



**SITAR**  
ARTS CENTER



# 2025 IMPACT REPORT

OUR MISSION IN ACTION



25  
YEARS OF

BUILDING A  
CREATIVE  
COMMUNITY  
OF LEARNING  
AND BELONGING



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: **KAI DIXON**

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN D.C. YOUTH HAVE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY?

In 2023, a motivated 9th grader eager to make her mark stepped inside Sitar Arts Center for the first time. **Kai Dixon's first project—painting a mural with her peers at Meridian Public Charter School—wasn't just another art project;** it was a moment that unlocked endless possibilities.

Welcomed by a vibrant creative community, Kai next dove into **Arts Afterschool, Sitar's Emerging Arts Leaders, and Summer Mural Internship**, programs. Each experience guided her development as both an artist and a leader. Immersed in graphic design, Kai's dedication and talent shone through—earning her **first place in the Young Adult category of Sitar's 14th Annual Patricia Sitar Juried Exhibition.**

In the summer of 2025, **Kai secured a coveted internship at Touchstone Gallery through Sitar's Bloomberg Arts Internship program.** Her internship expanded into a year-long journey, where she gained hands-on professional experience and a new vision for her future.

Her accomplishments took her even further. That fall, she was **invited to represent Sitar and present at the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals Youth Symposium in New Orleans.** There, Kai inspired her audience by sharing her perspective on youth workforce development and the role of the arts in preparing young people for future careers.

Now, the journey that began with a single mural is carrying **Kai to the Maryland Institute College of Art, where she will step boldly into the next chapter** of her creative life.

Kai's story shows us **what's possible when young people have access** to arts education, a community rooted in belonging, and real pathways to a career of their dreams.

At Sitar, D.C. youth find their voices, nurture their talents, and envision limitless futures—just like Kai.



  
**6,000+**  
young people have engaged in arts education and career training at Sitar since 2000.

## OUR MISSION

Since 2000, Sitar Arts Center has engaged over 6,000\* children, teens and young adults in building a **creative community of learning and belonging that removes financial and cultural barriers** to arts education and career training. What began as a bold commitment to equity has grown into a leading model for creative youth development, rooted in equitable access to the arts.

As Washington, D.C.'s only nonprofit delivering affordable, **high-impact arts education across all major disciplines** and creative career programs, Sitar expands access to opportunity for young people facing socioeconomic barriers. **Eighty percent of youth come from households at 60% or less of the Area Median Family Income**, with over half at 30% or less. Seventy percent live in Wards 1, 4, and 5, where access to the arts remains limited and urgently needed.

Sitar closes this gap through **year-round, quality programming**. At Sitar, D.C. youth build confidence, develop skills, form meaningful connections, and envision themselves as future leaders in the arts and beyond. Our work is made possible by a community of volunteers, faculty, and supporters who believe access to the arts is essential. Together with our young people, we create a **space where all youth, regardless of background belong, aspire, and achieve**.

\*unique individuals



**55,000**  
collective youth learning hours estimated in 2025



**3.8 out of 4**  
Average student rating when asked "Do you like coming to Sitar"



# ENGAGING DC YOUTH

Every studio moment, performance minute, and internship day is a strategic investment in D.C. youth. **For 25 years, Sitar has unlocked access to artistic discovery and professional opportunity**, equipping hundreds of youth each year with the skills, confidence, and community needed to thrive at every stage of development.

**404** | youth, **ages 0-24**, enrolled in Early Childhood Arts, Arts Afterschool, and Instrumental Music Academy programs.

**139** | youth, **ages 6-14**, enrolled in Camp Sitar.

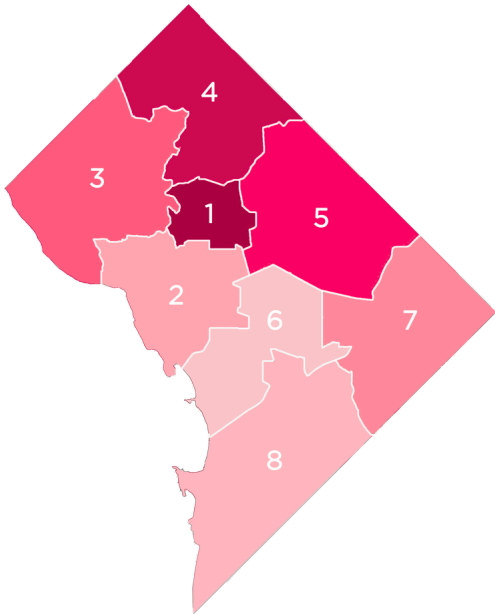
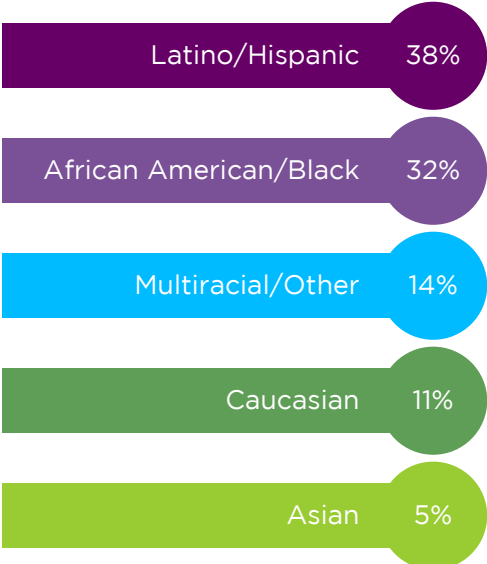
**159** | teens and young adults, **ages 14-24**, participated in Creative Career Programs.

