Lens on Life
Soundscapes
2020-2021 Annual Report
Dear Friends of Soundscapes,

As I reflect on the 2020-21 year, I am filled with gratitude for each of you. Because you value music and the students in our program as much as we do, you helped Soundscapes make it through the most difficult part of the COVID-19 pandemic without any gap in programming and without losing any staff members. We could not have done it without you.

Our theme for the year was *Lens on Life*. Our students and staff spent the year connecting through camera lenses and also worked hard to see the world through different “lenses” and perspectives. As a part of that process, they composed and performed “See My Friends Again,” a song that expressed their views on the dual crises of the pandemic and racial injustice, and received well deserved regional and national recognition for their work.

In July, Soundscapes assumed management of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra. Before last year, the PYO provided programming for our older and more experienced student musicians. When the PYO Board came to us saying they could no longer continue, we knew we needed to step in to keep this important 60-year-old institution alive for our students and our community.

These are just a few of the highlights from an extraordinary year. I am proud to share the rest with you through our 2020-21 annual report.

Sincerely,

Patrick B. McDermott

Chairman of the Board of Directors
About the Program

*Soundscapes* is a nonprofit youth development organization in Southeastern Virginia that uses music instruction and performance to develop life skills in students from early childhood to early adulthood. The organization provides daily after-school music programs, a regional youth orchestra, and several week-long summer camps. Through Soundscapes, youth from 1st grade through age 25 develop skills that prepare them to be today’s successful students and tomorrow’s engaged citizen artists.
A Year of Virtual Learning

Connecting Online

The virtual music education that started in March 2020 continued through June 2021. The talented teaching artists and dedicated students at Soundscapes met through Zoom for two hours after school four days per week. Concerts were also held online, with live premieres on YouTube and Facebook. For many students, Soundscapes was a support system and a creative outlet during a difficult year.

See My Friends Again

A song composed by students at Soundscapes was chosen for Carnegie Hall’s “Voice of Hope” Concert on April 28. “Voice of Hope” featured songwriters and composers of all ages who reflected on the life-affirming power of music during times of crisis. The Soundscapes song that was featured, “See My Friends Again,” was one of just 20 original compositions selected out of more than 80 submissions from musicians nationwide. The song was created through a group composition process and includes lyrics that address difficult topics like isolation and depression, police brutality, and the fear of COVID-19, but ultimately ends with a hopeful message: “Let the love shine in; I will see my friends again, see my friends again.”

Let The Love Shine In

A song composed by students at Soundscapes was chosen for Carnegie Hall’s “Voice of Hope” Concert on April 28. “Voice of Hope” featured songwriters and composers of all ages who reflected on the life-affirming power of music during times of crisis. The Soundscapes song that was featured, “See My Friends Again,” was one of just 20 original compositions selected out of more than 80 submissions from musicians nationwide. The song was created through a group composition process and includes lyrics that address difficult topics like isolation and depression, police brutality, and the fear of COVID-19, but ultimately ends with a hopeful message: “Let the love shine in; I will see my friends again, see my friends again.”
Opportunities for Older Students

In July 2020, Soundscapes brought the Peninsula Youth Orchestra under its umbrella to form a comprehensive music education program that benefits students on the Peninsula from first grade through age 25. In February 2021, Soundscapes formed a PYO chamber orchestra, which was small enough to rehearse in person and put on a concert for their families with appropriate social distancing. In addition, PYO hosted two virtual Creative Composition Weekend Workshops for students across the mid-Atlantic states, which were funded through a grant from Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. Soundscapes also received a grant in FY21 from Impact 100 that will allow PYO to re-launch a full in-person program in fall 2021 with a string orchestra and wind band for intermediate student musicians and a full symphony orchestra for advanced musicians. We can’t wait to return to live public performances!
Leadership from Families

To give students and families a greater voice in organizational leadership, Soundscapes created a Student Parent Advisory Council. Two members of the newly formed council — student Hunter Bernsed and parent Shanara Gwaltney — have also joined the Soundscapes Board of Directors as full voting members. The council’s purpose is to provide guidance and feedback to Soundscapes’ staff and Board.

