

extreme kids
& crew



A SPACE TO BE

2020 Annual Report



Mission

At Extreme Kids & Crew, we cultivate welcoming, accessible spaces where young disabled people and their crew create a supportive community through the arts, play, and conversation.

Vision

Extreme Kids & Crew seeks to show people that disability is not to be feared, pitied or mindlessly exalted, but understood to be an inherent part of life. We will achieve this by establishing and maintaining creative community centers for the disability community.

Strategic Plan

Extreme Kids & Crew will be the NYC community hub for young disabled people and their crews by expanding equitable opportunities regardless of disability, race, ethnicity, income inequality, or gender identity.

Racial Equity Statement

Extreme Kids & Crew believes that every child has the right to play and make art as it holds meaning to them, that every family has the right to accurate information and support, and that every employee has the right to a workplace that embraces a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. To see our full statement, go to extremekidsandcrew.org/racial-equity-inclusion.

Contents

- 3 Why We Do What We Do
- 4 What We Believe
- 5 Strategic Vision
- 6 Programs Overview
- 7 2020 Program Overview
- 8 Our People
- 9 Our Partners
- 10 Funders & Special Thanks
- 11 Finances & Analytics

Why We Do What We Do

Extreme Kids & Crew exists to increase feelings of confidence and self-worth, and decrease the feelings often felt by those who are neurodiverse or disabled — those feelings of isolation and loneliness. And while the COVID-19 crisis has wrought havoc on communities worldwide, young disabled people have been disproportionately impacted. When schools closed on March 16, our families found themselves more isolated than ever and without the means or bandwidth to facilitate remote learning and activities to engage their children.

We responded by reaching out to them to hear their concerns and needs, and within one week, we were offering virtual programs; to date, kids and families from every borough have joined us online. We also connected many families to resources like food banks and provided materials ranging from electronics to art and school supplies. After more than a year of building our online community, our families are continuing to find immense value in our virtual offerings, as evidenced by parents who continue to tell us that we are making this impossibly difficult time seem bearable.

“Zeffie loves her music and theater classes and has hugely surprised me in her enthusiasm for them after the painful slog that was online learning. That is in no small part thanks to Extreme Kids, how you’ve designed the classes, and how attentive you are to each kid.”

—Irene Schneeweis





What We Believe

Extreme Kids & Crew is committed to making our information and communications strategy fully inclusive & accessible to everyone, including those using assistive technologies such as screen readers, keyboard navigation, and more. We also recognize that our language should be intentional and should reflect the vast spectrum of identities that we hold and serve externally. This means being conscious of culturally-sensitive terminology, how a person self-identifies, avoiding broad generalizations about marginalized communities, and being thoughtful about our language.

According to the New York City Department of Education, 227,000 children in New York City public schools have at least one disability — one in every five kids.*

**data from the 2019-20 school year*

That is why we've made inclusive language and design a top priority in the continued growth of our organization. Our work is based on a person-centered, strength-based model which seeks the input and collaboration of its constituents. We do not work to cure or "fix" young people or their caregiver(s), but instead celebrate who they are and what talents they already possess. We want to value their lived experiences and the unique perspectives that they bring to us rather than measuring and quantifying them based on their social circumstances.

After all, we follow in the footsteps of the disability activists and organizers who came before us who brought forth a simple mantra: nothing about us without us. We cannot be an effective organization that advocates for our families without centering them in our work and lifting them up as the best representatives for themselves. While it's easy to fall into the trap of paternalism and condescension, we strive to set ourselves apart by serving as the connective tissue between our families — merely a conduit for the collective power that they wield.



Strategic Planning

We have spent the better part of the last year creating a roadmap for our organization, starting with Youth INC's eight-week Agile Strategy Planning Lab and culminating in a robust three-year strategic plan that outlines our goals and strategies to reach more constituents, better engage current and new participants, and ensure operational stability for growth.

Our long-term goal is to be the NYC community hub for young disabled people and their crews by expanding equitable opportunities regardless of disability, race, ethnicity, income level, or gender identity. We aim to achieve this through a three-pronged approach:

To expand equitable opportunities for young people with disabilities, we will...

