

2023



From the TRUSTEES

DEAR FRIENDS,

Welcome to the 2023 Bee Vradenburg Foundation annual report. We are proud to engage the entire Pikes Peak Region in advancing the arts as the soul of our thriving community. We thank you for taking time to read this report, and in so doing, envisioning how we may work together to further the power of the arts.

As Bee herself was fond of saying, "[Good art] is across this country in every community. In every community there are excellent things being done. And YOU need to get out there and see it, and watch it, and hear it."

A thriving arts community is the product of many people caring, participating and listening to one another, united by the belief that the arts provide a unique and irreplaceable benefit to our shared lived experience. Bee Vradenburg understood the importance of supporting that shared experience with the arts in the places we live. Carrying forward that legacy, we are guided by the vision of an inclusive and vibrant Pikes Peak community where *everyone* can experience belonging and connection through the arts.

This past year we took another important step toward this vision: The Foundation board completed a strategic plan that centers equity and inclusion across our work to advance the relevance, resilience and greatness of arts in the Pikes Peak Region. By promoting access to music, dance, visual arts and cultural expression throughout this increasingly diverse region, we intend to provide an ongoing demonstration of the power of the arts to build an even more vibrant and resilient community.

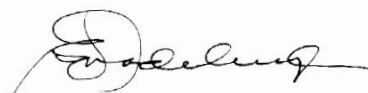
It is our intent that this strategic plan will allow the Foundation to serve as an ever more accountable and empowering voice for the evolution of arts philanthropy in these dynamic times. To that end, Bee Vradenburg Foundation is proud to present the following strategic priorities as a framework for the ongoing collaborative effort to advance the vital role of arts and culture in our region:

- 1 Leverage the Foundation's reputation and expertise to increase support for historically underrepresented artists and communities.**
- 2 Invest in catalytic and innovative work that expands inclusive access to the arts for all people within the Pikes Peak Region.**
- 3 Promote equitable and inclusive grantmaking practices for the greater benefit of arts and culture organizations in the Pikes Peak Region.**

Throughout this report you will see evidence of how this vision and these priorities are already being threaded into our work and making impact within the arts and culture sector we have sought to serve since 2002. We welcome your ideas and suggestions on how we can best advance these goals and bring our broader and more diverse community together. We very much look forward to your partnership in ensuring the arts continue to play a vital role in our region's way of life in the years to come.

FOR THE ARTS,




GEORGE VRADENBURG III
Board Chair




PHILLIP A. KENDALL
Board President

EMERGING ARTS LEADERS INITIATIVE

In 2023 the Foundation continued to invest in equity-focused work through its Emerging Arts Leaders Initiative (EALI), which engages arts leaders from marginalized communities in accomplishing project-based professional development goals. EALI addresses the vital role of creative leadership in driving resiliency and growth for the arts, asking emerging leaders to consider: What do YOU need to benefit your community through the arts?

With holistic, tailored support from BVF staff, trustees and partners, EALI provides emerging leaders room to plan, fail constructively, and pursue the full scope of their vision. Long-term, EALI will help to build a more diverse pool of professional creatives ready to serve on boards, drive policy, and lead mainstay arts organizations.

BVF's 2023 Emerging Arts Leaders were Ashley Cornelius, Pikes Peak Poet Laureate and co-founder of Poetry719, and Moni Hernandez, CEO of VIVA Marketing and co-founder of the Fiestas Patrias Hispanic heritage festival. Both leaders identified and pursued ambitious professional development goals to increase their impact as arts and culture changemakers. Through EALI, Ashley managed the transition from a career in clinical healthcare to full-time work as a freelance creative, completing a mural, publishing a book of original poems, participating in Colorado Springs Leadership Institute, and hosting a free workshop on the role of the arts in self-care that received national media coverage and sparked further examination of how historic inequities impact the mental health of people of color. Meanwhile, Moni secured competitive statewide arts grants, forged new partnerships with cultural and higher education institutions, and honed VIVA's value proposition as a social impact business promoting cultural pride for Southern Colorado Hispanic communities while assisting young women from challenged circumstances in advancing their careers.