SPA Council Members

SHAMEL SYKES
Parent/SPA Chair

SHANARA GWALTNEY
Parent/SPA Vice Chair/Board Member

HUNTER BURNSDE
Student/Board Member

EMMA THOMAS
Student/SPA Secretary

AMELIA CARO
Parent

JORDAN HILL
Student

LANASIA WALLS
Student
Family Profile: Shanara and DeAndre

Eleven-year-old DeAndre Ward has been a part of Soundscapes for more than 5 years. He first joined because he saw his sister in Soundscapes and he also wanted to learn to play an instrument. It took him several tries to find the right one — he first tried flute and trombone — but he now plays trumpet and loves the high sounds it can make.

Like all Soundscapes students, DeAndre took part in the program virtually from March 2020 through June 2021. Even though he says he’s gotten used to virtual learning, he admits he prefers being in person. “When you're together, you can actually hear when it sounds better,” he shares. Learning online can sometimes be frustrating, especially when it’s hard to hear or connections are dropped. DeAndre is eager to go back and hug all his friends, and to be able to play with them and do all the normal things.

DeAndre’s mother, Shanara Gwaltney, is a part of the Student-Parent Advisory Council and a new member of the Board of Directors. She has been interested in Soundscapes for a while, and the timing worked well for her to step into a leadership position this year. As a parent, Shanara sees the benefits of participating in Soundscapes first hand.

“It creates structure,” she shares. “He stays on task more. It's all of the little things that they teach outside of music...the little pieces that you don’t pay attention to that are being taught along with the music, they play a big role,” Shanara explains. “It teaches them a lot of responsibility.”

It’s all of the little things that they teach outside of music
Student Accomplishments

Congratulations

We are so proud of the students who earned medals in spring for being a part of Soundscapes for 5 or 10 years!

- **JORDAN HILL**  
  Cello

- **EMMA THOMAS**  
  Viola

- **ESABELLA BURNSED**  
  Flute

- **JALIYAH DEANS**  
  Trumpet

- **NOAH HILL**  
  Flute

- **JALIYAH STEWART**  
  Clarinet

- **SANIYA HUNDELY-SWEENEY**  
  Trumpet

The Briggs Scholarship Fund

Five student musicians received James F. and Mary Winston J. Briggs Scholarships to attend the Hampton Roads Chamber Players Summer Camp in June 2021.

The Briggs Scholarship Fund was established by the Petters Family Foundation to allow students to take part in extraordinary opportunities for musical growth outside of Soundscapes’ regular programming.

The student participants were:

- **CHRISTINE PARK**  
  Violin

- **CHLOE PARK**  
  Violin

- **TYLER PICKETT**  
  Violin

- **EMMA THOMAS**  
  Viola

- **NEVEAH STARKS**  
  Viola
Financial Details

Income for FY21

- **INDIVIDUALS**: 5%
- **PAYROLL PROTECTION PLAN/EMPLOYEE RETENTION CREDIT**: 29%
- **FOUNDATIONS**: 19%
- **BUSINESSES**: 20%
- **PUBLIC/GOVERNMENT**: 20%
- **SPECIAL EVENTS (NET)**: 7%

Expenses for FY21

- **PROGRAM**: 75%
- **ADMINISTRATION**: 15%
- **FUNDRAISING**: 10%
Our Supporters

Golf Tournament

Most of Soundscapes’ fundraising events were canceled in FY21 due to the pandemic, which made the golf tournament all the more exciting! Our generous sponsors and players raised over $50,000 for our students, making the FY21 golf tournament the most successful one yet. We are especially grateful for presenting sponsor Patten, Wornom, Hatten & Diamonstein.
Gratitude for Donors

This year was the most unusual in our history, but your support made it possible for Soundscapes to continue providing music education for our students without cutting any programming or losing any of our incredibly talented staff members. We are deeply grateful to each and every one of you for supporting us during the most trying of times.

