



GROWING TOGETHER THROUGH ARTS, LEARNING, AND FAITH

Annual Report

2012-2013



Growth at Beacon 2012-2013:

Over the course of October 2012 to September 2013, the life and work of Beacon continued to expand in exciting ways. In addition to our art and literacy programs, we created a raised bed garden, prepared and served our own food from the garden harvest, hosted community groups in our space, and began a collaboration with Blackboard Labs to offer a new after school studio program: a hip hop writing and recording. The community of folks involved in Beacon grew in both numbers and investments of time, in-kind donations, financial support, and service.



One of many tomato harvests during the summer of 2013

Worship:

Since moving upstairs into the sanctuary Beacon's faith community continues to grow. We average 20-25 folks in worship with a core group of folks on a regular basis as well as frequent visitors. Children of the neighborhood have begun to attend worship, often coming on their own. We've been challenged to craft a worship experience that gives them room to learn, hear, and be heard. In fall of 2013 we made the decision to move worship from 10:00am on Sundays to 5:00pm. We hope to welcome in even more folks this way. We also have big dreams of offering dinner after worship on Sundays as an extension of communion, and we are starting small with a monthly potluck dinner.



Becca and Shane writing prayers during worship

Community Cultivation, Art, and Literacy:

Our 2013 Summer Studio kicked off with an exciting special Photography Camp taught by J.J. Tiziou, an extremely talented local artist with national renown. His mural “How Philly Moves” was recently installed on the side of the Philadelphia International Airport. 10 participants learned the basics of photography and began to translate their perceptions of themselves and their neighborhood into images. We are grateful for J.J.’s time and for the way his work and creative process taught us to see ourselves.

From there, the rest of the 2013 Summer Studio added several exciting



new components. Community groups, one of our interns, and our program participants

assisted in building, planting, and harvesting vegetables from our very own raised bed garden. We collaborated with Broad Street Ministry to prepare healthy, fresh meals in their ServSafe kitchen and transport the meals to Beacon. We offered breakfast and lunch two days a week for eight weeks, for a total of 314 meals. Through the food program, students were invited to engage creatively with food, making their own pickles, pretzels, natural soda, and learning fun ways to enjoy healthy eating. These same participants went on to write creative stories and study famous artists along with their signature techniques. We concluded the summer with an art show open to the

community that welcomed over 100 guests.



In the fall of 2012 we launched our Story Studio after school program and saw quantitative and qualitative success. During our time with children ages 5-12, we noticed an increased facility with language as well as what is a still growing interest in writing and self-expression, both during our program, and in school (as per parental reports). Our weekly format consists of Co-Director Karen Rohrer teaching a short lesson, followed by all 10-13 students writing in their own writing stations throughout the room, assisted and guided by a team of creative, loving adult volunteers. Participants are then given the chance to share their stories with the group, and often do so with great enthusiasm and pride in their work.