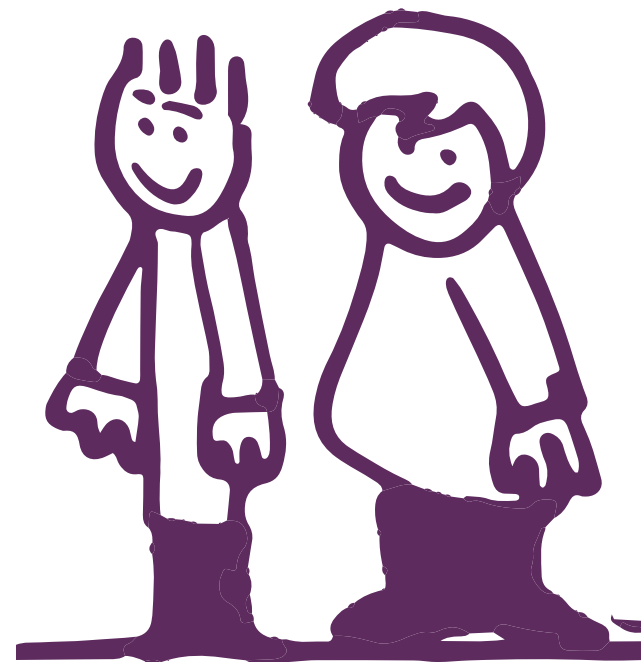
- Build out our own inclusive play-space
- Expand access to our out-of-school-time programming
- Increase our programming for teens
- Ensure cultural competency in our programming

To amplify the voices of the disabled, we will...

- Establish advocacy as a priority
- Provide a platform for self-advocates

To ensure operational stability, we will...

- Expand and diversify our funding
- Strengthen operational structures and processes



Programs Overview

Family Programs

Adapted from our popular, in-person Open Play program, **Play & Create** offered a virtual space to have fun in an understanding environment. Our staff, organizational partners, and performers facilitated weekly events that incorporated art, music, dance, theater, and imaginative play for the whole family. In addition, we facilitated **special events** such as magic shows, weaving workshops, movie nights, and more.

Out-of-School Time

Our popular **after-school** program delivered live, remotely-delivered arts and play activities for children with disabilities, focused on promoting creative expression, imaginative play, and growth in individual participant's social and emotional learning. Meanwhile, our **summer camp** was six weeks of guided arts and play activities that youth with developmental disabilities were able to enjoy from the safety of their homes.

Social Groups

Teens Crew was a monthly, online get-together for neuro-diverse teens with autism and/or other developmental disabilities, nurturing a sense of belonging and friendship-building. **Girls Crew** also met monthly for fun and exciting activities to encourage friendship-building between young girls with disabilities, and their families.

Advocacy & Support

Powerful Parents is our ongoing advocacy training and support group for parents and caregivers raising neurodiverse young people. Participants decide on the topics, and past sessions have included discussions about managing difficult behaviors, COVID-19 resources and support, living at the intersection of race and disability, and more. In an online setting, this group grew in membership and participants strengthened their already deep bonds with one another. In addition, we facilitated two caregiver seminars which focused on self-advocacy and self-care, individual and family rights, and navigating the transition from childhood into adulthood.



2020 Program Highlights

Having just opened our South Bronx play-space in December 2019, we hit the ground running in 2020, hosting 40 Open Play sessions across our three spaces and seeing 100 people show up for our accessible ice skating event in Prospect Park before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Within a week of schools shutting down in March, we were offering our after-school program online and had started building out a library of storybook read-alongs; by the end of the year, we had facilitated more than 400 hours of virtual programming across 15 different programs.

We also hosted our first-ever panel discussion, featuring a collection of self-advocates speaking on the intersectionality of race and disability. We had a record-breaking attendance of more than 100 individuals, from parents to nonprofit peers to teachers and more.

Population: In 2020, Extreme Kids & Crew worked with 317 youth, ages 5-17 and 306 adults. The young people we work with have intellectual, cognitive, developmental and/or physical disabilities including Autism, ADHD/ADD, cerebral palsy, and Down's syndrome, among others (we do not require diagnoses for participation).

