

GUITARS
OVER
GUNS

2023 - 2024

EMPOWER

MUSIC

CHANGES LIVES



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The Crego Group
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are proud to support
Guitars Over Guns

Veronica Crego-Flores
Managing Broker
Veronica@GenStoneRealty.com





***Congratulations on a wonderful 15
years! We really appreciate all of
GOGO's hard work and are proud of
the kids. Thank you for making the
world a little easier and happier!***



**MJ & FRED
WRIGHT**



OUR MISSION

TO EMPOWER YOUTH
THROUGH MUSIC & MENTORSHIP

Guitars Over Guns offers students from our most vulnerable communities a combination of music education and mentorship with professional musicians to help them overcome hardship, find their voice and reach their potential as tomorrow's leaders.

VISION

All young people should have the opportunity to discover and reach their full potential through the power of mentorship and the arts.

CURRICULUM

We use Positive Youth Development (PYD) measurements to evaluate key competencies, including:

- Engage Authentically
- Promote Peer Bonds
- Expand Interests
- Challenge Growth
- Manage Goals
- Share Power



OVER 9,700 STUDENTS
SERVED SINCE 2008

Miami (since 2008)
Chicago (since 2014)
Los Angeles (since 2021)

2023-24 AT A GLANCE

1,490

Students

52

Schools &
Community
Sites

83

Mentor



DID YOU KNOW?

Our full name is "Guitars Over Guns Organization." That's where we get the nickname GOGO!

OUR IMPACT

DURING THE 2022-23 PROGRAM YEAR...

85%

of students demonstrated measurable growth in 2 or more core Positive Youth Development capacities

79%

of students felt encouraged by their mentors to work through difficult problems

85%

of students said that their mentor pays attention to their lives outside the program and can be counted on for help

90%

of students would recommend Guitars Over Guns to a friend

93%

of students said that their mentor expects them to explore new interests and do their best

How do we measure

IMPACT?

Guitars Over Guns mentees complete biannual surveys using Hello Insight, a nationally recognized platform that helps youth development programs evaluate and respond to the needs of their young people. In these surveys, mentees self-report their growth across six positive youth development pillars, including the ability to engage authentically and manage their goals. We also ask them to list the number of supportive adults in their lives who believe in them, broaden their interests, and challenge them to grow artistically, emotionally, and academically.



Miami: 169 E Flagler St. #1134,
Miami, FL 33131

Chicago: 954 W Washington Blvd. #400,
Chicago, IL 60607

guitarsoverguns.org
@guitarsoverguns

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

Friends,

15 years ago, an experience at a juvenile detention center inspired me to envision a world where ZIP code would not be a limiting factor to a child's access to the very things that changed my life – quality arts education and a mentor who invested in my artistry, success, and future. It would have been so easy for that dream to stay an aspiration. It was improbable, it was unprecedented, and it arose at a time where the arts were being deprioritized everywhere we looked. Fortunately, I was surrounded by people who breathed life into that vision.

What began with just over a dozen students in our flagship classroom at North Miami Middle School has blossomed into a community and a movement. Through music, through finding the courage and confidence to take a microphone in hand and tell their own story, our mentees discovered that they could carve their own path. Recently, we brought our alumni together for a reunion dinner. They are college students, realtors, nurses, teachers, mentors, and parents. They are living audaciously in pursuit of their dreams, and I couldn't be prouder.

Those moments to take a step back and look at what we've achieved are everything. I'm endlessly thankful. The reality is that every kid deserves to dream big. Our job is to provide a space where the focus can be on what's possible, not on what's necessary to be safe or to survive. As important as our goals are, the blessing of a dream is to live in active pursuit of it. It's to know the version of yourself that is inspired and committed and invigorated. It's to know the world of support that surrounds you when you live in that alignment. It's to be brought together in common purpose.

So, I want to thank you. We are bound in celebration of the journey that unfolds when we have the audacity to chase our dreams. Your trust drives us and your support is the greatest resource we have in honoring what is possible for our students and our community. Together, we have collectively pushed the boundaries of what's possible for our youth, our communities, and our own lives. And so as we build, let us do so in recognition and in gratitude for the power of what is possible when we dream together. Having exceeded every expectation of that first vision 15 years ago, let's reset our vision higher. We're only scratching the surface of what's to come.

Thank you for being by our side, dreaming big with us, so that our students can dream even bigger.

With gratitude, always,



Chad Bernstein

Chad Bernstein
President/CEO

Miami alumni reunited for dinner & memories in May 2023





T U R N E R

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

Is a proud sponsor of GUITARS Over Guns

WORKING TOGETHER TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN THROUGH MUSIC

Supporting GUITARS Over Guns is dear to my heart. After serving on boards of various organizations dedicated in supporting the futures of talented musicians, it is natural I take on a leadership role to volunteer in their cause.

As a sponsor for the last three years, I see the positive effect on students from vulnerable communities and how they transform their lives for the better through music. I welcome you to participate and make change today.



Chad Turner
President, Financial Advisor
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MIAMI SUPPORTERS \$10,000+



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MIAMI PROGRAM SERVICES



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ROBERTO MATA
SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY
M I A M I

BRONWEN RUTTER



wine
by the bay

Guitars Over Guns is funded in part by The Children's Trust. The Children's Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County. With the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners. Sponsored in part by the State of Florida through the Division of Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts.

OUR SUPPORTERS

CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES & NATIONAL

NATIONAL SUPPORTERS \$10,000+



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LADY GAGA'S
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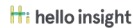
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SAVAGE FAMILY
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NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



CHICAGO SUPPORTERS \$10,000+

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ADRIANE
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ILLINOIS' 30TH
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OFFICE OF
SENATOR
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17TH DISTRICT

OFFICE OF
SENATOR
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HUNTER –
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& DANIEL LOEB
FOUNDATION

Guitars Over Guns is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how National Endowment for the Arts grants impact individuals and communities, visit www.arts.gov

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President/CEO



Jono De Leon
Chief Operating Officer



Carly Gordon
Special Assistant to the
President/CEO



Andrew DeMuro
Director of Program Quality



Amanda Hale
Director of Marketing

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LCSW**
Director of Mental Health &
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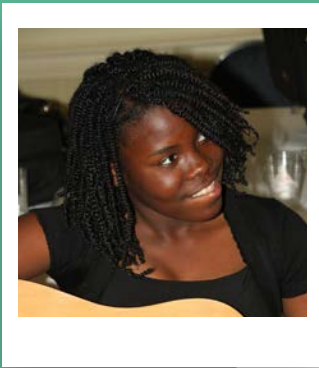
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THEN & NOW



2009

Partnership formed with the University of Miami to boost programming and outreach.

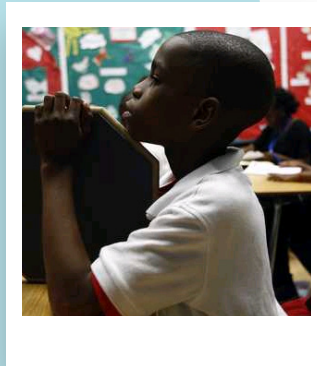


2011

Guitars Over Guns expanded to reach a second school site, Miami Edison Middle.

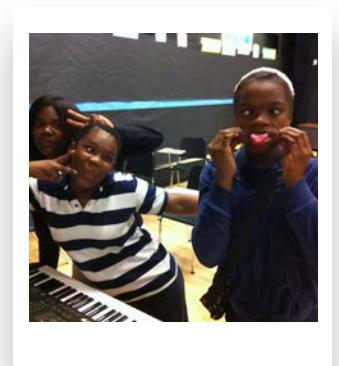
2008

Following a transformational experience at a juvenile detention center, then college student, Chad Bernstein, gathered a group of volunteer musicians to mentor 15 students at North Miami Middle School.



2010

Guitars Over Guns received its first major local press coverage in the Miami Herald.



15 YEARS OF CHANGING LIVES



2013

GOGO's logo got a rebrand thanks to philADthropy, a University of Miami program that pairs talented graphic design students with local nonprofits to revamp and amplify their message and mission. The logo incorporates negative space to illustrate youth's ability to choose music in their lives.



2015

We received our first national press coverage when Chad Bernstein was named a CNN Hero in 2015. This honor was a catalyst for great things to follow. Chad and GOGO were even on the big screens of Times Square in New York!