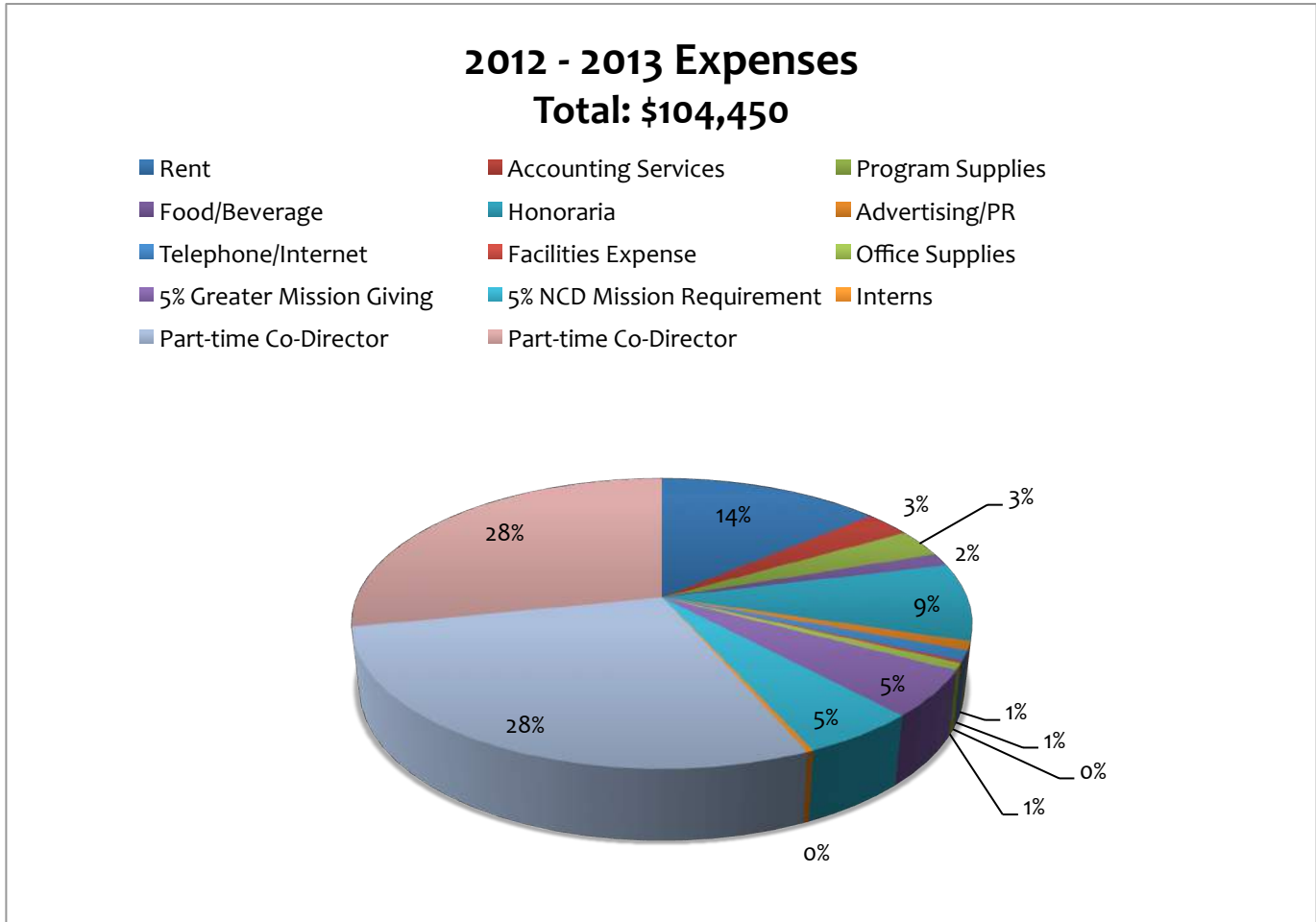
Our afterschool art studio saw tremendous growth in 2012. What began in 2011 as 5-10 participants is now holding steady at an average of 20 participants per session. Curriculum is developed and taught by our Co-Director, Rebecca Blake, who weaves her art education and pastoral skills to both instruct participants and volunteers about a particular project and facilitate a group dynamic that fosters wholeness and healthy relationships. We have made strides to increase our volunteer support with this program, with great success. Church partners, neighbors, high school and college students join us on a weekly basis to provide a safe, loving, and attentive environment for children who so desperately need the care and investment of their community.

Wednesday evenings, after the whirlwind of 20 children painting their pictures, their tables, and sometimes themselves dies down, the Studio at Beacon opens again for an adults-only open art studio. In contrast to our afterschool programming, this open studio provides a relaxing, quiet time and space for adults from the neighborhood to work on self-determined projects, with inspiration and guidance coming not only from our Co-Director Rebecca but from each other as well. Barriers of class and culture are overcome as participants stretch their creative muscles to work on projects that range from quilting to scrapbooking to meditative mandala creation. Wednesday evening art studio began in the spring of 2012 and now averages 10-15 participants a week.