Artists who have been involved in the Emerging Arts Leaders Initiative say that while they always knew they had the potential to accomplish their goals, Bee Vradenburg Foundation was instrumental in helping them to realize those goals on a shorter timeline. We are continually grateful to these leaders for trusting us with their artistic vision and allowing us to come alongside them in their transformative community-serving work.



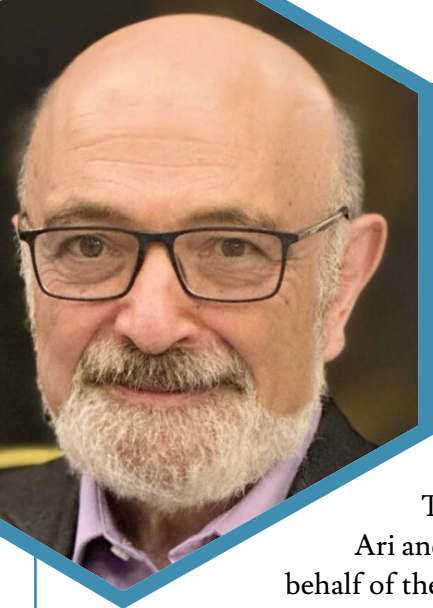
ASHLEY CORNELIUS

MONI HERNANDEZ



If you know a community-spirited artist who has encountered identity-based barriers in their mission to benefit others through their art, we encourage you to get in touch with executive director Claire Swinford to discuss participation in EALI.

claire@beevradenburgfoundation.org
719-477-0185



BEE AN ARTS CHAMPION

The Bee an Arts Champion Award, presented by Bee Vradenburg Foundation, honors the legacy of Bee Vradenburg by recognizing individuals who have demonstrated sustained, passionate, and innovative leadership toward advancing the arts in the Pikes Peak Region. The award includes an honorary grant to an organization of the recipient's choice.

This year the Foundation board chose to recognize Nasit Ari and Charlease Elzenga-Bobo for their many years of work on behalf of the Chamber Orchestra of the Springs, which celebrated its 40th anniversary season in 2023-24. The trustees especially commend

Charlease and Nasit's long-term commitment to both the visionary effort of board strategy and hands-on volunteering – a combination particularly valuable and impactful in small arts organizations with limited staff hours. The steady, responsible growth trajectory of this organization over many years is to their credit. The board also appreciates Nasit and Charlease's dedication to backing artistic leadership in highlighting new works and diverse repertoire. The Chamber Orchestra tackles ambitious projects, such as *Enough: Voices Against Abuse* and *Blind Injustice*, that succeed in part thanks to robust community partnerships, and many hours of legwork have gone into these and other successes. Our region and our arts sector are richer thanks to their steadfast service.

NASIT ARI



CHARLEASE ELZENGA-BOBO

INTERSHIPS

Paid internship placements through the Foundation provide students the opportunity to gain skills for arts careers, diversifying the field of young professionals ready to take on leadership roles in the community.

In 2023 the Foundation provided grants to UCCS Theatreworks and Green Box Arts to hire UCCS students Livia Demopoulos and Abraham Guevara. Livia developed and implemented community outreach strategies for Theatreworks' free traveling summer Shakespeare production, while Abraham worked with internationally respected sculptors and place-based artists to plan and execute the installation of their work as part of the Green Box Arts Festival.

Said intern Abraham Guevara of his experience at Green Box, "I am incredibly grateful for the support, encouragement, and guidance I received throughout my internship. The experience has not only broadened my horizons but has also left an indelible mark on my career aspirations. I am excited to carry forward the insights and skills gained from this experience as I embark on the next chapter of my journey in the world of art administration."

Foundation INITIATIVES



CLAIRE SWINFORD

A VOICE FOR THE ARTS

In addition to grantmaking, Bee Vradenburg Foundation is deeply committed to promoting the sustainability of the arts and culture sector and expanding awareness of its assets. Through thoughtful partnership with other funders, the Foundation more than doubled its grantmaking impact in 2023, with an additional \$201,000 from other funders going to BVF-funded projects and organizations based on promotion by Foundation staff.

