

GUITARS  
OVER  
GUNS



JOIN THE LABEL:

INVESTING IN  
OUR MISSION



GUITARS  
OVER  
GUNS



# TALENT IS EVERYWHERE.

GUITARS  
OVER  
GUNS



# OPPORTUNITY IS NOT.





# UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES

SINCE  
2008

innovative arts-based youth  
development organization

Guitars Over Guns has been

using the power of music, mentorship, and the arts

to unlock possibilities for the young people society is failing to reach.







# THE PROBLEM

## DEEPLY CONNECTED, MULTI-FACETED PROBLEMS

Our ability to succeed as an adult can depend on several significant and interrelated factors in our youth:

1. Lack of positive adult relationships
2. Barriers to access to high-quality arts programming
3. Cycle of disenfranchisement and exposure to trauma

Quality after-school programs give children opportunities that help reduce likelihood of taking part in risky behaviors outside of school hours.







# THE PROBLEM

## CRISIS OF CREATIVITY

Complex societal problems are on the rise. Creativity is the engine of problem-solving and innovation, yet creative thinking skills are in decline.

Thriving in today's world demands not only empathy, resilience, and a strong sense of self but also the ability to tackle these challenges with innovative, adaptable solutions. To prepare young people to be leaders and innovators in an ever-changing economy, we must address this crisis of creativity and invest in their potential now.







# THE POWER OF THE ARTS

**MUSIC AND THE ARTS PROVIDE  
A PROVEN PATHWAY, FOR  
ADDRESSING THIS CREATIVITY GAP.**

Research shows that investing in music and the arts significantly enhances creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving: skills that are essential for the success of all young people. Yet, too often, society overlooks the arts as one of the most effective tools for youth development, healing, and mental health.

By cultivating creativity, enhancing academic performance, creating job opportunities, fostering community development, and preparing a future workforce for the innovation economy, an arts education becomes a catalyst for social well-being and long-term economic growth.







## OUR APPROACH

### HOLISTIC MENTORSHIP: THE MISSING LINK



Unlike traditional arts-based programs exclusively focused on creative expression, our trauma-informed approach supports the "whole" child, which drives measurable grade improvement, healthier behaviors, lasting relationship building, and increased well-being.

We've seen firsthand how the combination of mentorship and the arts can break barriers, build bridges, and prepare youth for brighter futures-all while sparking joy and having fun.





# EXPERIENCE CIRCLE

## MUSIC EXPOSURE AND MUSICIANSHIP

- » Quality mentorship
- » Introduction to instruments
- » Methodology

## NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- » Self-efficacy
- » Self-esteem
- » Collaboration
- » Discipline
- » Integrity

## PIPELINE

- » Holistic support: creative, academic, personal & professional
- » Continuum of services from year 1 to alumni hood
- » Mentees becoming mentors



## M-POWER & ALUMNI WRAPAROUND SERVICES

- » Mental health & wellness support services for students, parents, and school partners
- » Staff & mentor trainings on trauma-informed practices
- » Continued artistic & professional support and opportunities for alumni
- » Upskilling our alumni, mentors and staff for internal hires & promotions
- » Track a virtuous alumni network to provide youth with continued ongoing support

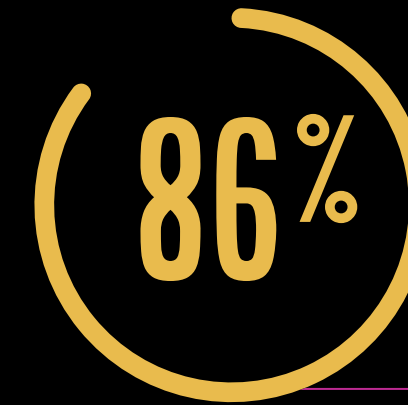




## WHY CHICAGO

From proof of concept in Miami to proof of scale in Chicago, Guitars Over Guns Chicago launched in this region in 2014, starting with one school and now serving 22 schools and community sites. Chicago's vibrant music and arts culture inspires creativity, while the city's systemic challenges, such as youth violence and inequitable access to resources, highlight the urgent need for programs like ours.

Evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs save \$5 for every \$1 spent compared to other social services, while significantly reducing crime and violence. By addressing these issues through mentorship and music, Guitars Over Guns Chicago empowers youth to express themselves, build resilience, and create safer, stronger communities.



of all 2024 youth  
homicide victims  
are from firearms

**SCHOOLS WITH MUSIC PROGRAMS HAVE  
AN ESTIMATED 90.2% GRADUATION  
RATE AND 93.9% ATTENDANCE RATE  
COMPARED TO SCHOOLS WITHOUT MUSIC  
EDUCATION, WHICH AVERAGE 72.9%  
GRADUATION AND 84.9% ATTENDANCE**







## WHERE WE WORK



# MIA

**MIAMI**

**863 students**

**72 mentors**

**35 school and  
community programs**



# CHI

**CHICAGO**

**637 students**

**62 mentors**

**24 school and  
community programs**



# LAX

**LOS ANGELES**

**30 students**

**3 mentors**

**1 school partnership**



# NYC

**NEW YORK CITY**

**23 students**

**4 mentors**

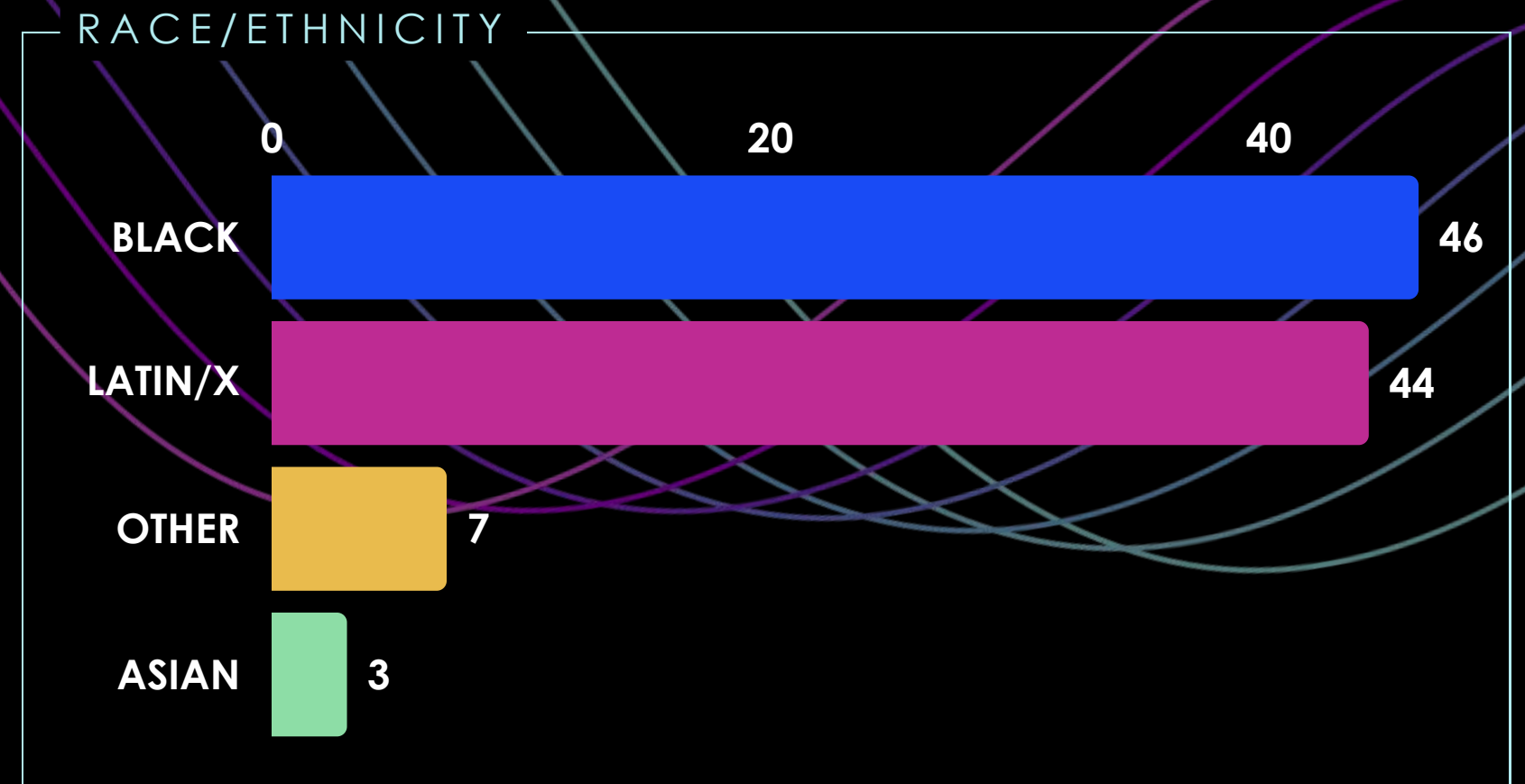
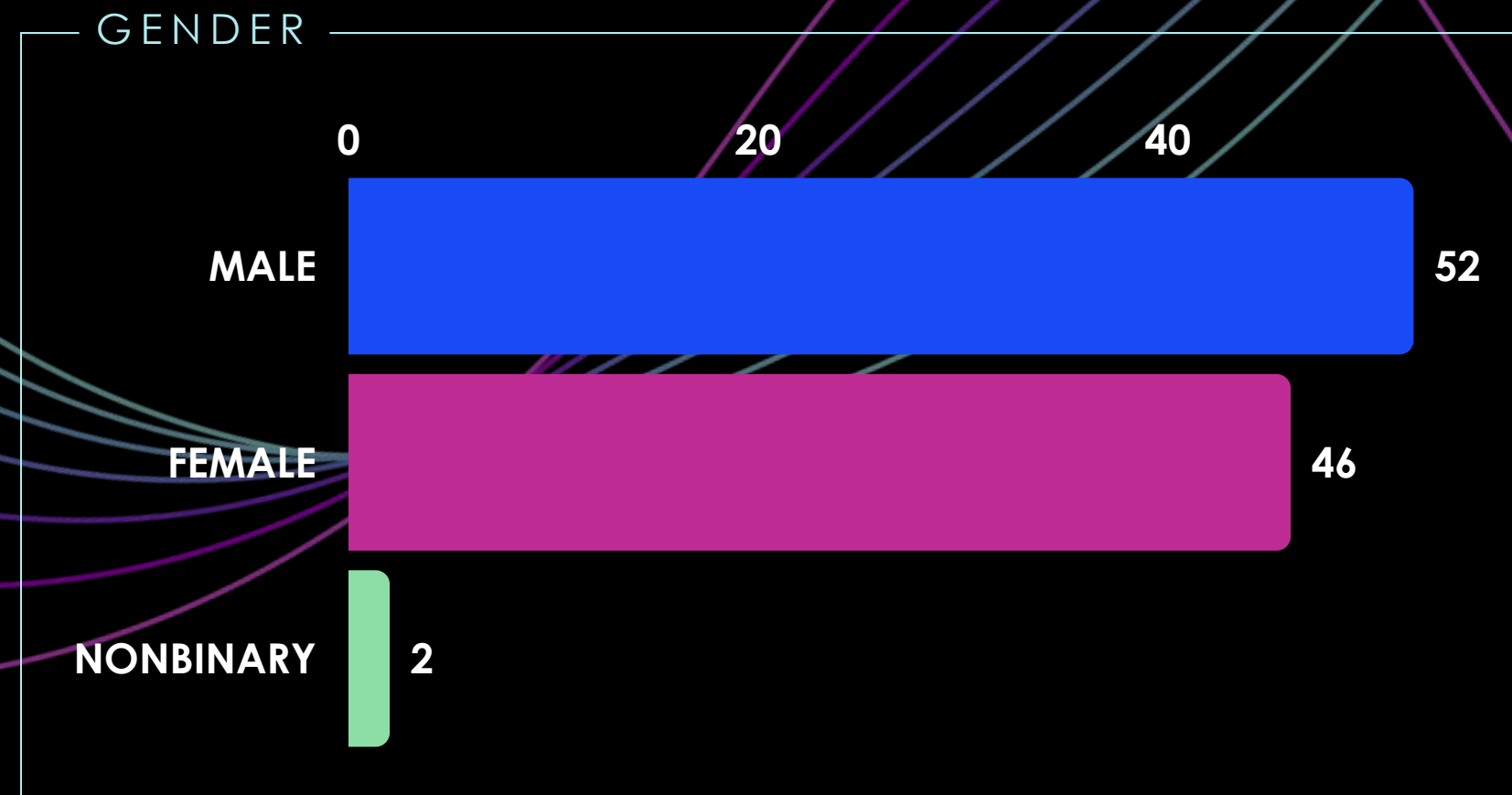
**2 school partnerships**