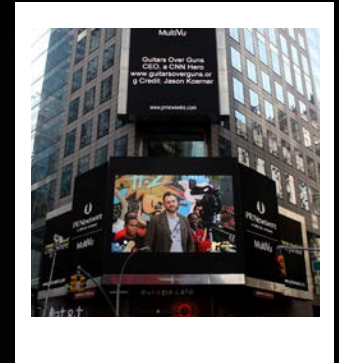
2012

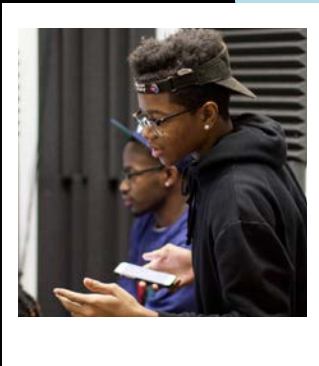
Chad received a Doctorate of Musical Arts degree, publishing his dissertation, "The Effectiveness of Music Mentoring for Youth Through the GOGO Program." This paved the way for Guitars Over Guns' research-based methodology.



2014

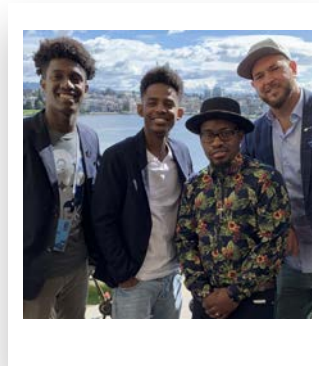
GOGO's first Chicago program launched at an innovative 1st through 12th grade year-round therapeutic day school.





2017

GOGO Chicago graduated its first class of middle schoolers from Evergreen Academy Middle School and launched the Evergreen Alumni Band to keep the music moving!

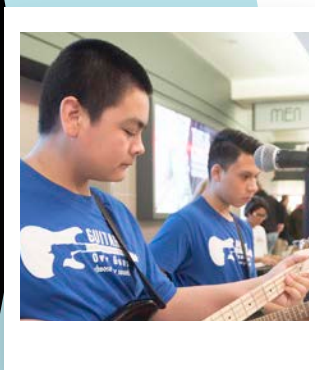


2019

In response to the needs of our students and mentors we launched our M-Power Mental Health Program, providing wellness coaching and professional development opportunities to our community.

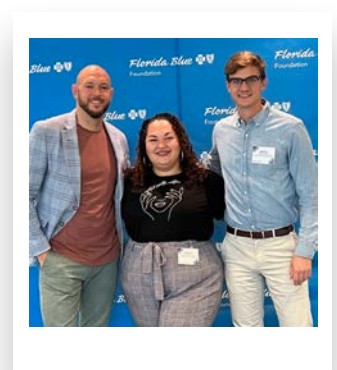
2016

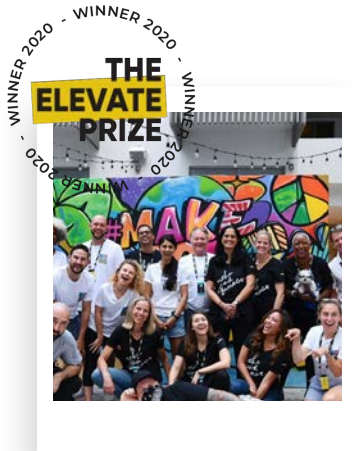
GOGO partnered with Andre "Add-2" Daniels to launch Haven Studios, our first community-based recording studio, in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago's South Side.



2018

After being named a "Community to Watch" by The Obama Foundation's My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Alliance, a delegation of GOGO and Haven Studios staff and alumni attended the MBK Rising! summit in Oakland, California, where they met young men of color who are working to transform their communities.





2021

We released our debut studio album, *The Rain May Be Pouring*, during the global pandemic. The album documents experiences of our collective community and was written, recorded and released during the height of this unimaginable experience.



2023

President Barack Obama dropped by Haven Studios for a surprise visit. This momentous event was an incredible validation of all the work and love put into building Haven Studios. We once again received the Obama Foundation's Freedom Summer grant, allowing us to expand programming throughout the summer months.

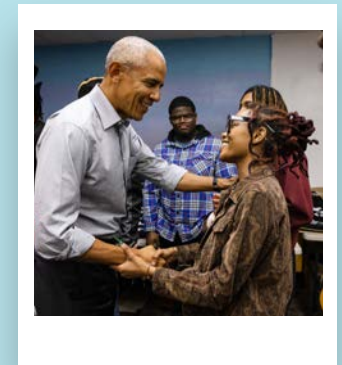
2020

We were honored to be awarded the inaugural Elevate Prize among a cohort of global changemakers. After a rigorous application process, we were selected from over 1,300 applications from 119 countries.



2022

California, here we come! After a successful virtual pilot program, we launched in-person programs at USC Hybrid High School in Los Angeles in Spring 2022, supported by the Cameron Boyce Foundation.





STUDENT VOICES

"Guitars Over Guns as an experience was a lot of fun. Right when my hope to continue music was fading, GOGO showed up and brought that spark back brighter than ever. I had the chance to explore my curiosity and gave me the push to really pursue music outside of GOGO."

— Angelina, Miami Southridge Senior High School

"I'm extremely grateful for having Guitar Over Guns as an outlet and I commend my mentors' persistence in making an impact. I want to advocate for programs as such to receive more attention and funding. Thank you GOGO."

— Sophonie, Miami Carol City Senior High School

MIAMI

2022 - 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

In our Miami region, **40** professional musician mentors served **721** students at **29** schools and community sites.

12 ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES

Guitar • Bass • Keys • Drums • Music Production • Songwriting
Spoken Word • Poetry & Creative Writing • Rap • Vocals
Visual Art • Dance

MAKING AN IMPACT



of students demonstrated measurable growth in 2 or more core Positive Youth Development capacities



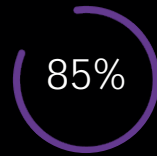
of students would recommend Guitars Over Guns to a friend



of students felt encouraged by their mentors to work through difficult problems



of students said that their mentor expects them to explore new interests and do their best



of students said that their mentor pays attention to their lives outside the program and can be counted on for help



In October, we partnered with Wynwood Walls, exposing our visual art students to world renowned artists right in their neighborhood.



We were so proud to see 8 students attend Interlochen Arts Camp this year! 4 art students and 4 music students participated in the prestigious program.



Walker Moseley
Regional Director, Miami



Brax Tinkler
Director of Community
Engagement &
Advancement



Cameron Underwood
Programs Director



Antonio Correa
Programs Manager,
Miami-Dade South



**Jesse "Ron Got the Recipe"
Dalrymple**
Programs Manager,
Miami-Dade Central

**OUR
TEAM
MIAMI**



Tenisha Lane
Programs Manager,
Miami-Dade North



Tiffany "Tif Boom" Lusan
Regional Coordinator



Romania Dukes
Community Coordinator



J. Howard
Community Engagement
Coordinator



Caleb Alcime *
Programs Associate
Guitars Over Guns alumni

In tune with our community.

WSVN 

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GUITARS OVER GUNS
choose your sound



OUR SITES

M I A M I

Andover

MIAMI GARDENS

- Carol City Middle School*
- Lake Stevens Middle School*
- Miami Carol City Senior High School*
- Myrtle Grove K-8 Center*
- North County K-8 Center*



NORTH MIAMI

- Linda Lentin K-8 Center
- North Miami Middle School
- North Miami Senior High School
- Gwen Cherry Park



WEST LITTLE RIVER

- Madison Middle



BROWNSVILLE / ALLAPATTAH

- Brownsville Middle School
- Georgia Jones-Ayers Middle School



LITTLE HAVANA

- Citrus Grove Middle



COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

- Ambassador Band
- Demps Park
- GATE Program @ Jackson Health
- GOGO Studio Homestead @ Live Like Bella Park#
- Gwen Cherry Park Community Studio
- Oak Grove Park

SUMMER PROGRAMS

- Gang Alternative @ South Miami
- Genesis Hopeful Haven @ Live Like Bella Park
- Miami-Dade County Parks Music Camp @ Live Like Bella Park
- Music Camp @ Dennis C. Moss Cultural Arts Center
- Music and Art Camp @ Lake Stevens Middle School
- Music Camp @ Little Havana Leadership Learning Center

SOUTH MIAMI DADE

- Cutler Bay Middle School
- Homestead Middle School
- Homestead Senior High School
- Miami Southridge High School
- Richmond Heights Middle School
- Redland Middle School
- South Dade Middle School
- Wilbur Bell Park



*powered by the Music Access Miami Fund at The Miami Foundation

#powered by the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation and Office of Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins, Miami-Dade County District 8