Foundation trustees serve the arts as volunteers, board members and patrons, and executive director Claire Swinford serves the arts community in a variety of ways:

- ▶ Co-chair of the Philanthropy Colorado Arts and Culture Funder peer group
- ▶ Arts & Culture Pathway lead for the Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC's Connect COS program
- ▶ Member of the UCCS Galleries of Contemporary Art (GOCA) advisory board
- ▶ Member of search committee to hire new UCCS GOCA director
- ▶ Member of the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum programs committee
- ▶ Panelist for Colorado Creative Industries (CCI) creative district recertification process
- ▶ Panelist for Philanthropy Colorado Arts and Culture Funders talkback session at 2023 CCI Summit
- ▶ Panelist for Arts in Society grants adjudication process
- ▶ Exhibiting artist at Kreuser Gallery and Surface Gallery

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\$201,000

from other funders going to BVF-funded projects and organizations

APPROACH TO EQUITABLE GRANTMAKING

In 2023 the board of trustees completed a year-long process to compose a new strategic plan for Bee Vradenburg Foundation, incorporating best practices for centering equity, diversity, inclusion and access at every level of the Foundation's internal and external work. The plan includes dozens of concrete, measurable action steps toward equitable practices and trust-based philanthropy. Foundation board and staff are guided by five core tenets to ensure BVF grantmaking succeeds in celebrating and ensuring the sustainability of a diverse spectrum of arts and culture activities and fostering a broadly inclusive and more just Pikes Peak Region.

ACCESSIBLE

The Foundation is an active partner and seeks out opportunities to engage with and support its community. The Foundation's grantmaking processes are approachable and straightforward.

TRANSPARENT

The Foundation communicates regularly with its community and ensures that all decision-making processes are clear, consistent, and fair.

ACCOUNTABLE

The Foundation regularly seeks and incorporates feedback from its community within its practices. The Foundation recognizes its position of power and proactively addresses feedback openly, thoughtfully and in partnership with its community.

FLEXIBLE

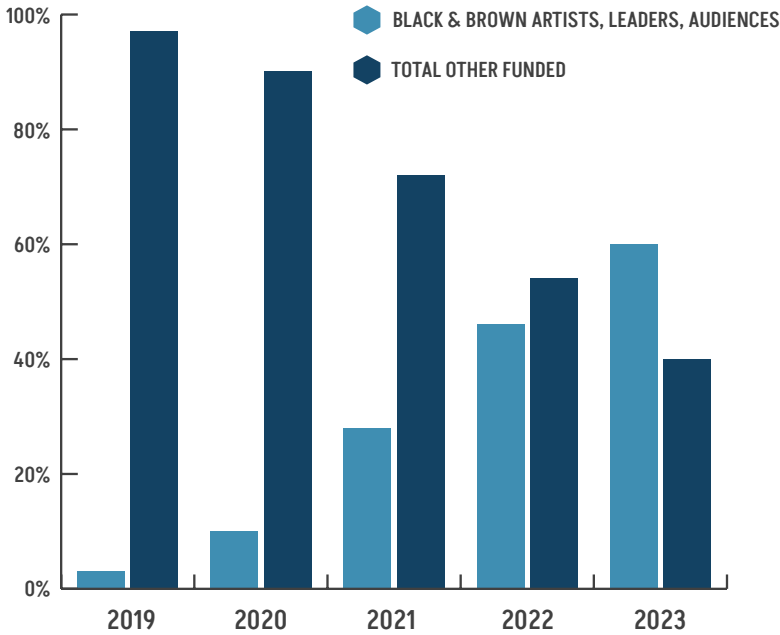
The Foundation listens to and responds to the shifting needs and challenges within its community and adjusts its grantmaking and decision-making when needed.