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<td>John &amp; Rose Garrett</td>
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<td>Huntington Ingalls Industries — Newport News Shipbuilding</td>
<td>IECA Foundation</td>
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<td>James R. Knight</td>
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<td>The Rona Jaffe Foundation</td>
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<td>Ward Scull</td>
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BRONZE

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Charles & Mari Ann Banks  
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Kiwanis Club of Greater Hilton  
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Wilson & Ann Cooper  
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Dorothy & Lake Critzer  
Marilen Crump  
Michael Curry  
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Paul Danehy & Shelly Simonds  
Sue Danehy  
Libby & Buddy David  
David Dirlam  
Jenna Eppink  
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Gordon Gentry, Jr.  
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James Gray  
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Nancy Jones Trimble  
Burke King  
Nicholas Kirkpatrick  
Margaret LaBell  
Urja Lansing  
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Michael & Kathy Monteith  
Beth & Ed Moore  
John & Amine Morgan  
Myfanwy & Peter Morgan  
Nancy Moseley  
Judith Myers  
Amy Nathan
Jim & Ellen Neff
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Amy Zakrzewski Watson

*Deceased

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Sue Danehy
David Hamilton
Robert R. Hatten
Judith Hilburger
Wilford & Kristie Holcombe
Lou Tiller Joyner
Kathrin Loeffert
Jeannine Moga
Valerie Wallace
Bobby & Joy Walters

IN-KIND
Dear Friends,

It is a joy to return to live teaching, rehearsing and performing again, as schools re-opened in September 2021 to in-person classes. After bonding through virtual lessons, recordings, and concerts together, the students are even more excited than we are to be reunited.

During the 18 months that our programs were virtual, we had fewer opportunities for recruitment, so this year and the next will certainly be rebuilding years. However, we are well on our way and expect to be back on a growth trajectory very soon.

Our acquisition of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra in July 2020 was a milestone that effectively completes a continuum of education for Soundscapes musicians, from early childhood through young adulthood. This fall we have re-launched all three components of the PYO — wind band, string orchestra, and symphony orchestra — and have found a home at The American Theatre in Hampton for this year’s concerts. Now that PYO is under the Soundscapes umbrella, we look forward to redefining what a youth orchestra can be!

To prepare for a new period of growth, we will be exploring ways to reach more students and make our programming model more efficient through a study funded by a generous grant from the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters Foundation. We expect to have results to share with you in next year’s annual report.

There are exciting years ahead! Thank you for being a part of our journey.

Anne W. Henry
Co-founder and Executive Director

Reynaldo Ramirez
Co-founder and Program Director
How to Support Soundscapes Now

Generous community supporters like you to make our program possible. To learn about volunteer opportunities, instrument donation, and specific ways to give, like the Encore Club and the Yaffa Howell Music Fund, please visit the Soundscapes website. We always welcome questions from our supporters and friends.

Contact Carol Minter anytime at 757-273-6178 ext. 5 or cminter@soundscapeshr.org to learn more.

Make a Gift

The vast majority of students at Soundscapes are considered economically disadvantaged, which is why our daily program is FREE to all participants and PYO is offered on a sliding scale. You make our program possible with your generous support!

For individual gifts of at least $500 and corporate gifts of at least $616, we are pleased to offer Neighborhood Assistance Program state tax credits worth 65% of your donation. That means the out-of-pocket cost of a $1,000 donation would be only $350. NAP tax credits are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please call to confirm availability before making your gift.

Donate an Instrument

Do you have an instrument hidden away in a closet or under a bed that hasn't been played in a while? Consider donating it to Soundscapes! For students from low-income households, purchasing or renting an instrument can be a significant barrier, which is why we provide free instruments for all students in the program.

Volunteer Your Time

We provide volunteer opportunities to suit your needs, whether you are looking for a regular commitment to work with the students during weekday afternoons, a one-time volunteer opportunity during an event, or something in between. Let us know your interests and availability, and we will be glad to find a way for you to get involved!

We always welcome questions from our supporters and friends.
Use the QR code or visit soundscapes.org/FY21AR to see an interactive version of this report, including videos of student performances, a Carnegie Hall concert featuring an original Soundscapes composition, and an NNPS-TV feature on Soundscapes.