**Efrem "Tranquil"
Alexander**
Vocals



Jasmine Azor
Visual Arts



Alana Barrett
Visual Art



**Pricilla Zoe
Carlo Berrios**
Vocals



Kelly Blake
Drums, Bass, Vocals



Kevin Bodniza
Music Production



Bryce Bottomly
Guitar



Bertrand Boyd
Poetry & Writing



Aaron Bradley
Bass



Gerald "Nova" C.
Music Production



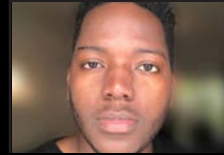
"Marley" Donnelly
Vocals, Songwriting



Ruben Espinosa
Guitar



Kasby Edouard
Guitar



Juner Etienne
Keys



Karen S. Feldner
Vocals



**Jeimar "Zeth
Pheonix" Gomez**
Studio Director



Ellio Gomez
Guitar



**Faith Michelle
Gonzalez Berrios**
Vocals



Raymond Gordon
Drums



Aime Guache
Vocals



J. Howard
Music Production



Kaley Howard
Bass, Drums, Vocals



Jefferson Joseph
Guitar



Just John Persaud
Spoken Word
Poetry



Vania Junco
Guitar & Drums



**KeAndre
"K2Stixx" Kelley**
Drums



Tiana Lanier
Wellness Mentor



Timothy LaRoque
Guitar



Javier Luna
Drums



Nilka Maisonet
Visual Arts



**Leo "DaVinci"
Mayorga**
Music Prod. & Rap



Andrew McCoy
Music Production



Tatyana Monestime
Vocals



Junior "Juju" Paul
Piano



Jean Petit-Homme*
Drums, Keys
Guitars Over Guns alumni



Alejandra P. Leon
Guitar, Keys



Isaiah Rodriguez
Drums



John Rodriguez
Drums



Salam The Poet
Spoken Word
Poetry



Penelope Santacruz
Vocals



Camilo Velez
Guitar



Natasha Perez V.
Vocals



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Changing lives.
What matters to you
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At EY, we're proud to support Miami –
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helping to make our community a better
place to work and live. A better and brighter
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WE GON' SHINE

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS



Shine, Vol. 1 is Guitars Over Guns' second studio album, featuring original music written and performed by GOGO students. Youth had the opportunity to write original lyrics, record professionally, and even register as professional songwriters. The students' songwriting process was inspired by their lived experiences, penning lyrics that reflect on gun violence, overcoming obstacles, and following your dreams.

Songwriting mentor Karen Feldner shared the story of how the album came to be. One day, Karen's students at North Miami Middle School grappled with the tragic loss of a student from the neighboring high school. They reflected as a group, and one student, Wiliena, was moved to share about her grief for her late aunt. "I told Wiliena that when I strongly feel something, I gravitate towards songwriting," Karen recounts. "Without any persuasion, she wished to do the same. As she spoke

of her loss, the words, 'I wish we had more time' were spoken. I asked her how she might sing those words."

Now, more than a year later, "I Wish We Had More Time" is a moving, expressive track nestled among 12 original student works. Mentors and producers Danny Hayoun and Leo "DaVincici" Mayorga saw the songs brought to life in their state-of-the-art studios, guiding each student through the recording process. From hip hop to bluegrass to classic rock, eclectic influences and powerful themes tie together a meaningful project where young artists from across Miami-Dade lent their voices, stories, and talent to create something truly special. "Songwriting is so important," Karen says of the project. "It helps shift deep unexpressed feelings into musical expression. It opens a path to sharing experiences and creating community."



"My song's message is that even though there is a lot going on in the world around us, that cannot stop us from being happy and pursuing happiness."

—Angelina Barbosa, "We Gon' Shine"

Album art by Nilka Maisonet

Photo: Angelina & Leo (mentor / producer) } Credit: Mateo Serna Zapata
Shine, Vol. 1 was made possible by the Al & Jane Nahmad Family Foundation.

MIAMI

ROUND OF APPLAUSE



Scan to watch



Special thanks to the talented team: Andrew Hoo (Videographer), Pedro Fernandez (Second Camera Operator), Johann C. Muñoz (Creative Director), Marve Afo (Project Director), Jesse "Ron Got the Recipe" Dalrymple and Juner Etienne (Song Producers), and Kaley Howard (Musical Director). The 2023 music video project was made possible by the support of Peacock Foundation, Inc.

In March 2023, students from 19 Miami-Dade schools and 3 community-based sites came together to professionally film and record this year's music video project. Collaboratively, students voted to select Lady Gaga's "Applause" and Outkast's "Hey Ya," spun together into a mashup that celebrates the people in our lives who deserve applause. Students contributed at every level, from original lyrics to spoken word and vocal performances, instrumental tracks, and artistic direction. Students convened at The Bridge recording studio and Lake Stevens Middle School

to put it all together, along the way meeting and collaborating with their peers from neighborhoods all over the county. For many students, this was their first time in a recording studio or in front of a camera – and they showed out! With a theme of gratitude, everyone wrote out their "thank you's" to family members, friends, mentors, and those no longer with us. Throughout the intensive week of recording, we broke bread together, jammed out, played games, and shared vulnerable memories. The final product has us bursting with pride over the mesmerizing visuals and infectious energy.

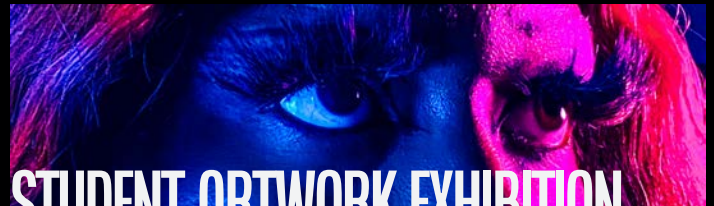


PHOTOGRAPHY UP CLOSE

This year, we launched an official partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami. Students from North Miami Senior High School participated in a photography class led by GOGO mentor Mateo Serna Zapata. MOCA generously provided all the necessary equipment and opened up their photography room to our students. As a culminating project, students created portraits of each other, experimenting with lighting while learning new techniques. Students engaged and connected with their classmates, allowing the person being photographed to become vulnerable and express themselves freely. "My love for photography has grown a lot since I've joined this class," says mentee Isaiah S. "I've learned a lot from my experienced mentor and I'm glad he passed his knowledge and creativity down to me."

"My time doing photography with GOGO was seriously amazing! It was amazing to see people's faces light up when they saw my finished photos. I had so much fun capturing moments. The whole experience really stoked my passion for photography and made me appreciate how strongly photos can move others."

— Shahoria L.



STUDENT ARTWORK EXHIBITION

Our art program students from North Miami Middle and North Miami Senior High celebrated the incredible accomplishment of presenting an artwork exhibition at MOCA's Pavillion Gallery. This exhibition showcased diverse media, including drawing, painting, collage, and digital illustration. The culmination was a candid exploration of identity, community, and nature. Special thank you to Amanda Covach, Curator of Education at MOCA, for facilitating the exhibition space and supporting our programming via incredible partnerships like this one



BEYOND THE GATE

GATE is Jackson Health System's innovative intervention program for juvenile weapons offenders. As part of their holistic approach, GATE partners with Guitars Over Guns to offer music-based mentorship to boys and young men with a weapons charge on their record. "The boys get a second chance at life," J. explains. "Music is a vehicle to reach them, and have somebody that looks like them show them different ways of going at life." J. and co-mentor Bertrand have been with GATE for 3 years, including a virtual program during Covid lockdown. These days, their team is bolstered by former GATE mentee Nate, who now works full-time with Jackson Health as a GATE peer mentor. "Seeing Nate and my boys graduate and get out of the program, out of the



Jackson HEALTH SYSTEM



system is a proudest accomplishment," J. shares. "We're inspiring youth to be the best versions of themselves. You hear their parents say, 'I've seen a major transformation in my son.'" As for the future of GATE, things are looking bright. "I envision more youth becoming financially stable, helping to get more life skills, and staying in touch after they graduate. We want to let them know that we do care and we do love them," J. says. "I tell the boys all the time, 'I love you.' They probably feel a little weird about it, but I don't care. I mean it."



MENTOR OF THE YEAR

Kaley Howard

Presented in recognition of a mentor who has made a significant impact on our organization, on our community, and in the lives of our Miami students.

Kaley Howard, a musical powerhouse originally from Youngstown, Ohio, is making waves in the Miami scene. Kaley’s childhood was immersed in the world of instruments; her father, GRAMMY-winning producer Eddie Howard, Jr., contributed his magical touch to Anita Baker’s “Giving You the Best That I Got.” Kaley is a global performer, sharing her talents with Trina, Kent Jones, Damien Marley, Wayne Wonder, and currently serving as the music director for reggae dancehall sensations Baby Cham. Yet, Kaley’s true passion is guiding young minds. As a Site Coordinator with GOGO, Kaley collaborates closely with principals, staff, and students. Her performances aren’t just about music – they’re about pushing boundaries, exceeding expectations, and instilling the belief that “Anything is possible.” This mantra reverberates in her personal and professional life, inspiring a new generation to reach for their dreams.

This award is given annually to the Miami student who most exemplifies Louis Salgar’s ability to elevate the lives of people around him through his unmistakable passion, uncompromising drive, infectious sense of humor, and positive attitude.