TRUSTWORTHY

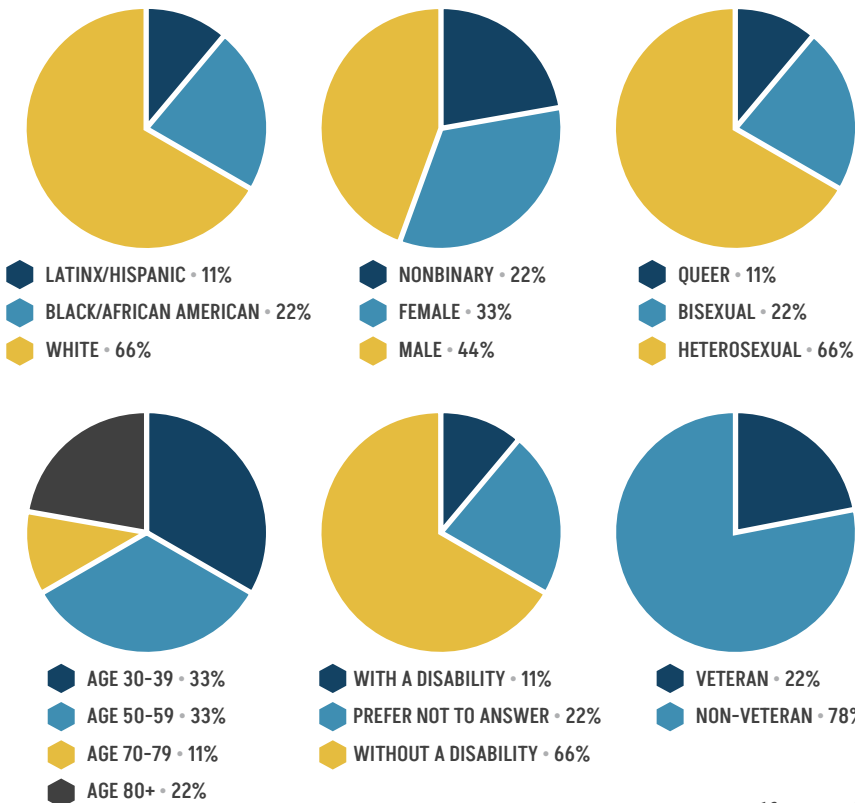
The Foundation trusts its community to know what is best and demonstrates that it is invested in its community's long-term success and sustainability. The Foundation follows through on its commitments.

TOWARD EQUITY IN THE ARTS

The following graphics show the Foundation's progress on internal goals: to diversify its leadership in a meaningful way and to increase grant funding for Black and Brown artists, arts leaders, and audiences by 10 percentage points annually until such grants make up at least one-third of the Foundation's annual giving. For both commitments, the Foundation holds itself accountable by publishing progress reports regularly.



BVF 2023 BOARD & STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS*



*self-reported

Bee Vradenburg Foundation is proud to demonstrate that over half of its grants given in 2023 supported organizations and projects that included participants of color. Up from just three percent of projects in 2019, more Foundation-funded projects now reflect the contributions of Black and Brown community members in some way. This can be attributed to our community's growing awareness of the importance of using and tracking the effectiveness of inclusionary strategies as part of their overall work, as well as the Foundation's ongoing promotion of such strategies as vital components of relevance, resilience and greatness in the arts.

While this number is significant in aggregate, much room for progress remains. Bee Vradenburg Foundation envisions an inclusive and vibrant Pikes Peak community where *everyone* can experience belonging and connection through the arts.

GRANTMAKING

TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED IN 2023:

\$134,000

not inclusive of Symphonic Music Fund

PASSING THE TORCH

In 2023 Bee Vradenburg Foundation made its largest grant to date as it transferred \$589,909 in assets to the Colorado Springs Philharmonic Foundation. Formerly known as the Symphonic Music Fund, these monies were held by BVF for 15 years following the dissolution of the Colorado Springs Symphony. They now form the base of the Bee Vradenburg Fund at the Colorado Springs Philharmonic Foundation, continuing to honor Bee's legacy by supporting the work of the Philharmonic into its second century. The transfer of the fund to CSPF shows an abiding faith in the organization and its future as the backbone of symphonic music in our region.



- PROGRAM
- GENERAL OPERATING
- PROJECT
- OUTREACH
- CHALLENGE
- CAPITAL

¹ Grant Awarded by Bee an Arts Champion honorees

² BVF Internship Host Organization

Funding PROCESS

BEE VRADENBURG FOUNDATION GOALS

- 1 Advocate for arts and arts education as a vital part of the region's economy and quality of life.
- 2 Support emerging and diverse artists, art forms, audiences, and artistic endeavors.
- 3 Foster growth and resilience for arts organizations that are part of the cultural fabric of the region.
- 4 Build organizational capacity of arts groups.
- 5 Cultivate partnerships with businesses and funders to leverage new financial resources for the arts.

