



extreme kids
& crew



A SPACE TO BE

2018 annual report



“Play supports the formation of the safe, stable, and nurturing relationships with all caregivers that children need to thrive.”

- *The Power of Play: A Pediatric Role in Enhancing Development in Young Children*

I came to Extreme Kids & Crew eight years ago as the mother of a son who was not understood in our world. As I have said many times in the past, the experience of raising such a child was isolating and stressful. Finding Extreme Kids & Crew was life-changing for me, both my children, and my entire extended family. But I rarely discuss why it was the refuge it became for us. Extreme Kids seems so simple, really: just a room filled with some huge pillows, some padded floors, and a ball pit. Why did such a place change our lives so quickly and profoundly? Why has it similarly affected the lives of so many others?

Earlier this year, I conducted an entirely non-scientific, anonymous survey of approximately 100 parents who have children with developmental disabilities. I wanted to understand specifically why simple spaces like those Extreme Kids provides are so important. I asked if access to simple spaces was something of use to caregivers parenting or helping to raise neuro-diverse kids. Over and over again, the responses told me the same things: the actual spaces dedicated to and designed for children with developmental disabilities are lovely, but ultimately not of especially vital importance to caregivers. But through the many responses, I was nevertheless able to put my finger on what made Extreme Kids so important to me and to so many others: it's the people working behind the scenes and within the rooms we offer that matter most. Just as a house is not necessarily a home, a room is just a room—until it becomes a dedicated community space that people collectively fill with energy, love, acceptance, and understanding.

We don't ask people to change themselves or their situations when they come through our doors. Instead, we encourage them to connect: to meet and talk to and get to know one another's families. Such interactions have helped us create diverse programs and expand geographically. Again, this is lovely. But no matter where we are, it's always the relationships formed that matter the most. There's a peace to knowing, when you walk through the doors into a room Extreme Kids oversees, that you will find a tribe who gets it—who understands the struggles you experience in a world that is constantly telling you, whether directly or indirectly, that you or your child or your family are somehow challenging, or different, or wrong.

What has become clear to me, then, as the mother of two awesome individuals and the executive director of a growing, eclectic organization, is that the isolation, fear and stress I felt parenting an autistic child was never caused by my child. It was the result of a society that does not value, accommodate, or often even tolerate neurodiversity. Finding the room in which Extreme Kids was housed was lovely; finding the people within those four walls was a miracle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'C. M. Cassaro'.

Caitlin M. Cassaro, Executive Director

“More than 75% of families report they can’t find after-school care, non-institutional community services, trained reliable home care providers, summer care, residential, respite and other services.”

- The Arc, FINDS survey, 2017

“The interactional processes of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination have relevance to the social experiences of people with disabilities and their families and that these processes can have negative consequences in their lives.”

-Living Stigma - The impact of Labeling, 2005



Through play, **Extreme Kids** increases feelings of belonging and confidence, and lowers feelings of stigma and isolation.



"I found the relationships that we made over the year were very important for both of our kids as well as for us. The fact that we could rely on seeing Sterling's face or get to connect with Sherri regularly meant our kids would be excited to engage--which is as important to our autistic child as his neurotypical brother. To us, it was about being able to have conversations about anything with the volunteers or staff or to have a moment of knowing what a particular parent is going through and knowing how to help."

- Anonymous Parent Member



FIRST TIME
VISITS

366

TOTAL
VISITS

6,110

ACTIVE
MEMBER FAMILIES

387

VISITS
SINCE 2011

30,720

VISITS PER
YEAR BY P.S.
15 AND P.S. 71
STUDENTS

1,377

963

unique visits to
Special Events: Brooklyn
Nets game, NY Transit
Museum, Ice Skating,
Outdoors for Autism,
Disability Pride
Parade.

102

new families
engaged at
Open Play

495

individual
donors

90

kids who
attended a music
or movement
class

325

unique visits to
Mostly Monthly Events:
MusicWorks concert,
ArtShack ceramics, Sensory
Painting, End of Year Potluck,
Queens County Farm and
Saori Weaving.

43

hours of parent/
caregiver programs:
Coffee & Conversation,
Cocktails & Bureaucracy,
Queens Parents and
Powerful Parents

21

volunteers

10

full and part
time staff

15

kids who
attended after-
school

2

play-spaces:
Red Hook Space &
Ridgewood Space





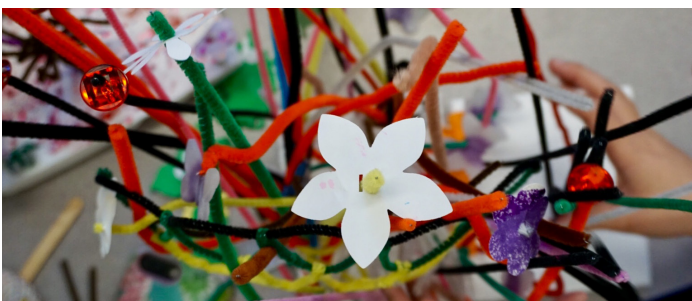
Extreme Kids & Crew believes that every child has the right to play and make art as it holds meaning to them, that every family has the right to accurate information and supports, and every employee has the right to a workplace that embraces a culture of diversity and inclusion.





Meeting children on their own level, or when the material they are learning is meaningful to them, is key to retention of information and the building of supporting relationships (trust and communication). Providing active, engaged, constructive, and interactive environments is the exact mission of **Extreme Kids & Crew**.