Jayden Holmes is an 18-year-old songwriter, multi-Instrumentalist, and aspiring audio engineer, recent graduate of Miami Beach Senior High School, and recipient of the 2023 Frederica Wilson scholarship. In Fall 2023, he started college at HBCU Tennessee State University as a Music Technology Major. Jayden was born to Yolonda Holmes, an elementary school teacher and Eric Holmes, a retired police officer, spending his early years in Orlando. When Jayden was only 7 years old, he woke up to find his father had died from a heart attack. Four years after this loss, Jayden’s mother would ultimately lose her battle with breast cancer. After moving Miami with his now legal guardian and affectionately named Aunt Lala, there would be another bump in the road – a breast cancer diagnosis for Jayden’s aunt; thankfully, their love for each other and “Crazy Faith” in God helped fuel Jayden’s aunt’s recovery. Jayden started his musical journey on his Aunt Lala’s bass, exploring his grief by creating songs that were “sonic gateways into his psyche.” Jayden joined the GOGO family and became a proud member of the GOGO Alumni Ambassador Band. Jayden strives to create music that will make people hear and feel the beauty music and life can offer. In 2023, Jayden was selected among students across the U.S. to attend the prestigious GRAMMY Camp, which helps prepare campers for a career in the music industry.



LOUIS SALGAR LEGACY AWARD

Jayden Holmes

MIAMI

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS

THE ATOMIC LOLLIPOPS

Like all great bands, the Atomic Lollipops first formed from a meeting of musical minds. When GOGO programs from across South Miami-Dade convened for a Spring Showcase performance, Programs Manager Antonio Correa knew what he had to do. "I thought, let's make a band out of them," Antonio says. "It started with one song and evolved into them wanting to play in a rock band." Soon enough, the band was tearing it up on stages all over the community, from the Dennis C. Moss Cultural Arts Center, to the UNIDAD 305 festival, to a special performance celebrating

the opening of GOGO Studio Homestead – the band's rehearsal studio and home base – in front of an audience that included Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins and members of the press.

The band's membership has changed over the years, with members like Ari moving on to college and Malik departing to finish high school at the prestigious Interlochen Arts Academy. But one thing that stays the same is their talent, dedication, and care for one another. "We've gone from four kids to now almost twelve Lollipops," says Antonio. "It's like one big family.



They care of each other, communicate with each other, and they're closer now than they've ever been."

Oh, and in case you're wondering – the band knew that they wanted their name to be "cute but sinister." It only took a moment of brainstorming to arrive at the perfect answer.



Drum set with logo artwork
by Atomic Lollipops
member Remy Ortega

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

MIAMI

From curtain call to final bow, our Partners make an impact every step of the way. As an official Guitars Over Guns Partner, you're a VIP in every audience we entertain. From our student showcases to our Choose Your Sound Benefit Concert – and all things in between – you'll groove to the music, watch our kids shine on stage, and know that you are making a difference. Learn more at guitarsoverguns.org/become-a-partner

RECORD EXEC (\$50,000)



■ MJ & Fred Wright

PRODUCER (\$25,000)



COMPOSER (\$10,000)

- Wynn & Jeff Adam
- Bob & Kathy Bernstein
- The Bluhm Family Charitable Foundation
- Scott & Becki Etzler Foundation
- Tanner Lee
- Cindy Wallace & Allen Moseley



MUSICIAN (\$5,000)

■ Ambal, Inc.



Chrysmela



DVMC
DIVERSIFIED MEDIA & MEDIA
MANAGEMENT & CONSULTING, INC.



FLORIDAVALLE
PARTNERS



BAND MANAGER (\$2,500)



CHOOSE YOUR SOUND & REGIONAL BOARD

Bandmates

Event Committee

Veronica Crego-Flores
Michael Bittel
Melanie Masterson
Adam Savage
Denise Minakowski
Ralph Fales
Tracy Shelowitz
Dafna Gold
Liz Heno
Sarah Feil Lewin
Amy Simons
Katherine Solorzano
Kathy Bernstein
JP Melo
Stefano Campanini
Brax Tinkler

Rockstars

Host Committee

Kathy & Bob Bernstein
Dr. Mary Beatrice De Leon
& Jono De Leon
Jessica & Alex Dominguez
Cathy Gordon
Dr. Kimberly Green & Mireille
Louis Charles
Denise Minakowski
Kent Savage
Chad Turner
Tamara & Dave Walsh
Robin & H Weitz
Duane Miranda
Yonathan Yehezkel
Tanner Lee
Brenda O'Connor Juanas
Veronica Crego-Flores
Sarah Feil Lewin
JP Melo

Road Crew

Logistics Committee

Caleb Alcime
Chad Bernstein
Antonio Correa
Jesse "Ron Got
The Recipe" Dalrymple
Amin De Jesus
Jono De Leon
Carlos Gonzalez
Carly Gordon
Amanda Hale
J. Howard
Tenisha Lane
Isaac Lorié
Tiffany "Tif Boom" Lusan
Walker Moseley
Amy Simons
Brax Tinkler
Cameron Underwood

Miami

Regional Board

Veronica Crego
Dr. Mary De Leon
Dafna Gold
Cathy Gordon
Tom John
Tanner Lee
JP Melo
Denise Minakowski
Duane Miranda
Jacquie O'Malley
Chad Turner
Yonathan Yehezkel



2023 CHOOSE YOUR SOUND HONOREES

This year, we honor Kimberly Green and Mireille Louis Charles of the Green Family Foundation, a private nonprofit foundation dedicated to providing funding and resources to organizations in the U.S. and abroad that support education, global health, community development, the arts and cultural preservation. Kimberly and Mireille's tireless work and support has enabled Guitars Over Guns to deepen our impact in Miami, including creating a series of Haitian cultural activations celebrating our students' heritage and community.



Dr. Kimberly Green

Philanthropist, writer, and documentary filmmaker **Kimberly Green** has led the Green Family Foundation (GFF) since 1997. In Haiti, Ms. Green's work ranges from community health and development to cultural repatriation and preservation, and includes a partnership with Columbia University's Earth Institute and the establishing of the Haiti Policy Program, partnering with Fastforward for the Sinema Anba Zetwal "Food for Souls" tour (which followed the

2010 earthquake's fault line and was attended by over 250,000), and executive producing the Alan Lomax in Haiti: Recordings for the Library of Congress, 1936-1937 box set (which received two GRAMMY nominations). Ms. Green directed and produced the award-winning documentary "Once There Was a Country: Revisiting Haiti" (narrated by Dr. Maya Angelou and Guy Johnson). Ms. Green and GFF's close association with Florida International University has resulted in the creation of the Steven and Dorothea Green Library, Digital Library of the Caribbean, NeighborhoodHELP program, and most recently Green Space Miami, a community art and conversation space.

Mireille Louis Charles is Executive Director of the Green Family Foundation, having joined GFF in 2011 following a 20-year career in stewardship and development at United Way of Miami-Dade, the largest not-for-profit organization in the county focused on improving education, financial stability, and health. At United Way, Mireille also concentrated her efforts on informing and creating partnerships with the Haitian and Caribbean communities in Miami. Upon moving to Miami from Haiti, Mireille forged relationships with community leaders. She worked as a liaison while managing the Haitian Task Force, a former community-based economic development organization and developer of

the unique commercial shopping center in Little Haiti, the Caribbean Marketplace. In working with Miami's Haitian and Caribbean communities, she developed her personal mission of connecting young professionals with mentors, their cultural roots, and each other. Mireille serves on the Sant La Fellows Advisory Board, Prizm Advisory Committee, UNCF South Florida Leadership Council, and Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami (MOCA) Board of Trustees.



Mireille Louis Charles



STUDENT VOICES

“I love that our mentors care about our mental health. Even if they see that we’re having a bad day, they’ll check on us. It pushes me. It shows me that I actually have someone in my life who cares about how I do.”

— Arianna, Kenwood Academy High School

“I’ve grown more confident in myself. I’ve grown more confident in the work I can do.”

— Jillian, Kenwood Academy High School

“What I love most about music is that people can let all the stuff out that they have in their minds.”

— Tywayne, CICS Lloyd Bond Charter School

CHICAGO

2022 - 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

In our Chicago region, **30** professional musician mentors served **486** students through **20** programs at **13** schools and community sites.