ELIGIBILITY

Organizations may apply for funding once per year. All organizations applying to the Foundation must:

- Be a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization; or be an arts-oriented project or organization under the fiscal sponsorship of a 501(c)(3) organization.
- Be based in and serve the Pikes Peak Region, defined as El Paso County and the Ute Pass corridor of Teller County to include Woodland Park.
- Have an active employment nondiscrimination policy signed by the board chair that is inclusive of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental handicap, veteran status and marital status.

INELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

The following activities or organizations are ineligible for funding from the Foundation:

- Individual artists or art students.
- Organizations that are not 501(c)(3) nonprofits or under the fiscal sponsorship of a nonprofit.
- Performances or arts events designed primarily as fundraisers for non-arts organizations.

GRANT SIZES

Grants are based on the size of an organization's budget.

Organizations with prior-year or current-year revenues of \$50,000 or less may request

UP TO
\$2,500
PER YEAR

UP TO
\$15,000
PER YEAR

may be requested by organizations with prior-year or current-year revenues of more than \$50,000.

Organizations applying for capital support should contact the Foundation before submitting a request.

GRANTS FOR EQUITY IN THE ARTS

In an era defined by social change, Bee Vradenburg Foundation is eager to contribute to artistic endeavors that respond to, or are inspired by, the lived experience of marginalized communities. Please contact the Foundation to learn more about funding opportunities.

TO APPLY FOR A GRANT

Grant application forms are available at BeeVradenburgFoundation.org. Applicants may submit applications by mail, in person, or via email. For email applications, please combine the entire application in a single PDF attachment.

DEADLINES

Applications are accepted year-round but must be received **Jan. 15, Apr. 15, Jul. 15** or **Oct. 15** to be considered during quarterly trustee meetings. When those dates fall on a holiday or weekend, the first weekday thereafter applies.

BOARD & STAFF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



CHAIR
George A. Vradenburg III
(he/him)



PRESIDENT
Phillip A. Kendall
(he/him)



TREASURER
Libby Rittenberg
(she/her)



SECRETARY
Susan Edmondson
(she/her)



TRUSTEE
Victoria Lipscomb
(they/them)



TRUSTEE
Kevin Mitchell
(he/they)



TRUSTEE
David Siegel
(he/him)



TRUSTEE
Lynn Vidler
(they/them)

TRUSTEE EMERITA
Alissa Vradenburg
(she/her)

TRUSTEE EMERITUS
Tyler Vradenburg
(he/him)

STAFF



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Claire Swinford
(she/her)

FINANCIALS

FYE Dec. 31, 2023

\$3,622,813

FAIR MARKET VALUE OF INVESTMENTS

\$363,524

EXPENSES &
DISBURSEMENTS

Pursuant to IRS disclosure requirements, copies of Bee Vradenburg Foundation's Form 990-PF are available by contacting the office.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Authored by Debbie Howell (Pawnee/Dakota), used with permission from the Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region.

The Pikes Peak Region is situated on the ancestral homeland of the Ute Peoples, who are the Southern Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Northern Ute. Other tribes who lived and hunted on this land include the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, and Apache. Even through forced relocation and land dispossession, the land still holds Ute traditions, language, stories, and history. Today, Indigenous people from many Native nations reside here and continue to make significant contributions to our community.

Bee Vradenburg Foundation ties acknowledgement to action by working toward consistent funding for, and respectful relationships with, Indigenous artists and arts patrons.

CONTACT

Bee Vradenburg Foundation is a proud member of the Philanthropy Collective, located at 315 E. Pikes Peak Ave., #120 in Downtown Colorado Springs. Get in touch by calling 719-477-0185 or emailing claire@beevradenburgfoundation.org.

IMAGE CREDITS

BVF thanks the following entities for the use of their images:

TITLE PAGE

*Ballet Folklorico de Barajas dancer
image courtesy of Ballet Folklorico de Barajas*

*Chamber Orchestra of the Springs harpist
image by Isaiah Downing*

*Graffiti artist Fuse
image courtesy of the Cultural Office of the
Pikes Peak Region*