*\*2024-25 school year projections*





## OUR YOUTH



**95%** OF STUDENTS ARE AT OR BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

**20%** OF STUDENTS IDENTIFY AS HAVING A DISABILITY

\*2023-24 school year



## OUR IMPACT

STUDENTS

637

MENTORS

62

SITES

24

ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES TAUGHT:

13

- GUITAR
- MODERN BAND
- KEYS
- VOCALS
- PHOTOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL MEDIA
- BASS
- MUSIC PRODUCTION
- POETRY AND CREATIVE WRITING
- LATIN PERCUSSION
- DRUMS
- SONGWRITING
- RAP
- SPOKEN WORD

\*2024-25 school year projections





# OUR SITES

## SOUTHWEST

Evergreen Academy  
Middle School

James Shields Middle School

Curie Metro High School

A.O.N. Productions  
Career Pathway

## WEST SIDE

Roberto Clemente  
Community Academy

Rusu-McCarten  
Boys & Girls Club

Washington Irving  
Elementary School

William H. Brown  
STEM Magnet School

William P. Nixon  
Public School

## WAUKEGAN

Mosaic Hub

Waukegan High School  
– Brookside Campus

JNAC Creatives

John R. Lewis  
Middle School

Boys & Girls Club  
of Lake County

## SOUTH SIDE

Chicago Collegiate  
High School

CICS Prairie

CICS Lloyd Bond  
Charter School

Gary Comer College  
Prep Middle School

Kenwood Academy  
High School

Gary Comer  
Youth Center

Art in Motion

Haven Studios

Juvenile Probation  
Program @ TASC

Haven Cinema

Cinema Career  
Pathway

## SUMMER PROGRAMS

Camp GOGO @  
Covenant Harbor

Haven  
Studios

Kenwood Academy  
High School

Curie Metro  
High School

Roberto Clemente  
Community Academy

Haven  
Cinema



## SIGNATURE EVENTS

### 1. DAY OF GRATITUDE

Students, families, mentors, school partners, and community members enjoy a meaningful celebration of their collective achievements.

### 2. MUSIC VIDEO

Students in every city professionally film and record a collaborative music video. This annual regional project demonstrates the power of music as a universal language that can bridge neighborhood, cultural and other boundaries, finding common ground in the drive toward self-expression, connection, and empathy.

### 3. SPRING SHOWCASE

Watch our students shine on the big stage! Every school performs as their own band ensemble, presenting songs the students have chosen – or even an original song they wrote themselves! We also feature a student art exhibit from our visual art program. The concert vibes will have you on your feet, dancing and cheering our young rockstars on!







## SIGNATURE EVENTS

### 4. CAMP GOGO

Our annual Camp GOGO takes place in Covenant Harbor, a picturesque setting of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Over the course of four days, our young musicians enjoy a journey filled with outdoor adventures, creative exploration, and deep self-reflection. The youth create the theme and record an EP during camp.

### 5. MENTOR INSTITUTE

Institute is our foundation for building both individual and collective leadership among our frontline workers. Mentors receive 34 hours of paid training over four days. Workshops cover instrument and song instruction, mental health and wellness, trauma-informed teaching tactics, and culturally affirming teaching practices.







## SIGNATURE EVENTS

### 6. BAND TOGETHER

This fall event is our second annual fundraiser and features live mentor and student performances, a dynamic silent auction, and uplifting music.

### 7. CHOOSE YOUR SOUND GALA

This memorable gala hosted in Miami will have you on your feet dancing and enjoying live performances from mentors, alumni, and special guests.

Last year, our 11th annual Choose Your Sound Gala raised nearly \$900,000!