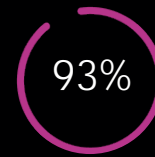
16 ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES

Guitar • Bass • Cinema • Keys • Drums • Latin Percussions
Modern Band • Music Production • Musical Theater
Songwriting • Spoken Word • Photography & Digital Media
Poetry & Creative Writing • Rap • Vocals

MAKING AN IMPACT



of students demonstrated measurable growth in 2 or more core Positive Youth Development capacities



of students said that their mentor pays attention to their lives outside the program and can be counted on for help



of students felt encouraged by their mentors to work through difficult problems



of students said that their mentor expects them to explore new interests and do their best



of students would recommend Guitars Over Guns to a friend



Highlight of the CENTURY! President Obama stopped by Haven Studios in Bronzeville to meet our mentees & hear their points of view.



Welcome to Waukegan! This year we expanded our reach thanks to the support of Illinois State Senators Adriane Johnson, Elgie R. Sims, Jr., and Mattie Hunter.



Andre "Add-2" Daniels
Regional Director, Chicago
Founder, Haven Studios



Lisa Thompson
Director of Donor Impact



Dominic "I.B." Pettis EL
Programs Director



Mark Anderson
High School Programs
Manager



Alex Peyton-Levine
Regional Coordinator

**OUR
TEAM
CHICAGO**



Dr. Larry Reiner, Ed.D.
Legislative Liaison/Program
Advocate



Jeremiah "RE@L" Fristoe*
Studio Director,
Haven Studios



Chris "Robbin" Horace*
Production Director,
Haven Studios



Dennis Thompson
Mixed Media Specialist
Director, Haven Cinema



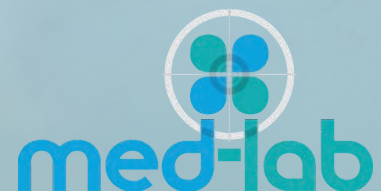
Jeremy Jervis
Studio Director, Mosaic Hub

Notes of Activism: Music transforms our communities

Med-Lab is thrilled to continue being a sponsor for the Guitars Over Guns annual fundraising event.

Congratulations to all of the students in the program for your dedication and desire to reach your full potential.

#ChooseYourSound



OUR SITES

CHICAGO

NORTH SUBURBS

- Mosaic Hub, North Chicago/Waukegan



WEST SIDE

- Washington Irving Elementary School
- William P. Nixon Public School
- Roberto Clemente Community Academy



SOUTHWEST SIDE

- Evergreen Academy Middle School
- James Shields Middle School
- Curie Metro High School



SUMMER PROGRAMS

- Camp GOGO @ Covenant Harbor
- Haven Studios @ Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church
- Songwriting & Peer Mentoring @ Curie Metro High School
- Photography & Digital Media @ Kenwood Academy High School
- Guitar and Keyboard Intensive @ Roberto Clemente Community Academy



SOUTH SIDE

- Art In Motion
- CICS Lloyd Bond Charter School
- Gary Comer College Prep Middle School
- Kenwood Academy High School
- Wendell Phillips Academy High School
- Haven Studios @ Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church
- Electronic Monitoring Program of The Juvenile Temporary Detention Center



*powered in part by After School Matters

^powered in part by Ingenuity's Creative Schools Fund

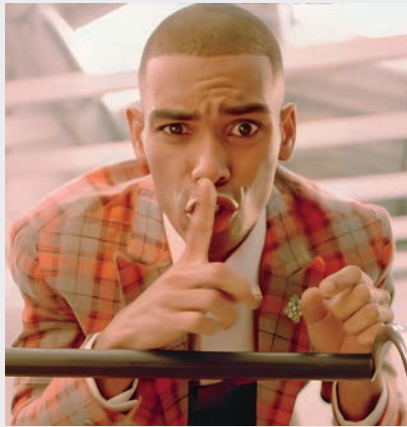
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THE GREEN FAMILY FOUNDATION THANKS
GUITARS OVER GUNS FOR THEIR
IMPACTFUL WORK IN THE COMMUNITY



GREEN FAMILY
FOUNDATION

FON congratulates

Guitars Over Guns

on **15 years** of

empowering youth through

music & mentorship



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CHICAGO MENTORS



Jorge Alvarado
Student Engineer,
Haven Studios



Troy Downey
Guitar



**Janetta "Netta
Sherrell" Goines**
Bass, Percussion



Henry Hollinshead
Guitar



Josh Levine
Keys



**Cameron "C.A.M."
Currie***
Rap



Zaria "Zeeniith" Evans*
Producer, Haven
Cinema Photography &
Digital Media



**David "D Major"
Gueringer**
Music Production,
Keys



**Chris "Robbin"
Horace***
Production Director,
Haven Studios
Studio Engineer



Ryan Mayer
Percussion, Guitar



Bobby Cooper
Music Production



**Jeremiah "RE@L"
Fristoe***
Studio Director,
Haven Studios
Music Production



**Gerard "Geelewie"
Gueringer**
Music Production



Jeremy Jervis
Studio Director,
Mosaic Hub
Music Production



**Alysha
McElroy-Hodges**
Vocals



**Andre "Add-2"
Daniels**
Founder, Haven
Studios



Joaquin Garcia
Keys



Dolan Heard
Drums & Production



Max Lazarus
Keys,
Music Production



Jesse Parks
Guitar

CHICAGO MENTORS



Andrew DeMuro
Songwriting & Peer
Mentoring



Dana Gatzolis
Guitar, Vocals,
Songwriting



Mark "MJH" Heath
Songwriting



Kenneth Leftridge Jr.
Keys,
Music Production



**Kameron "Ron
Parks" Parker**
Music Production



Jackson Shepard
Guitar



**Jarmiah
"Heart Cry" Scott***
Poetry & Spoken
Word, Haven
Studios



Dexter Sims
Bass



**Adam
"Eleven" Stein**
Guitar & Bass



Evan Thompson
Guitar



Ashley Russell
Production, Vocals



Andi-A'ja Prophet
Student Liaison,
Haven Studios
Wellness Mentor



Natalie Shields
Wellness Mentor
Songwriting



Dennis Thompson
Director, Haven
Cinema
Production &
Mixed Media



Mateo Zapata
Videography



Scan to watch

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS | CHICAGO

BARACK OBAMA AT HAVEN STUDIOS



“

“To have President Barack Obama visit one of our sites was surreal, but to see him genuinely listening to our mentees speak from the heart and directly hear about the impact of our programs was truly an experience beyond words.”

— Haven Studios Founder, Andre “Add-2” Daniels

”

“When we went to that program, you saw this incredible talent in a church basement making music. What was most powerful about it was seeing these young men really looking out for each other. Getting more of that in our communities is also going to make a difference. And that’s what we’re demonstrating through these model communities of My Brother’s Keeper.”

— Barack Obama

"WE CAN'T GIVE UP"

"Even in the absence of action at the federal level you are still seeing communities able to reduce violence by dealing with not just access to guns but just as importantly making sure that the young people in these communities feel as if they've got someone paying attention to them. We don't have room for cynicism and we can't give up."

— Barack Obama



Haven Studios started with a dream and came to fruition when Andre "Add-2" Daniels opened its doors with Dennis Thompson in the basement of Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church in 2016. This year, we celebrated a culmination of the many years of work that went into building this safe space for youth on Chicago's South Side, when President Barack Obama dropped by for a surprise visit with our mentees.

The mentees were blown away, as he shook their hands and spent nearly an hour listening to their words, their stories, and their music. He recognized the unique and transformational work taking place. He shared his excitement around our partnership with My Brother's Keeper Alliance and the investment that the Obama Foundation has made in Guitars Over Guns. He told us that "winning the race is more

often a function of staying the course," and that "the truly significant things in life are seldom done alone."

The visit was also joined by Nate Burleson of CBS Mornings, which aired coverage of the visit. Shortly after, our leadership team received news that we had received the Freedom Summer Grant from My Brother's Keeper Alliance. The grant was provided by Cities United, a project of The Tides Center, with support from The Barack Obama Foundation. This grant made it possible for us to host mental health summits, master classes, open mics, and lock-in sessions for mentees to collaborate and record new music.

This moment was transformational, and we know it's just the start. We can't see what the future holds for Haven Studios.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS



MUSIC VIDEO MAGIC

Chicago mentees from schools across the city collaborated on an ambitious mash-up of “Just Wanna Rock” by Lil Uzi Vert, “The King’s Affirmation” by Iniko, and “Chicago” by Michael Jackson. “Songs were selected by polling the students at all sites, narrowing down to top choices, then having the students vote on top songs,” says High School Programs Manager, Mark Anderson. “The way these pieces were selected allowed us to highlight different students across different sites throughout the video.”

The video was filmed at Artifact Effects, shot and edited by our talented Haven Cinema team. Vocals and instrumental recordings were laid down at Classick Studios, a space which generously welcomed us at no cost. Classick Studios owner, Christopher Inumerable, says he founded the studio because when he was younger, he knew that “to be it, you have to see it,” and that young BIPOC artists need to be in supportive, affordable environments to develop their craft. We’re grateful to have partners like Christopher who drive our mission forward!

