



Loop It Up Savannah

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Loop It Up Savannah Annual Report 2019



In 2019 Loop It Up Savannah continued to bring innovative, culturally responsive programming to over 8000 Savannah children. Nearly 100% of the students in our programs live in low-wealth, under-served communities and attend Title I public schools and subsidized community center programs. We use the arts to foster strong relationships, academic success, a sense of ownership and pleasure in learning, and greater emotional stability. In our safe and supportive classroom environments children experiment with new ideas, new materials, and new challenges to their imaginations.

Most of the goals set for 2019 were met. We were very pleased to introduce new programming that uses the arts to work more deeply on the literacy and numeracy issues in our community and to bring new relevant programming to early learning and pre-k classrooms. It is clear that the skills gained in arts based projects are critical to, and in many instances identical to those necessary for gaining age-appropriate numeracy and literacy skills.

Among the noteworthy programming accomplishments this year:

- **The Garden at Butler Elementary School** was successfully launched with both a grant and volunteer workforce from the Junior League of Savannah.
- The first **Mindfulness Zone** program was launched at The Juliette Low Elementary School. and funding has been secured to launch programs at eight additional Savannah Schools.
- The **Looping Literacy Together** project was launched at Brock Elementary School bringing the Weekly Reader program to students in Pre-K and K.
- The **Exploration Station** was launched at the Early Learning Center of the West Broad YMCA bringing STREAM programming to the pre-K age group.
- In partnership with The Savannah Music Festival we brought the first **Musical Explorers Family Jam** to our students in the spring. This project took place at the Yamacraw Center

for the Arts and included musical performances, art exhibits, and musically themed art activities for all participants.

- We were involved in the second annual **Whale Week Celebration**.
- We either continued or launched several clubs including Boy's Clubs, Girl's Clubs, The Violin Club, The Young Rising Kings, and the Young Entrepreneur's Club.
- We offered new **Book Box Library Projects** in partnership with Trinity Methodist Church.
- **#WREPresent**, our arts enrichment program in partnership with the Chatham County Juvenile Court, continued into its second year.
- In-school and after-school arts enrichment and STREAM programming in partnership with SCCPSS 21 Century Program continued at 38 Title I schools and community centers.

A few of these projects are highlighted in the following pages.

Our work continues to be dependent on a tightly-knit web of program and community resource partners. Among our **2019 partners** were:

- The Savannah Chatham County Public School System including 21st Century, Student Success, and Title I Programs
- The YMCA of Coastal Georgia
- The West Broad Street YMCA
- The Wesley Community Centers
- The Lady Bamford Center
- Starlandia Creative Supply
- A-Town Get Down Music Festival
- Telfair Museum of Art
- Healthy Savannah
- The City of Savannah
- Trinity United Methodist Church
- Urban Mentoring Academy
- Savannah Music Festival
- Metro Rotary Club
- Chatham County Juvenile Court
- Care Source
- Peach State
- Coastal Heritage Society
- Junior League of Savannah



The Mindfulness Zone at Juliette Low Elementary School

This new program includes a dedicated workshop space designed to foster wellness and well-being and is contributing to school-wide efforts to cultivate a positive climate attuned to the social and emotional health of children. Though designed primarily to provide alternatives for handling behavioral issues, the program is being woven into the culture of the school using techniques that build self-esteem and trust between students and school staff. By learning to respond to their circumstances with intentionality rather than impulsiveness, children are gaining agency through skills that promote self-understanding and self-regulation.

In the coming year, we will be creating Mindfulness Zones in eight or more additional schools. Working closely with school leadership teams, Loop It Up will design and implement programs staffed by teaching artists, yoga teachers, and school counselors, and will offer activities that reinforce mindfulness based concepts in children and help teachers and staff to make the best use of those concepts in their classrooms.

Each Mindfulness Zone will offer a broad but interrelated set of experiences and will introduce special activity sessions such as gardening, boy's clubs, girl's clubs, and cooking clubs.



The Exploration Station

New in 2019, The Exploration Station is a STREAM classroom designed specifically for very young children attending the Early Learning Center at the West Broad YMCA. In an open floorplan we have created a workspace complete with large tables suitable for science or art projects, open shelving providing easy access to materials, a large carpeted space for movement and music classes, a library and reading area, easels, a science station, and a pet corner!

Art and music workshops are currently being offered to ages 2 through 5 on a weekly basis. The space is not only used for workshops run by guest teaching artists but also for the Learning Center teachers to work on larger projects, and to hold community gatherings, meetings, and family engagement events.

The Early Learning Center teachers are able to bring small groups of children to the classroom to explore the materials available. The goal is to allow children the time and space to investigate available materials and hopefully to ask questions that inspire new interests.



Looping Literacy Together

Phase One of this multi-faceted project was introduced to Pre-K and Kindergarten children at Brock Elementary School with our large group of volunteer Weekly Readers. The volunteers represent a diverse set of enthusiastic community members.

The project brings music, movement, art, storytelling, and reading partnerships together, using the deeply common elements among these fields to support the fundamentals of literacy. Through listening, singing, following established patterns and rhythms, making predictions, moving and playing games to set rhythms, and visual arts activities important background knowledge is gained that will contribute to reading and writing readiness and experiences. Offered together, these classes will enable our children to enter first grade with measurable literacy skills.

Future projects in Looping Literacy Together will include new Book Box Library Projects, professional storytelling and narrative-building workshops, more Weekly Reader Projects, music, and dance classes.