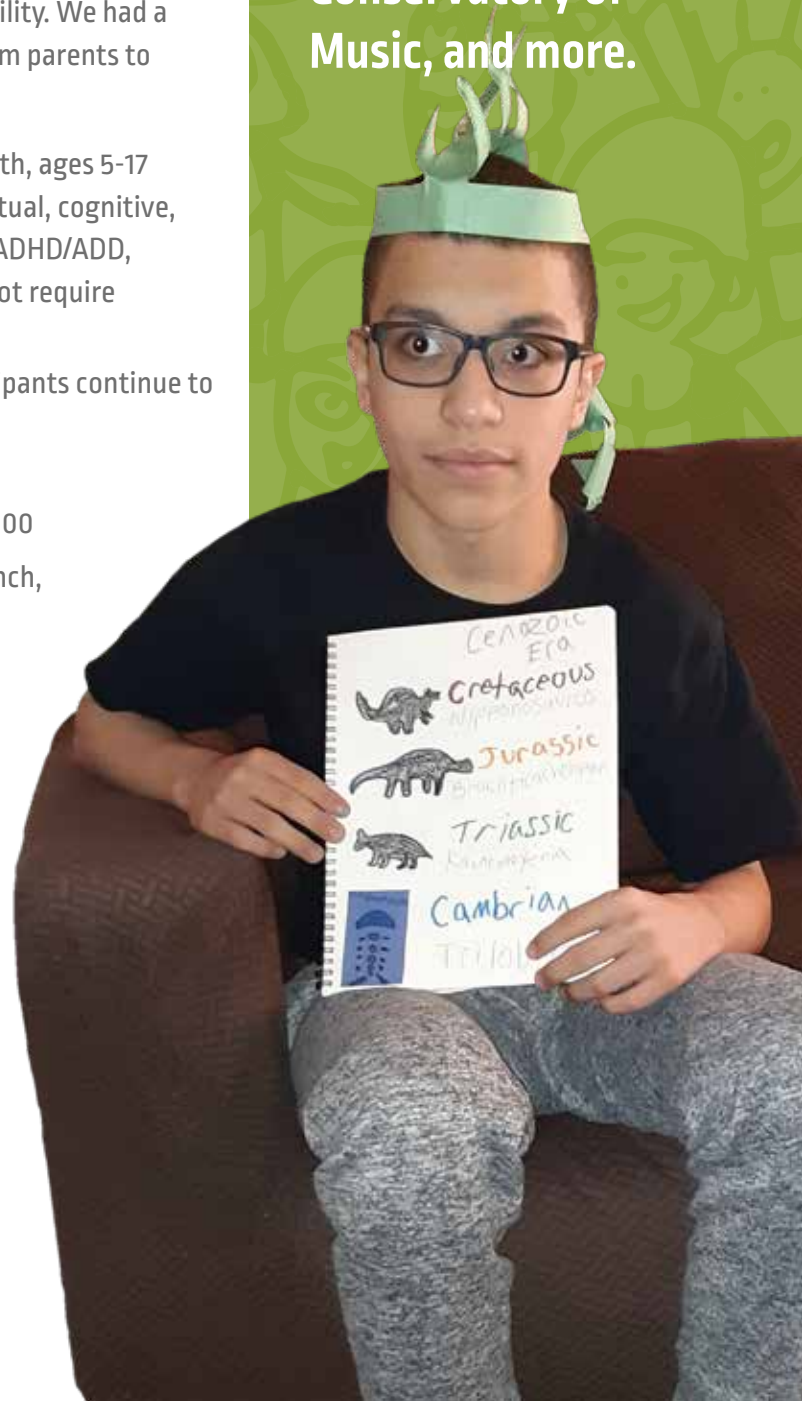
- 89% of our youth are aged 5-12, although our teen participants continue to increase.
- 45% of our youth are female, 55% are male.
- 21% of families reported a household income below \$25,000
- 88% of our families reported that they qualify for free lunch, Medicaid, or SNAP.

**Statistics representative of families who voluntarily completed demographic information.*

The racial /ethnic backgrounds of the children and family members were:

- 22% African-American
- 11% Asian
- 37% White/Caucasian
- 28% Hispanic/Latino
- 2% chose not to identify

We hosted 33 Friday Play & Create sessions, occurring weekly during the school year and featuring partners like BEAT Global, SAORI Arts, Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, and more.



