



# The Walter Hive 2023 Annual Report

# Who We Are

It all began in 1994 when Mary Strawn left her practice in pediatrics to pursue helping high-risk youth through therapeutic art. She volunteered in several settings bringing art to youth with various challenges.

During this time Mary began volunteering at Maricopa County Hospital. Here she worked with young burn survivors, helping them cope with trauma through creative expression. In her experience Mary discovered just how powerful and healing the arts could be for others. She continued her volunteer work for many years with The Arizona Burn Foundation's Camp Courage, a summer experience for burn survivors.

It was at Camp Courage that Kirk Strawn joined the team by bringing his art car, a giant VW bus named Walter, to camp. Walter is converted from an old fire truck which gave it special meaning for the kids. While Kirk and Mary helped lead activities at the camp they started developing the idea of a space dedicated to empowering arts, run by a community of like-minded individuals.

This shared vision led to the creation of The Walter Hive in December of 2017 with the goal of providing programs that support creative expression for all ages and experience levels. This includes work with the both the general public and specific communities, from youth through dementia clients.

The Walter Hive Campus includes:

- The Walter Dome: A makerspace with fabrication tools such as a wood shop, welding, laser cutter, 3D printer; tech such as arduinos, LEDs, and other programmable components; and a vast array of fine arts materials.
- Walter Art Gallery: A welcoming space where attendees experience contemporary art and where the work of both up and coming and more established local artists is celebrated.
- The Walter Hive Community Gallery: Attached to the Walter Art Gallery, our community gallery showcases art created through our workshops.

Through The Walter Hive Mary and Kirk continue to spread their message of healing through art, and they hope to inspire others to do the same. They have seen firsthand how powerful creative expression can be. They are grateful for this opportunity and for all of the participants, staff, volunteers, and partners who share in this vision.



# How we know we're making an impact.

50% reduction in stress levels from pre to post workshop.

N=200 Front Line Health Care Workers

*"It took some courage for me to attend my first workshop. I was convinced that I had no artistic or creative talent. But I was so wrong! The wonderful folks at The Walter Hive make it so easy to produce really cool stuff. I learned that artistic creation is accessible to all of us. I am not exaggerating when I say that these workshops have greatly enriched my life."*

**- Michael T.**



*"It is truly a pleasure to collaborate with The Walter Hive in providing exceptional programming. Additionally, The Walter Hive is committed to a vision that supports community creativity, empowerment, and innovation. Because of The Walter Hive, we are a stronger nonprofit sector and a better world to live and raise our families in! Plus, they are just simply F-U-N!"*

**- Debbie D.**

*"The generous and supportive people at The Walter Hive help people 'see what is possible when they work together, to be bigger than themselves, to not take themselves so seriously' and have been the life preserver tossed to me in all this chaos."*

**- Sharon W.**





# Our Guiding Principles

We believe creative expression and connectivity are necessary elements to well-being. Our workshops are designed to give participants guidance in expressing themselves through the arts while providing meaningful human connection.

## Our Community Partners

Our community partners share our passion for helping through community outreach and facilitate our efforts through their dedication and support.





# Our Programs

## Fine Art Workshops

We provide an array of fine arts workshops designed to foster creativity across all ages and skill levels. Participants may find themselves delving into the intricate world of painting, the tactile wonders of ceramics, sculpting, collage, sewing, and even the intricate techniques of bookbinding.

Additionally, our Art Masterpiece Series is a comprehensive 5 day program that combines art history with hands on creativity across a variety of styles and mediums.

## Community Workshops

Our offerings include workshops open to the public allowing us to cultivate a deep network of volunteers and community support while still providing valuable art education.

## Community Art Gallery

As a part of the Walter Art Gallery, our community gallery showcases pieces created by workshop participants. This platform gives us the opportunity to visually share our mission and display unique creations from our programs.

## Fabrication Art Workshops

Combining art with fabrication and technology allows us to introduce participants to tools and techniques which are often difficult to access. This includes laser cutting, welding, woodworking, and electronics. One example is our Design Series, an extensive project based learning course that takes participants through all stages of project development from concept to installation.