All of our programs are free and open to all, as we are aware that charging even a nominal fee would prevent very vulnerable individuals from experiencing and benefitting from voice-cultivation, creative expression, and time spent in a safe space with invested adults. Through our work with participants in the after school studios, as well as recruiting both volunteers for our afterschool programs and participants for the adult open studio, we have seen our mission fulfilled in neighbors from a variety of backgrounds opening themselves to knowing and being known by each other, and in that community building, realizing their own creative voices, inherent worth, and collaborative gifts.

Budget 2012-2013:

Beacon's fiscal year runs October to October, so the below information offers a picture of the two budgets in place for the calendar year in question.



Income	Amount
Covenant Fund	20,000.00
Eugene Bay Fund	30,000.00
Connelly Foundation	2,025.00
New Church Development Grant PC(USA)	25,000.00
Presbytery of Philadelphia	12,500.00
Synod of the Trinity	12,500.00
Individual Donors	1,000.00
Worship/Offering	2801.78
Furniture and Equipment Sold	400.00
Total	\$104,201.78

Staffing:

Our 2 part time Co-Directors have been hard at work to build a sustainable and impactful staffing structure at Beacon. The paid staff at Beacon this year consisted of 2 Co-Directors (both part time), a shifting Sunday musical team, one 10 hour a week work study student for office administration, one full time summer intern from Princeton Theological Seminary, and newly this fall, one 10 hour a week intern from Princeton. As we build capacity, we are excited to participate in the training and formation of seminary students for creative and innovative ministry and to foster teaching and nonprofit management skills for a University of the Arts student. We continue to host several dedicated regular volunteers, including former teachers, Eastern University students, nonprofit workers, storytellers, artists, and more.

Looking Ahead:

This fall we begin a formal partnership with Blackboard Labs, a local nonprofit that initiates social change by empowering Philadelphia youth through innovative creative arts programming rooted in hip-hop culture. This program will reach our older students, extending our continuum of education and investment to students who have grown beyond our arts and writing programs.

In the new fiscal year, Beacon will shift our worship service to 5pm Sunday evenings, as we work to make our service as open and welcoming as possible to individuals and families in our neighborhood. This time change also allows us to host dinner following our worship service, inviting community and extending the nourishment of the communion table beyond the formal worship service.

As we continue to reclaim the building as a space in service to the neighborhood, Beacon will focus on raising funds for building repairs and hosting several work groups from a variety of contexts to continue the building improvements undertaken this year. This year the men's restroom received a new floor and a rebuilt wall and, in the next few months, will be fully operational. The installation of a new heater is planned for fall 2013 as well as several wall repairs.

We met our fund raising goal for the Lights on Cumberland Street Project via individual donations as well as a successful IndieGoGo campaign, and construction is set to begin in late fall 2013 and we hope to have the work complete by early 2014.

We could not do this work without the support of communities and individuals like you.

Join us in the adventure that awaits us in 2013-2014.

For More Information:

Contact Rebecca or Karen at any time by emailing them at: thewordatbeacon@gmail.com

Check out our website: thewordatbeacon.org for more detailed information about our mission, programs, and staff.

Follow us on Facebook for weekly updates: facebook.com/thewordatbeacon

To volunteer with us at the Story Studio or Art Studio, every Tuesday and Wednesday from 4-6pm, contact Rebecca at 267 702 0804 or rblake910@gmail.com.

To support Beacon with in-kind donations or financial giving, go to our website and click “Support Beacon” for more information.

Join us:

Every Tuesday for Story Studio from 4-6pm

Every Wednesday for Art Studio from 4-6pm and 6:30-8:30pm (adults only)

Every Thursday for Hip-Hop Writing Studio from 4-6pm

Every Sunday for worship at 5:00pm

We are located at:

2364 E Cumberland Street

Philadelphia, PA 19125