AND NOW A SPECIAL GUEST...

We love it when the music community shows up for the youth! Legendary punk-rocker, professor, author, and museum owner, Martin Atkins visited our students at Curie Metro High School this spring. Martin answered a host of questions about being a professional musician. His overall message to students was simple: “A good song lasts for a few minutes; a good relationship lasts a lifetime.” Martin was the first in a series of guest speakers to lend their time and expertise to our Chicago students. The series culminated in May with a visit to the Museum of Post-Punk and Industrial Music on Chicago’s South side, which Martin has owned and operated since 2021!





CAMP GOGO

In June 2023 we embarked on the first-ever edition of Camp GOGO, spending four days at Covenant Harbor in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Guitars Over Guns staff, mentors, and high school volunteers led 7th and 8th grade mentees in an unforgettable camp experience.

Camp GOGO was a whirlwind of creativity, growth, and bonding! The daily schedule consisted of music-making and M-Power wellness sessions in the mornings, and outdoor activities in the afternoons. The activities were aplenty with zip lining, rock climbing, high and low ropes courses, canoeing, pontoon boat rides, campfires, volleyball, basketball, karaoke, a trust walk, and gratitude circles. Our campers were split into three large groups, and named themselves the "Sunset Riders," "Casa Quesadilla Wepa," and "The Cowboys." The mentee groups collectively wrote, performed, and recorded four complete songs to create their original EP, Home Away From Home.

This trip was made possible by The National Endowment for the Arts, and the Camp GOGO EP will share mentees' experiences of their neighborhoods and daily lives, along with memories of the camp experience. Look out for Home Away From Home, coming soon!



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS

CHICAGO

TAKING CENTER STAGE

In May, Guitars Over Guns students at Evergreen Academy Middle School were selected to perform at RE*VER*BER*ATE Arts Festival, sponsored by Chicago Public Schools, Ingenuity, Lollapalooza, and Spotify. Our rising rock stars performed three songs in the Millennium Park Room at the Chicago Cultural Center and engaged in free workshops, artist talks, master classes, and college/career connections with hundreds of peers across from across the city. "It was a great experience for our mentees," said guitar and percussion mentor Ryan Mayer. "They got to see music and art from other schools and played a killer set in front of a full audience."



RELATIONSHIPS ARE EVERYTHING

GOGO Chicago kicked off the 2022-23 school year with an epic Fall performance by our students at Gary Comer Middle School. Mentors Bobby, Kenneth, Dolan,

and Max put together a meaningful experience for their mentees at the school community's very special Town Hall Day. So early in the school year, students had only been learning their instruments for about two months, yet already, they shone bright on stage! One mentee stood out, a vocalist named Payshence. "This girl sang with confidence



and conviction," said Director of Program Quality Andrew DeMuro. "I think we found a diamond in the ruff at Gary Comer!"

2023 AWARD WINNERS

CHICAGO

CHICAGO

Presented in recognition of a mentor who has made a significant impact on our organization, on our community, and in the lives of our Chicago students.

Born and raised just outside of Chicago, Dana is a singer-songwriter and a writer of poetry and prose. Her songwriting hints at an ever-evolving desire to experience life in all of its fullness – embracing the beauty to be found in life’s highs and lows. Brimming with passion for people and creativity, she aims to live with no stone left unturned. Her love for storytelling and hunger for a full, vibrant life gives her voice and songs an earthy, soulful, yet approachable sound. “Friendly folk” may be the perfect description. You can find her albums and latest singles available for streaming on all platforms. Dana has found so much joy in mentoring with Guitars Over Guns. She loves helping her students to find their voice and build confidence through songwriting. You can connect with Dana on Instagram where she has links to all of her music, inspiration, her podcast and upcoming gigs.



Dana Marie
Chicago Mentor of the Year



Armanie Torres
Chicago All-Star Student

Presented to a Chicago student who demonstrates exceptional leadership while serving as a supportive and positive presence for other youth.

Armanie Torres is a 6th grade student. He first joined Guitars Over Guns 2 years ago at William P. Nixon Elementary, where he received mentorship in the disciplines of vocals, songwriting, and percussion. “I’ve seen Armanie’s growth over the last few years, and his artistic achievement,” says Chicago Programs Director Dominic “I.B.” Pettis EL. “He’s expressed himself through songwriting, and he has demonstrated his excellence through performances such as our Regional Showcase. But the most amazing thing is how he is with his classmates, and how he shows leadership in the classroom. Armanie is very deserving of this award.” As an extra special occurrence, Armanie is highlighted as our 2023 All-Star Student alongside his own mentor, Dana Marie, this year’s Chicago Mentor of the Year – a deserved honor for two superstars.

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

CHICAGO

From curtain call to final bow, our Partners make an impact every step of the way. As an official Guitars Over Guns Partner, you're a VIP in every audience we entertain. From our student showcases to our signature Band Together event – and all things in between – you'll groove to the music, watch our kids shine on stage, and know that you are making a difference. Learn more at guitarsoverguns.org/become-a-partner

RECORD EXEC (\$50,000)



ENSEMBLE (\$1,000)



PEOPLES GAS*



Sweetwater



MUSICIAN (\$5,000)

■ Helen V. Brach Foundation



Music Foundation

Reverb

STAGE CREW (\$500)



SUPERCritical



In memory of Michael Lafferty

BAND MANAGER (\$2,500)



MacArthur Foundation



STERN PERKOSKI MENDEZ

CHICAGO IMPACT COMMITTEE

Vanessa Abron

Jen Mercer

Jen Boisseau

Kunaal Mehra

Elayne Granger

Sarah Moss

Kerry Jordan*

Thomas Reutter

Mark McShane*

Carl Washington

*Chicago Regional Board of Directors



It is with great appreciation and respect that we recognize the leadership of the following Legislators for their vision in securing significant State Funding to sustain and expand Guitars Over Guns' direct services. This commitment will greatly impact the lives of our children and their families, in their respective legislative districts and the surrounding communities.

Senator Elgie R. Sims Jr.

Majority Caucus Appropriations Leader
17th State Senatorial District

Senator Mattie Hunter

Assistant Majority Leader
3rd State Senatorial District

Senator Adriane Johnson

Chairperson, Education Committee
30th State Senatorial District

Representative Nicholas K. Smith

Majority Officer & Sargent at Arms
34th State Representative District

Representative Kimberly du Buclet

Appropriations – Higher Education
Committee Member
5th State Representative District

Representative Rita Mayfield

Appropriations – Public Safety
Chairperson
60th State Representative District



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**We're proud to support
Guitars Over Guns
for their impactful work
in the community,
empowering youth through
music and mentorship.**

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of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association





STUDENT VOICES

“Guitars Over Guns has fueled my connection with music. It’s given me a vision for what I want to accomplish, motivated me to look at music differently, and made me better overall.”

— Amir, Student, USC Hybrid High

“I appreciate the mentors for teaching me to read the tabs and chord charts from some of my favorite songs, and for pushing me to turn my hobby into a passion that could last a lifetime.”

— Calvin, Student, USC Hybrid High

LOS ANGELES

2022 - 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

In our Miami region, **3** professional musician mentors served **240** students at **1** school site.

4 ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES

Guitar • Drums • Piano • Music Production

MAKING AN IMPACT*



of students surveyed demonstrated measurable growth in 2 or more core Positive Youth Development capacities



of students surveyed would recommend Guitars Over Guns to a friend



of students surveyed felt encouraged by their mentors to work through difficult problems



of students surveyed said that their mentor expects them to explore new interests and do their best



of students surveyed said that their mentor pays attention to their lives outside the program and can be counted on for help



Our mentors partnered with USC Hybrid High’s Visual & Performing Arts teacher, Ms. Darlisa Ali, to bring lessons in World Music to over 200 9th and 11th graders.



Our Hybrid High band hit the stage at this year’s Cam For a Cause gala, hosted in Hollywood by the Cameron Boyce Foundation.

**students surveyed = a subset of 22 students who engaged in Guitars Over Guns’ after-school & flex block program at USC Hybrid High School*

MENTORS

LOS ANGELES



Marcelo Araujo-Cox
Guitar, Music



Lucas Lenny
Drums, Percussion



Ella Luna
Vocals

CAM FOR A CAUSE

Our L.A. students had the honor of performing at the Cam For a Cause gala, hosted in Hollywood by the Cameron Boyce Foundation. The Foundation honors the legacy of actor and advocate Cameron Boyce by not only striving to cure epilepsy through research, education, and awareness, but also by supporting causes dear to Cameron's heart, such as arts education and gun violence prevention. One unforgettable moment from the evening was when our student Amir gathered his bandmates for a heartfelt pep talk, helping them shake out the nerves before they took the stage. Amir himself shared his own original music and beats, captivating the audience. The night was further illuminated by special appearances from notable Disney Channel stars and a headlining performance by Macy Gray. For our students, this Hollywood experience – meeting their favorite stars, capturing memories in the photo booth, and sharing a moment of unity and support on stage – is truly what Guitars Over Guns is all about.