## Community Partners

The Walter Hive has partnered with many local non-profits to fill the gaps in their programming, allowing us to bring therapeutic art to a diverse population ranging in age and abilities.

## Walter Art Gallery

The Walter Art Gallery is a welcoming space showcasing contemporary artists. It has become a vibrant part of the local arts community and purchases from the gallery directly fund The Walter Hive programming.



# Impact Areas

## Creative Expression

We believe that everyone benefits from creative expression and art. Our workshops are designed and led in a manner that encourages individual self-expression. Our space is inclusive, welcoming, and safe for participants of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to create. Workshop instructors are trained on how to provide encouragement and support, removing the hesitancy often found when participating in the arts.

## Local Artists

The Walter Art Gallery provides a space for emerging and established local artists to showcase their work. Many of these artists return to instruct workshops for Hive participants. Coordinating the opening and closing receptions with our Third Friday events has enabled The Walter Hive to become a hub for local artists to connect with a larger community of creatives.

## Teaching New Skills

Learning new skills is empowering and energizing. Feeling empowered builds resilience and promotes healing. Workshop participants can take the skills they learn with us and use them on their own and with their friends and family.

## Community

The Walter Hive is an inclusive gathering space. Through events like Third Fridays and other functions we connect people in meaningful ways, all in support of a common purpose. Volunteers have quickly become our heart, facilitating experiences and making The Walter Hive a key contributor to the wellness of the local community.





# Walter Art Gallery

The Walter Art Gallery has been bringing the community together to appreciate art and artists for more than 14 years. A non-profit exhibition space, we host five exhibits a year which attract 1000 to 1200 visitors and feature artists and works not typically shown in commercial galleries. Our shows include new promising artists, well-known and established artists, and fine art installations designed to be experienced rather than sold.

In the last year WAG hosted two innovative, well-attended art installations – one by Heidi Dauphin called “Visual Days,” and another called “Soft Spoke·n” by Danny Upshaw. WAG also hosted emerging artists Andrea Merican, Dan Pedersen, and Heather Weller in 2023. Each of these artists created more than 20 new works of art for their solo shows. Merican’s refined contemporary abstract paintings, Pedersen’s sophisticated expressionistic pieces, and Weller’s surreal representational images were all extremely well-received and popular with clients. The artists received extensive publicity, these shows were attended by approximately 1000-1200 people, and 54 paintings along with 54 small works were sold throughout 2023.



## ***Visual Days: Heidi Dauphin***

Dauphin created one piece of art inspired by events of the day every day (drawings, collages, or collections of found objects) in the years 2000, 2010, and 2020 totaling 1200 individual works.



## ***Jason Hugger - Gadget Lands***

A well-established artist, he exhibited his Dali-esque oil paintings of found objects in fantastical landscapes.

## ***Danny Upshaw - Soft Spoke·n***

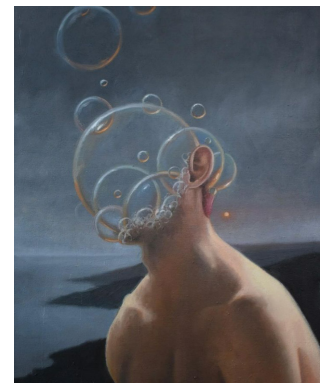
Soft Spoke·n featured large black and white photographs, a dreamy video of a man riding through various stretches of the urban landscape, and a large mural which spilled out onto the gallery floor.