**“I woke up and I caught her watching “Hamilton” ... because she had to learn the song that they had given her in musical theater.**

Now she’s been exposed, which is **what it’s all about, right? Exposure. So she sees herself in a different way now**, which is what I love about Sitar.”

— Danyelle H., Sitar Parent

**80%** of youth are from households at 60% or less of the Area Median Family Income.



- Ward 1** | 40%
- Ward 2** | 5%
- Ward 3** | 6%
- Ward 4** | 21%
- Ward 5** | 12%
- Ward 6** | 4%
- Ward 7** | 8%
- Ward 8** | 3%

## STRENGTHENING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Access to high-impact, out-of-school time programs is out of reach for many families. Sitar addresses this opportunity gap through a creative youth development model, where young people build skills through the arts that support long-term success. **Through year-round programs, D.C. youth develop the mindsets, social skills, and confidence needed to achieve their full potential.**



### ARTS AFTERSCHOOL



Afterschool hours are a critical time for learning and development. Sitar's Arts Afterschool program ensures these hours are filled with safe, enriching experiences that support students' growth beyond the classroom. By program end, **students demonstrate strong outcomes across key areas of youth development.**

**94%**

of students demonstrated social-emotional skills.

**89%**

of students demonstrated communication skills.

**86%**

of students demonstrated critical & creative thinking skills.

### CAMP SITAR



Summer often disrupts the developmental progress students achieve throughout the school year. During **Sitar's six-week summer camp**, youth continue to grow through arts-based learning experiences—staying engaged with peers, deepening their creativity, and **strengthening both cognitive and non-cognitive skills.**

**96%**

of campers demonstrated critical and creative thinking skills.

**88%**

of campers demonstrated collaboration skills.

**80%**

of campers demonstrated initiative and adaptability skills.

"We chose Camp Sitar because it **offers a creative, supportive environment** where our child can explore the arts, build confidence, and have a **meaningful summer experience.**"

- 2025 Camp Sitar Parent

## BUILDING A CREATIVE COMMUNITY

A city where every young person experiences transformative moments through the arts requires more than programs; it requires community. Since welcoming our first 50 students and 30 volunteer faculty 25 years ago, **Sitar has become a trusted community anchor, uniting volunteers, teaching artists, and local leaders** to expand opportunities and foster belonging for D.C. youth.

In 2025, **179 volunteers, seasonal faculty, and program assistants** came together to bring our mission to life.



**74**

Volunteer  
teaching artists



**52**

Volunteer  
leaders



**53**

Seasonal faculty and  
program assistants

“I LOVE the community!!! Greatly enjoy the daily interactions with students, parents, staff and fellow artists in a safe and engaging space that is Sitar.”

— Gregg Adams, Faculty

## FOSTERING BELONGING

Belonging is the foundation for growth. At Sitar, strong relationships between students and caring adults foster a culture of trust and support, ensuring young people feel seen, heard, and valued.

In a survey from the Deputy Mayor of Education’s Office our youth rated their Sitar experience on a scale of 1 to 4:

**3.8 out of 4:** an adult at Sitar listens to and respects them.

**3.5 out of 4:** an adult at Sitar is interested in their thoughts.

**3.4 out of 4:** an adult at Sitar helps them solve problems.

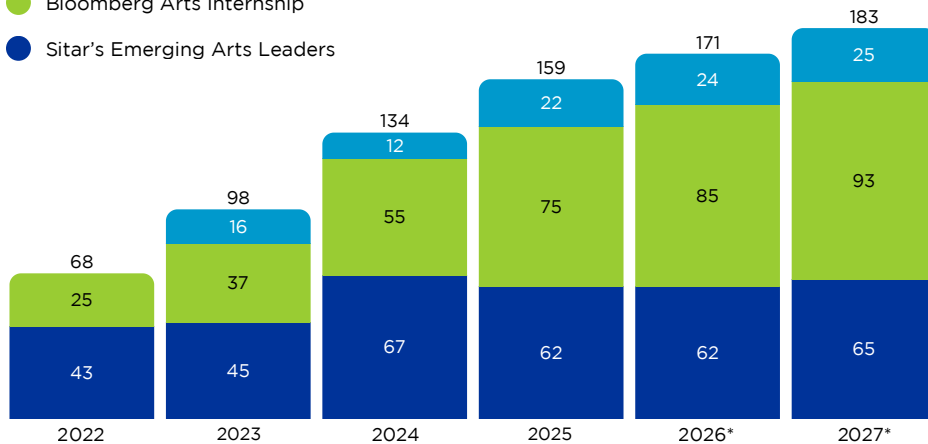


## DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S CREATIVE WORKFORCE TODAY

Sitar's Creative Career Programs connect education to opportunity, equipping teens and young adults with paid, real-world experience and in-demand skills while removing financial barriers to professional growth.



- ArtsAdvance: Career Studios
- Bloomberg Arts Internship
- Sitar's Emerging Arts Leaders



*Since launching in 2022, Sitar's Creative Career Programs have **grown by 57%**.*

\*projected growth

“Being involved with Sitar is the reason I have the leadership experience I have. Sitar pushed me to be the leader I am and set an example.”

— Lorenzo R., 2025 Sitar Bloomberg Arts Intern



By the end of their 2025 summer internships, teens and young adults gained valuable skills, leading to:

- 97%** of interns reported feeling confident they have something to contribute to a professional space.
- 85%** of Bloomberg Arts Internship interns reported feeling prepared for college.
- 82%** of Bloomberg Arts Internship interns reported positive assessment of their critical thinking skills.
- 80%** of interns reported feeling comfortable advocating for themselves in the workplace.



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