# WE NEED YOU.

# JOIN THE LABEL

**As an exclusive donor and member of The Label, you will become a distinguished VIP in every audience we captivate.**

**Experience the music like never before, witness our talented youth shine on stage, and revel in the knowledge that your involvement is making a profound difference.**





**SILVER:**  
**\$2,500+**

#### RECOGNITION & ENGAGEMENT

- Inclusion in Band Together on-site marketing materials.
- 1/4 page advertisement in annual magazine.
- 2 tickets to our Annual Student Showcase and Day of Gratitude.
- 2 invitations to Band Together.







**GOLD:**  
**\$5,000+**

RECOGNITION & ENGAGEMENT

- Inclusion in Band Together on-site marketing materials.
  - 1/2 page advertisement in annual magazine.
  - Highlighted in an annual social media post, listed in music video credit.
  - Receive an exclusive GOGO Goodie Bag.
- 4 tickets to our Annual Student Showcase and Day of Gratitude.
  - 2 invitations to Band Together.







**DOUBLE GOLD:**  
**\$10,000+**

#### RECOGNITION & ENGAGEMENT

- Inclusion in Band Together on-site marketing materials.
- Highlighted in an annual social media post, listed in music video credit.
- 1-page advertisement in annual magazine.
- Receive an exclusive GOGO Goodie Bag.

- 2 invitations to Band Together.
- 4 tickets to our Annual Student Showcase and Day of Gratitude.







**PLATINUM:**  
**\$25,000+**

#### RECOGNITION & ENGAGEMENT

- Recognition in Band Together marketing materials.
- National newsletter logo inclusion, social media post & music video credit.
- 1-page advertisement in annual magazine.
- Receive an exclusive GOGO Goodie Bag.
- 4 invitations to Band Together.
- 6 tickets to our Annual Student Showcase and Day of Gratitude.







**DOUBLE PLATINUM:**  
**\$50,000+**

#### RECOGNITION & ENGAGEMENT

- Presenting Partner at Band Together, recognition during awards presentation.
- 2-page advertisement in annual magazine, premiere placement.
- 4 invitations to Band Together.
- National newsletter logo inclusion, social media post & music video credit.
- Recognition in the Annual Student Showcase Speech.
- 6 tickets to our Annual Student Showcase and Day of Gratitude.





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DIAMOND:

\$100,000+

#### RECOGNITION & ENGAGEMENT

- Title inclusion for Band Together & on-stage recognition during the awards presentation.
- National newsletter logo inclusion, social media post & music video credit.
- 2-page advertisement in annual magazine, premiere placement.

- 6 tickets to our Annual Student Showcase and Day of Gratitude.
- 4 invitations to Band Together.







# THE LABEL FOUNDING MEMBERS

• Updated 4/24/25

## DOUBLE PLATINUM (\$50,000+)



THE HOWARD & PAULA  
TRIENENS FUND

## DOUBLE GOLD (\$10,000+)

MAMMEL FAMILY  
FOUNDATION

## GOLD (\$5,000+)

Goldman  
Sachs

MARK &  
CHRISTIE  
OSMOND

HIEDE &  
KEN  
BUCKMAN



HEAR US  
ROAR

GOLDEN  
FAMILY  
FOUNDATION

Reverb

BARRY  
QUIRKE

MARK  
MC SHANE

## SILVER (\$2,500+)

MacArthur  
Foundation



HUGH K. AND  
ELEANOR D.  
ANDREWS  
FAMILY FUND

McMASTER-CARR.

ZACHARY  
BENNING

THE  
CHICAGO  
COMMUNITY  
TRUST



LEONARD  
GOODMAN

CHUCKY AR LA  
FOUNDATION



**“EACH MENTOR I’VE MET HAS DONE  
SOMETHING FOR ME TO CHANGE MY VIEWS  
ON MUSIC AND LIFE. I’VE BEEN ABLE TO  
TAKE EVERY PIECE OF ADVICE THEY’VE GIVEN  
AND ADAPT IT TO MY ENVIRONMENT.”**

**- KYLA W.,**  
CURIE METRO HIGH SCHOOL





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# THANK YOU

## CHICAGO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BRANDON BLACKWELL

JASON HAWKINS

MICHAEL JONES

KERRY JORDAN

MARK MCSHANE

LAUREN O’NEIL

CARL WASHINGTON

## CHICAGO IMPACT COMMITTEE

VANESSA ABRON

SARAH MOSS

BRANDON KOSSACK