Program Partners, Teaching Artists & Supporting Organizations



All Hands in Motion
 Brooklyn Conservatory of Music
 ChristTiana ObeySumner, Panelist
 CO/LAB Theater Company
 D'Arcee Charington Neal, Panelist
 Four Corners Translation LLC
 Generate Impact
 Harrison Kramer
 INCLUDEnyc
 Jacobē Bell, Equity Consulting Group
 Jerron Herman
 Jitasa
 Joseph J. Barretto, Barretto Consulting LLC
 Kentler International Drawing Space
 LeFrak Center at Lakeside
 Leroy F. Moore Jr., Panelist
 Michael Davidson, board coach
 Michael Gilberg
 Monkey Do Yoga
 Nonprofit New York
 SAORI Arts NYC
 SHARED Brooklyn
 Tiffany Hammond, Panelist



Our arts partners, like the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music and the Kentler International Drawing Space, helped facilitate 316 hours of out-of-school time programming across our after school and summer programs, serving 58 kids across four boroughs.

Our People

Board of Directors

Christian Bergeron, Treasurer
Vanessa Connelly, Board President
Michael Cooney
Edinardo Figueiredo
Meg Harkins
Jules Herlihy
Alexander Khenkin
Shell Lee
Anthony Mulira
Nat Rubin
Gisela Sanders-Alcántara
Jen Sellar, Vice Chair
Amy Stone, Secretary
Kelly Symons

Consultants & Independent Contractors

Emily Antoniades, Senior Grant Writer
Julie Cavanagh, Principal, P.S. 15
Rachel Howard, LMSW, River House Consulting
Amy Weber, LCSW, Speak, Learn & Play

Volunteers

Carley Burgess
Latoya Clarke
Cayley Crutchfield
Marlon Curbelo
Ashley Dunn
Linda Kocieniewski
Joshua Lyageh
Jannat Nabonee
Jordan Sison
Aram Sung

Staff

Caitlin Cassaro, Executive Director
Leigh Reid, Senior Director of Development
Alex Bazeley, Communications Coordinator
Diana Baron-Moore, Head Teacher
Christian Peralta, Program Manager
Nicole Nicholson, Director of Program Operations
Chris Lares, Program Coordinator
Sherri Poall, Program Coordinator



Funders & Special Thanks

Bank of India

BNY Mellon

Brooklyn Community Foundation

City Council Member, Carlos Menchaca

Cowan Slavin Family Foundation

Disney

Ford Foundation – Good Neighbor Committee

Frank & Ruth E. Caruso Foundation

General Atlantic Foundation

Hunt Lane Capital

Investors Foundation

JPMorgan Chase

Laura B. Vogler Foundation

Magic Pebble Foundation

Mastercard

Meringoff Family Foundation

Microsoft

Movers, Not Shakers

New York Community Trust

NYC Department of Youth & Community Development

Philip J & Carol J Lyons Foundation

Planet Fitness

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)

Select Equity Group Foundation

Skylark Realty LLC

SMPS Family Fund

SparkYouth NYC

Sunshine Foundation

The FAR Fund

The Joseph H. Flom Foundation

The New York Women's Foundation (NYWF)

The O'Connell Organization Family Foundation

The South Wind Foundation

The Stephen Colbert Americone Dream Fund

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

Valentine Perry Snyder Fund

Walentas Foundation Ltd

Youth INC



A Very Special Thank You To:

Cece Bell, 2020 Felix Award recipient

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP

Eliza and Jason Factor

Fuqua Family

Ilya Kaminsky, 2020 Felix Award recipient

Indiana Soto and the P.S. 71 family

Lawyers Alliance for New York

Lisette Febus and the Sheridan Academy for Young Leaders family

Peggy Madison and the P.S. 15 family

Victor Calise, NYC Commissioner for People with Disabilities

Volunteers who share their energy and time to play with our families and help to create a welcoming environment for all.



Finances & Analytics

Extreme Kids & Crew is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 2010. We cultivate welcoming, accessible spaces where kids with disabilities and their people create a supportive community through the arts, play and conversation. Through arts and play based programming, kids discover their talents and forge friendships. Our family education and advocacy services equip parents and caregivers with the knowledge and emotional resources they need to advocate for their children and themselves.

