANDÓN NAVIDEÑO

Our annual Christmas celebration is dedicated to honoring our local Latino community by bringing together families to enjoy festive activities, traditional music, and holiday cheer. Families enjoyed fun holiday crafts, photos with Santa and the Three Kings, and of course, our Coquito and Flan contest!



# COMMUNITY EVENTS

Every year we show our commitment to community by partnering with local organizations, and this year was full of exciting opportunities for the Center to be represented outside of our campus!

## GUARDIANS NOCHE LATINA EVENT

We brought our love for arts and culture to the Cleveland Guardians' Noche Latina event! We featured **eight of the pieces in our Doors to My Barrio** collection, and **over 150 kids** enjoyed sweet treats and coloring activities.

1,500  
people engaged

12  
performances

## PERFORMANCES

Our talented Latin Social Dance groups **Grupo Coquí** and **Sabor Latino** represented the Center with beautiful performances at multiple events, such as **One World Day Parade of Flags**, the **Cleveland Puerto Rican Parade**, the **International Community Cultural BBQ**, **Esperanza's Back to School Celebration**, and **Cleveland's Dominican Festival**.

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH IN THE CITY

We celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month all around Cleveland, promoting JDBCAC at events with some of the city's largest organizations such as the **Rock Hall**, **KeyBank**, **Cleveland State University**, **Cleveland Play House**, and **Cleveland Public Theatre**.





# OUR IMPACT



9,180

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED

43 classes, workshops, and book clubs

24 outreach events

29 organizations hosted on campus



135,580

## VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENTS

95,000 social views through Instagram and Facebook

30,000 website visitors

10,700 followers & friends on Facebook

1,900 email subscribers

980 subscribers from Twitter, LinkedIn, and Youtube



250

## ARTISTS SUPPORTED

26 artist-focused newsletters

19 artists in residence

17 artist-led workshops

10 exhibition opportunities

# FUNDERS



# PARTNERS





# 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

**Max McMillen**

Program Assistant &  
Social Media Manager

**Gilberto Rivera**

Project Manager

**Lydia Diaz Torres**

Bookkeeper

**Melanie McCarter**

Administrative Assistant

## BOARD

**Mariely Luengo**

Board Chair

**Madeline Corchado**

Co-Chair

**Robert Kunkle**

Treasurer

**Alicia Love**

Secretary

**Mario Ornelas**

**Augusto Bordelois**

**Yarimilka Rodriguez**

**Kirby Suntala**

**R.L. Render**

**Dr. Daisy Diaz**

**Kevin de Leon**



## 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.