Marcelo Araujo-Cox
LOS ANGELES MENTOR OF THE YEAR

Presented in recognition of a mentor who has made a significant impact on our organization, on our community, and in the lives of our Los Angeles students.

Marcelo Araujo-Cox is a guitarist/producer from Miami Beach, living in Los Angeles. Marcelo has produced music with artists such as Iban Lee, Nicole Ngo and MEVS while finishing his Bachelor's Degree at Los Angeles College of Music. Artists he has performed with include Anton Iakukhin and Lucas Lenny. In addition to performing, Marcelo has been teaching private lessons since 2017, and carries an immense appreciation for the generosity of the music organizations and educators that have helped him improve as a young musician. Marcelo makes it his duty to inspire his students to find their own path and form a relationship with music that could be cherished long-term.



Shoot riffs, *not bullets.*

Music education combined with mentorship is a powerful means for students from our most vulnerable communities to overcome hardship, find their voice and reach their potential as tomorrow's leaders.

That is why Bradesco Bank is a proud supporter of Guitars Over Guns.

We firmly believe that through music education, our children and youth have the ability to express their feelings, shape new perspectives, build self-confidence, promote social inclusion, and cope with adversities.



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a special thank you to board member Cathy Gordon
for her dedication to the organization's mission

IN MEMORIUM



Christopher Valdez

On February 10, 2023, Christopher Valdez lost his life to gun violence. Chris was a graduate of the GATE program and worked with mentors J.Howard and Bertrand Boyd II. Chris is remembered for showing growth and promise for the future. J.Howard will always hold the memory of Chris's graduation and the tears of joy in his sister's eyes at his GATE program graduation.

On June 15, 2023, Danny lost his life in a car accident on I-95. Danny was an especially revered and effective local businessman and activist. The Roots Collective venture he co-founded in Liberty City has become a vital engine for Black and minority entrepreneurship. Agnew described his work as "artspreneurship" – he promoted business and culture as a means to uplift the community.



Danny Agnew

Credit: Al Diaz / Miami Herald;
via GoFundMe

Art created for GOGO by Lebo



David "Lebo" Le Batard

On August 1, 2023, David "Lebo" Le Batard lost his life after a year-long battle with cancer. Lebo is recognized for working in a wide spectrum of creative mediums including murals, paintings and sculptures. Lebo is the innovator of Postmodern Cartoon Expressionism – a combination of cartoon imagery, richly saturated balances of color and unique linear composition brought together in a narrative style to inspire emotion and create layers of meaning.

Sherieff Medlock, also known as "Royal Rieff," was a former mentee of Andre "Add-2" Daniels and Dennis Thompson in the Haven Studios program in Chicago. Rieff was known for his infectious energy, his creativity, his smile, and his love for supporting and bringing others together. On November 1st, 2022, Sharieff passed away at the age of 26. His mother has created the Royal Rieff Reading and Literacy Program in his honor.



Sherieff Medlock

MENTOR INSTITUTE

2023



IN THIS TOGETHER

*93 professional musician-mentors.
4 intensive days. Lots of empanadas!*

Guitars Over Guns' Mentor Institute is an annual convening designed to train and equip our teaching artists from Miami, Chicago, and Los Angeles with the skills and best practices for implementing high quality arts-based mentoring programs as they head into the school year.

Held in August, this year's Mentor Institute provided 32 total hours of training to our mentors, including sessions on our organization-wide core values, eclectic repertoire of collaboratively-selected teaching songs, the growth of our M-Power mental health program, our systems for using data to improve teaching practice, and a powerful alumni panel discussion. Mentors also received 6 hours of training each in restorative justice circle-keeping and the Modern Band framework for teaching music, facilitated by our partners at Chicago's Praxis Institute and Music Will, respectively. These long training days were capped with shared meals, mentor committee meetings, jam sessions, and ultimately, the creation of bonds that stretch across the country and last throughout the year.

Mentor Institute kicks off a full scope of year-round professional development opportunities offered to mentors. Though separated by geography during the year, mentors look forward to reconvening virtually in February at "Re-Institute" – a one-day, virtual retreat designed to fortify the foundation we built back in August.

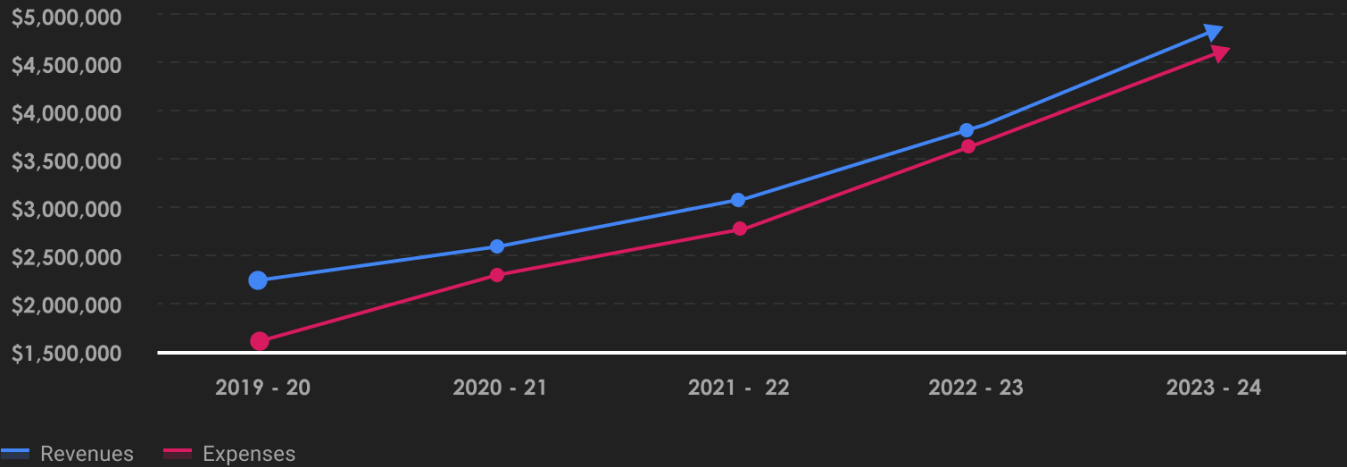
When operating in-person and at full capacity, Mentor Institute is a \$100,000 annual project, from covering travel expenses to compensating every mentor for the intensive hours spent in this crucial, multi-day training. We can't think of a more worthy investment. By equipping our team with resources to light the way through the challenges and triumphs of the program year, we are advancing the core tenet of Guitars Over Guns' mission: that an effective mentor can positively transform the trajectory of a young person's life.

Special Thanks!

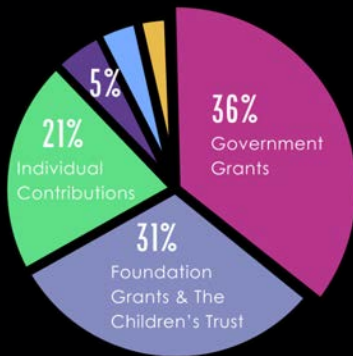
The Anderson
Bay 13 Brewery
Camillus House
Larry & Nancy Cohen
Half Moon Empanadas

Music Will
Praxis Institute
Red Rooster Overtown
SHOTS Wynwood

ANNUAL BUDGET GROWTH, LAST 5 YEARS



SOURCES OF REVENUE



- Government Grants
- Foundation Grants & The Children's Trust
- Individual Contributions
- Special Events
- Program Services & Earned Revenue (4%)
- Corporate Contributions (3%)



STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



Launched Alumni Listening tour to reconnect with our alumni, hear how we can better serve them, and create pathways to college, career and beyond.



Expanded use of Hello Insight organization-wide, an evidence-based Positive Youth Development data collection tool helping us measure our impact among a national cohort of peer organizations.



Deepened collective impact work with the Miami Gardens Music Alliance (powered by the Music Access Miami Fund), collaborating with Miami's arts-based youth development ecosystem to ensure that every single student in Miami Gardens, FL receives access to high quality music education.



Invested in our rising talent to bring our impact to the next level, including elevating a Director of Program Quality and the new position of Chicago Regional Director for Haven Studios founder Andre "Add-2" Daniels.



Launched use of the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS), a method of powerfully aligning our team to achieve key strategic priorities that represent our mission, vision, and values.



Welcomed President Barack Obama to Haven Studios as recipients of the Freedom Summer Grant from the Obama Foundation & My Brother's Keeper Alliance.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Our goal is to serve 10,000 students annually across the U.S. by 2030.