## **First Solo Shows**

***Heather Weller - Delusions***

***Dan Pederson - pederson***

***Andrea Merican - Metamorphosis***



# 2023 Highlights

**918**  
Volunteer  
Hours

500 in 2022

**144**  
Workshops

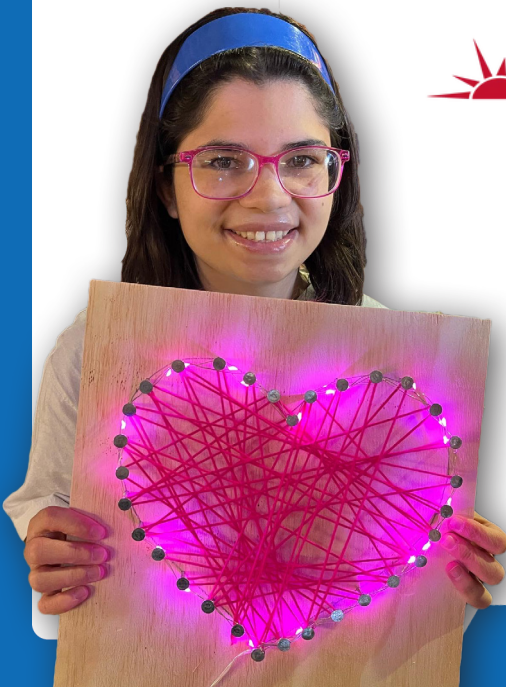
55 Fabrication Art  
89 Fine Art  
132 in 2022

**4649**  
Workshop  
Participants

2099 in 2022



## New Community Partners in 2023:





# Looking Forward

## 2024 Strategic Priorities

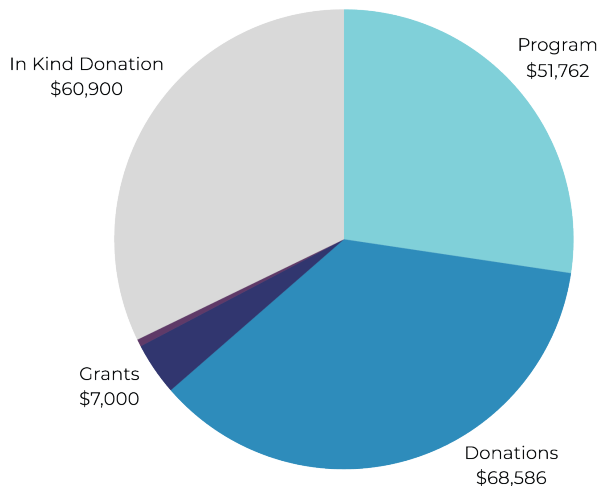
- Continue to grow new community partners
- Increase frequency of workshops with current partners
- Build a skilled and empowered volunteer core to deliver programming
- Secure sustainable sources of funding including individual and corporate donors

## Financials

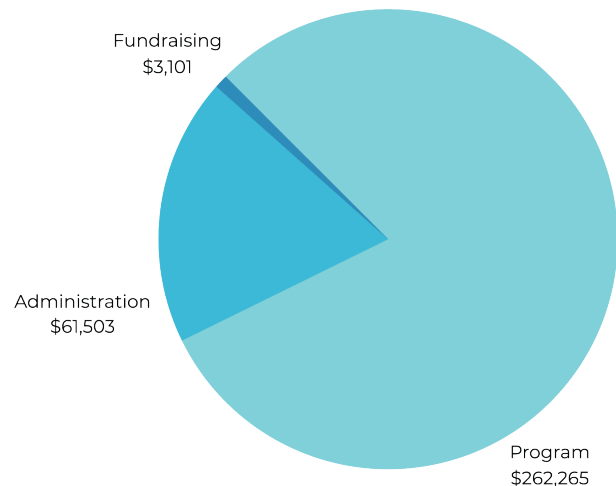
The Walter Hive has a financial obligation to ensure that all donations and community funding received directly support our art programming.

Revenue  
\$189,209

Expenses  
\$326,869



■ Program ■ Donations ■ Grants  
■ Facility Rental ■ In Kind Donation



■ Program ■ Administration ■ Fundraising

# JUST • BE • NICE

## The Walter Hive

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[info@thewalterhive.org](mailto:info@thewalterhive.org)

### Founders

Dr. Mary and Dr. Kirk Strawn

### Board of Directors

Kirk Strawn - Chairman

Anita Lang

Darren Jeffery

David Edwards

Jimbo Beck

Seth Philbin

### Staff

Dianne Haws - Executive Director

Mary Strawn - Program Director

Zena Peterson - Shop and Fabrication Manager

Jules Brandenburger - Program Manager

Charlotte Strawn - Gallery Manager

Colin Kestian - Marketing Manager