"I've noticed that the kids have begun to take more ownership in their motor skills, and have really grown in their abilities to use their hands as tools. It can still be tricky for them in terms of occupational use, but they're not as frustrated. I remember them as younger children being far more frustrated, so it's nice to see them have a better understanding of how to use their abilities."



-Victoria Calabro, teaching artist with Kentler International Drawing Space. Victoria joins the after-school program every other week to lead sensory-rich art projects.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AND POSITION

	2016	2017	2018
Total Support	\$421,790	\$555,921	\$593,240
Total Expenses	\$410,305	\$469,307	\$495,540
Change in Net Assets	+\$11,485	+\$86,614	+\$97,700
Net Assets Beginning of Year	\$100,421	\$111,906	\$198,520
Net Assets End of Year	\$111,906	\$198,520	\$296,220
Total Assets	\$132,953	\$215,125	\$316,009
Total Liabilities	\$21,047	\$16,605	\$19,789
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$132,953	\$215,125	\$316,009

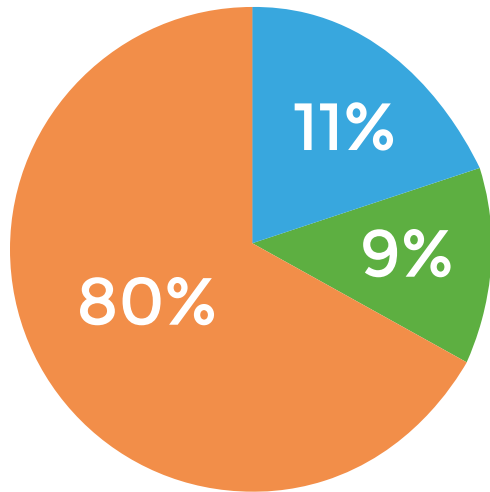
All Extreme Kids & Crew programs are free or pay-what-you-can. No one is turned away for lack of funds.

For full financial reports, please visit extremekidsandcrew.org/financial-reports/



DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCES

percentage breakdown, 2018



- program services
- fundraising
- management & general



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MS Curriculum and Teaching
Rachel Howard, LMSW

Grants, Funders and Sponsors

Brooklyn Branches Giving Circle
Budweiser (Stella Artois)
Catalog for Giving
City Council Member, Carlos Menchaca
Cowan Slavin Family Foundation
Department of Youth and Community Development
Disney
Dry Dock wine + spirits
Frank & Ruth E. Caruso Foundation
Investors Bank
Investors Foundation
Magic Pebble Foundation
Meringoff Family Foundation
Miles Ahead, an advised fund of BCF
Movers, Not Shakers
NYC Department of Cultural Affairs
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Sports 4 Life
Stephen Colbert Americone Dream Fund
TerraCRG
The Joseph H. Flom Family Foundation
The FAR Fund
The O'Connell Organization Family Foundation
Two Trees Management
Valentine Perry Snyder Fund
William J. & Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation
Youth Inc.

Partners, Teaching Artists, and Supporting Organizations

Advocates for Children
AHRC
Amy Gravino
Artshack Brooklyn
Brooklyn Academy of Music
Brooklyn Botanic Garden
Brooklyn Public Library
Cleaning with Meaning
Claire Golden
Co/Lab Theater Company
Cora Dance
Disability Pride NYC
DJ Reborn
Freddy's Bar
GallopNYC
Gary Shulman
GiGi's Playhouse New York
Grow NYC
INCLUDEnyc
Jennifer Sellar
Katrina Hazell
Kirsis Cuello
Kirsten Lindsmith
KEEN New York
Kentler International Drawing Space
LeFrak Center at Lakeside
Lloyd Miller
Mark Morris Dance Group
Marquis Studios
Melinda Burke
MusicWorks
My Circle of Girls
New York City Aquarium
New York Transit Museum
NYC Department of Education
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
New York University Silver School of Social Work
Pat Murano
Portside New York
Queens County Farm
Red Hook Houses Farm
Red Hook Initiative
Saori Arts NYC
Shauna Gray
The Sheild Institute
South Brooklyn Community High School
Speak, Learn, & Play
SUNY Downstate Department of Occupational Therapy
YAI Link

A very special thank you to:

501 Union
Amelia Wilson
Amy Herzog (2018 Felix Award recipient in theater - Playwright)
Carmen Fariña, Department of Education Chancellor
Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP
Indiana Soto and the P.S. 71 family
Lawyers Alliance for New York
Linda Kocieniewski
Nina Collins
NYPG
Peggy Madison and the P.S. 15 family
Sam Gold (2018 Felix Award recipient in theater - Director)
The Fuqua Family
Van Brunt Stillhouse
Victor Calise

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



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 with the knowledge and emotional resources they need to advocate for their children and themselves. There are many ways to contribute to your community:

- Volunteer to be a “Play Partner” to the many children visiting our spaces
- Donate and financially support the programs the organization offers
- Write for the blog, Broken and woken, and help change the perception of disability: brokenandwoken.blogspot.com

Photos: Filip Wolak (cover page, pages 5-9 and back cover) and Extreme Kids staff.

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Updated design: Polina Stepanova.

All photos taken at Extreme Kids & Crew locations or events.






Extreme Kids & Crew

71 Sullivan Street
Brooklyn, NY 11231

62-85 Forest Avenue
Ridgewood, NY 11385

347-410-6050
info@extremekidsandcrew.org
extremekidsandcrew.org

 facebook.com/extremekidsandcrew
 twitter.com/EDExtremeKids
 instagram@extreme_kids_and_crew
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