MIAMI

M-POWER

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

All young people deserve a safe space to express their true selves and tell their stories fearlessly and authentically.

That's why we created M-Power, our first-ever dedicated mental health initiative. The program has been providing trauma-informed social-emotional support to students since launching in 2019 through targeted social work interventions including no-cost individual and group wellness coaching. Mentors also receive key resources, including one-on-one wellness coaching,

professional development, crisis response support, lesson planning guidance, and more.

Director of Mental Health & Wellness, Natasha Santana-Viera (LCSW), is joined on-the-ground by interns pursuing degrees in social work and music therapy through partnerships with Barry University, Florida Memorial University, Florida Atlantic University, Jewish Community Services South Florida, and University of Miami's Frost School of Music. M-Power interns are embedded directly within our arts-based

Guitars Over Guns' M-Power program is powered by the Florida Blue Foundation, with additional support from United Way Miami, Born This Way Foundation, and the Lynne & Nigel Ross Charitable Trust.

Florida Blue 
Foundation



Chicago mentees gathered at Haven Studios for our first-ever Youth Wellness Summit.

programming, working alongside mentors to guide youth through the challenges they face. Along the way, our M-Power team is building trust among students and their families, destigmatizing mental health and building equitable, accessible pathways to care.

This year, M-Power is ensuring that our staff and site coordinators receive training and certification in Youth Mental Health First Aid, empowering our mentor corps with life-saving knowledge. Not only that, but

M-Power has been deepening its impact in Chicago, launching a series of youth-driven Wellness Summits and facilitating powerful wellness activities at our Camp GOGO summer youth retreat. The 2023-24 program year also sees the brand-new addition of Wellness Mentors to our Miami and Chicago teams, a corps of qualified healing artists working hand in hand with arts mentors to support students' creative and holistic growth.



Natasha Santana-Viera, Director of Mental Health & Wellness, was invited to facilitate a workshop on trauma, burnout and self-care at Florida Blue's 2023 Community Health Symposium.

MAKING AN IMPACT

The Childhood Global Assessment Scale (C-GAS) is a widely recognized tool to measure young people’s psychological and social well-being. In 2022-23, 62% of students scored 81 or higher, indicating they were doing well. Additionally, 100% of GOGO students whose score indicated some noticeable problems showed an increase of 5 points or more!



2022-23 M-POWER INTERNS



Daniela Artilles, Erin Brolley, Caroline Gardner, Chelsey Jacobs, Tiana Lanier, Rothan Lyle, Gabriel Rubio, and Malissa Saintil.

“The students and I bonded through our one-on-one sessions, mentor-led circle discussions, and learned healing through music, art, wellness, and mental health. In my time with the students, they improved and presented knowledge on the importance of mental health, confidence, self-awareness, and overall wellness. The students were provided with resources such as hygiene products during my time interning, gearing them up to be successful in the program. With GOGO, I had the opportunity to inspire, create, heal, innovate, support, counsel, and cheer on for the future of the youth.”
 —Malissa Saintil, M-Power Intern, 2022-2023

“During my incredible time working with GOGO, I saw growth in the majority of my students, especially one. This specific student and I built a relationship that was based on transparency, motivation, and love. While working with her, I learned about her extremely difficult life at home. I was able to educate her on breathing techniques and affirmations that she can implement in her daily life. These tools allowed her to open up authentically and tap into a unique form of self-expression. When I reflect on the progress she has made, it brings a gigantic smile to my face. She embodies true resilience and is an inspiration to me.”

—Chelsey Jacobs, M-Power Intern, Spring 2023



"LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS: WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?" -MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Congratulations to the Guitars Over Guns Organization for their unwavering commitment to transforming the lives of young people in the Miami and Chicago communities. It's an honor to support the GOGO team, which is not only making a meaningful difference but also sets the standard for youth mentorship programs. Your dedication to nurturing the talents and aspirations of the next generation is truly inspiring.

TANNER LEE





KNIGHT
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an informed citizenry as essential for a representative democracy to function effectively.

engaged, equitable and inclusive communities.



Many
congratulations to
the Bernsteins and
Guitars Over Guns
for all they do.

SCOTT & BECKI ETZLER



"I NEVER FAIL, I EITHER WIN OR I LEARN"
-NELSON MANDELA

To our Guitars Over Guns Family,
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! Thank you for 15 years of selfless
dedication to instilling our Core Values:

- *Expect Excellence
- *Embrace Failure
- *Youth First

- *Relationships are Everything
- *Embrace Your Weird
- *Find Joy

BOB & KATHY BERNSTEIN



Celebrating a year of incredible growth and success transforming the lives of countless young people. Congratulations GOGO Family.

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ALUMNI PROGRAM

PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE

Growth. Change. Adventurous. Passionate. Legacy.



When asked to describe their GOGO experience in one word, alumni in Miami and Chicago didn't hesitate. "GOGO were the best years of my life," said Korina, an alum from Chicago's Evergreen Academy.

In Spring 2023, we partnered with the Morgridge Family Foundation's MAP Program to roll out a series of Alumni Listening Tours, to help us better inform future alumni engagement efforts and our continued impact on youth as they graduate from our programs and make their way toward their chosen next step. MAP paired us with Naika Pierre, a MAP Fellow – one of a cohort of emerging social impact leaders dedicated to supporting and managing special projects for impactful organizations across the nation.

Hosted as intimate dinners, the Listening Tours were memorable convenings that celebrated our amazing alumni and captured their feedback on how we can best continue to empower our alumni community. We were joined by alumni from as far back as our flagship program and as recent as the class of 2022. Grown up from the middle and high schoolers who first picked up an instrument in our programs, they are now college students, musicians, nurses, real estate agents, mentors, and even parents.



“GOGO were the best years of my life.”
—*Korina, Chicago*

From opportunities for professional development, to returning to music, to mentoring the current generation of GOGO students, they brainstormed a myriad of ways to better engage our alumni. Reconnecting with one another, they reflected on the community they found as part of their GOGO experience and highlighted the importance of mental health and wellbeing in discussing how to support and empower GOGO's past and future graduates.

Looking forward, GOGO is working to bring on board an alumni engagement coordinator and continuing to engage our alumni through mixers, performance opportunities, and new initiatives as we further our mission of empowerment through music and mentorship – both in the classroom, and beyond.



“I learned from GOGO that family is everything and to follow your passion.”
—*Santamarie, Miami*

“GOGO has allowed me to express myself in positive ways. GOGO is continuously there for me even after all these years.”
—*Symphonie, Miami*

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I support Guitars Over Guns, as their mission to empower and inspire youth through music resonates with our belief in the transformative power of the arts.

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**CHOOSE YOUR SOUND
HALLOWEEN BALL**

Thank you to Guitars Over Guns for your unwavering commitment to empowering kids from vulnerable communities through music and mentorship. Your dedication is helping them discover their boundless potential and inspiring them to become tomorrow's leaders. **You rock!**

 Commissioner
Eileen Higgins
District 5

Congratulations to Guitars Over Guns on your Choose Your Sound Gala!

The power of music can transform lives. Guitars Over Guns is making music to address gun violence and give back to our youth. Thank you for nurturing and inspiring our future leaders.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA



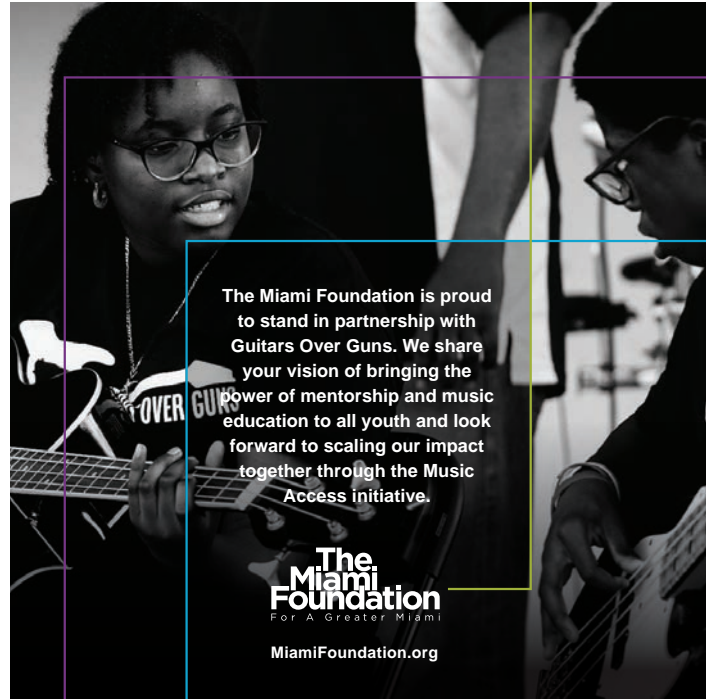
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