Financial Position

Total Support – **\$676,205**

Total Expense – **\$611,044**

Change in Net Assets – **\$65,161**

Net Assets Beginning of Year – **\$375,650**

Total Assets – **\$440,811**

Total Liabilities – **\$12,212**

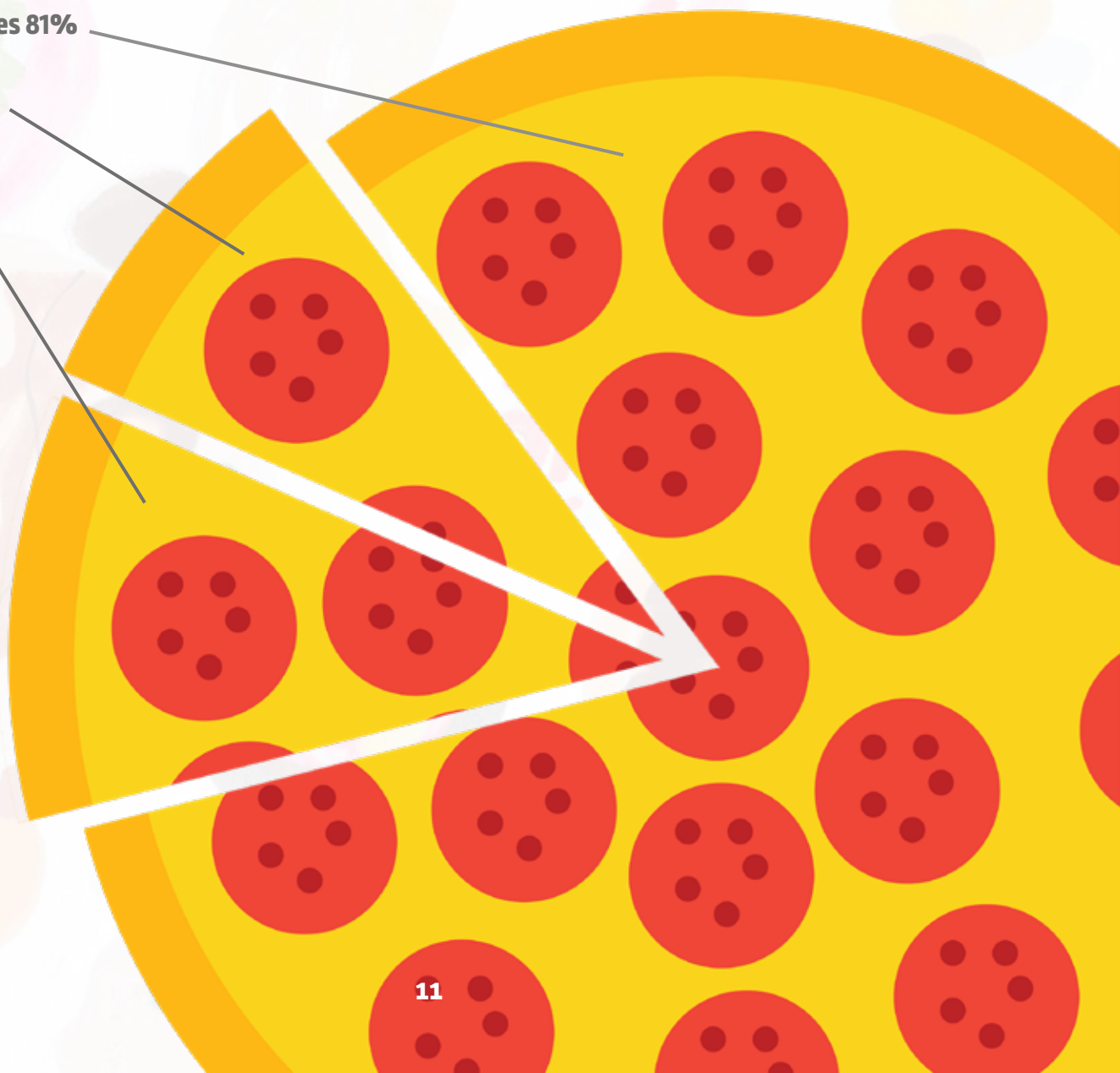
Total Liabilities and Net Assets – **\$453,023**

Distribution of Finances

Program Services 81%

Fundraising 8%

Management & General 11%





Artist Bio:

Illustrations in this report are by Silas Raines, a 11-year-old member of our Crew and a visual artist. Silas, who is also the son of board president Vanessa Connelly, is an Autistic artist whose work — done primarily by pen — depicts abstract and surrealist interpretations of life, often focusing on communities of people. He maintains an Instagram account @artbysilas that showcases the variety of his work.

extreme kids
& crew



A SPACE TO BE

Main Office

185 Van Dyke Street, Suite 205

Brooklyn, NY 11231

347-410-605

info@extremekidsandcrew.org

 facebook.com/extremekidsandcrew

 twitter.com/EDExtremeKids

 instagram@extreme_kids_and_crew

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#)