The Garden at Butler Elementary School

During the spring of 2019 Loop It Up Savannah, in partnership with Butler Elementary School and 21st Century Community Learning, launched a new project at Butler Elementary School with the aim to educate children about health, wellness, and sustainability by means of a garden classroom. Among the goals are encouraging healthy eating, trying new foods and learning the fundamentals of good nutrition, connecting children to the natural environment and the concept of growing seasons and cycles, promoting healthy outdoor physical activity, and offering our students the chance to participate in environmentally meaningful activity. We plan to hold community events including holiday celebrations for the students, families, and neighbors. Our garden provides a safe outdoor space in which children can work, learn, and decompress.

Pictured here is the first cool weather crop planted, watered, weeded, and harvested by the children!



Whale Week 2019

The timing of this event coincided with the beginning of the calving season for Right Whales off the Georgia coast.

With around 400 whales left in existence, this partnership focused on education, awareness, and cultivation of stewardship of the North Atlantic Right Whale. Events included talks and lectures, family activities, movie screenings, and local art shows. The children learned about the importance of Georgia to the Right Whale including that many come to our coast to give birth to their calves. This connection to our coast motivated us to teach students about local stewardship and our relationship to the ocean.

Billboards throughout the city featured work of local artists and students to advertise events and promote awareness. Large format paintings were created for the celebration by Loop It Up students at Heard and Juliette Low Elementary schools.



Violin Club

Loop It Up Savannah hosts numerous clubs each school year with the goal of bringing a diverse set of people (men, women, and young adults) into after-school programming to share life experiences, to mentor and teach specific skills, and to share relationship-building skills. Among these clubs are boys clubs, girls clubs, cooking clubs, and this year, Violin Club .

This youth focused project was designed to broaden the musical experiences of two groups of participants-- four experienced student musicians who attend the Savannah Arts Academy and eight 3rd grade students attending 21st Century after-school programming at Hodge Elementary School.

Participation by the Savannah Arts students was based on musical experience and their potential to mentor the Hodge participants in playing the violin and in gaining basic musical knowledge. Meetings will take place weekly throughout the 2019-20 school year.

All aspects of the project including lessons, rehearsals, and performances are free of charge for participants, including the use of violins for the duration of the program.

2019 Loop It Up Savannah at a Glance:

- 2,458 art and youth enrichment classes at 38 sites
- 57 community events that featured art
- 8,100 student participants
- 214 volunteers
- 30 murals painted
- 9 Book Box Library Projects completed including 198 Book Box Libraries filled with 3,960 books
- 200 #Art4Ever Kits sent home with our students
- 493 generous donors



2019 Funding Sources

Annual Campaign 2019	\$35,610
Contracts*	\$29,485
Grants**	\$24,830
Foundation Donations***	\$12,500
Individual Donations	\$33,240
Friends of Loop It Up and Corporate Rewards	\$ 2,545

***Contracts:**

Chatham County Department of Juvenile Justice
Savannah Chatham County Board of Education
The Telfair Museum

****Grants:**

Arts Ashore Legacy Fund
The Baldwin Fund
Bank of America
The City of Savannah Arts Council Weave-A-Dream Grant
The Downtown Neighborhood Association
The Emerging Leaders Committee
Gulfstream
International Paper
The Louisa Porter Aid Society
The St. Thomas Thrift Store,
The Rotary Club of Skidaway Island

*****Foundations:**

The Hodge Foundation
Mary Lane Morrison Foundation

2020 Projected Funding: \$175,000

Loop It Up Office News

Our Board of Directors welcomed four new members in 2019. The Board is working with the staff to develop both immediate and long-term plans and is fully involved in our fundraising and community building efforts. The Board will work together with the Loop It Up staff this year to create our first Strategic Plan.

Current members include:

Michelle Solomon, President

Heidi Sanchez, Secretary

Shenequa Gresham, Treasurer

Mary Ivey, Board Member

Zelonia Williams, Board Member

We have implemented a rigorous volunteer recruitment and orientation program, created by our Outreach Coordinator Carmen Vasquez, to ensure that there are a large number of qualified and prepared individuals to fill the many volunteer positions and hours. Among the new volunteers is our Community Readers Squad who work weekly in the Looping Literacy Project piloted at Brock Elementary School.

Looking Ahead to 2020

Our annual campaign celebration, Soup It Up for Loop It Up 2020, will be February 29th at the American Legion Ballroom in Savannah. Five partnering chefs and teams have joined the event for 2020 and will each make soup for as many as 200 attendees. We will be honoring four outstanding individuals with awards for their community service during 2019:

- Dr. Ann Levett, Superintendent for SCCPSS (Howard and Mary Morrison Award)
- Judge Lisa Colbert, Chatham County Juvenile Court (Peter Doliber Award)
- Anne Robinson, Founder of Momentum Development Solutions (Cayewah Easley Award)
- Selina Ruth-Gillans, Principal at Otis J. Brock Elementary (Deborah Enoch Award)

Among our goals and scheduled projects are the following:

- Introducing Mindfulness Zone Program to eight or more new locations
- Implementing Looping Literacy Together, Phase Two: Storytelling, Drumming, and Dance
- Implementing a “Movers, Shakers, Game Changers” portrait project” in a school residency program at Otis. J. Brock Elementary School
- Implementing the first Loop It Up Savannah Strategic Plan