

the unscripted project

2023-2024 Annual Report

NAVIGATING YOUR
WORLD THROUGH IMPROV



www.unscriptedproject.org



"The Unscripted Project taught me
how to approach people with
kindness and openness, giving
everyone a chance to share their
heart and mind"

**UNSCRIPTED STUDENT
10TH GRADE**

Table of Contents

Who We Are	4
Our Impact	7
Year in Review	11
Financials & Our Future	16
In Gratitude	18
Support Us	23



Who We Are

Need

Traditional education is not adequately preparing young people with the social-emotional and interpersonal skills necessary for life within and beyond the classroom

Mission

To equip students with the building blocks for personal and professional success through the power of an improv education

Vision

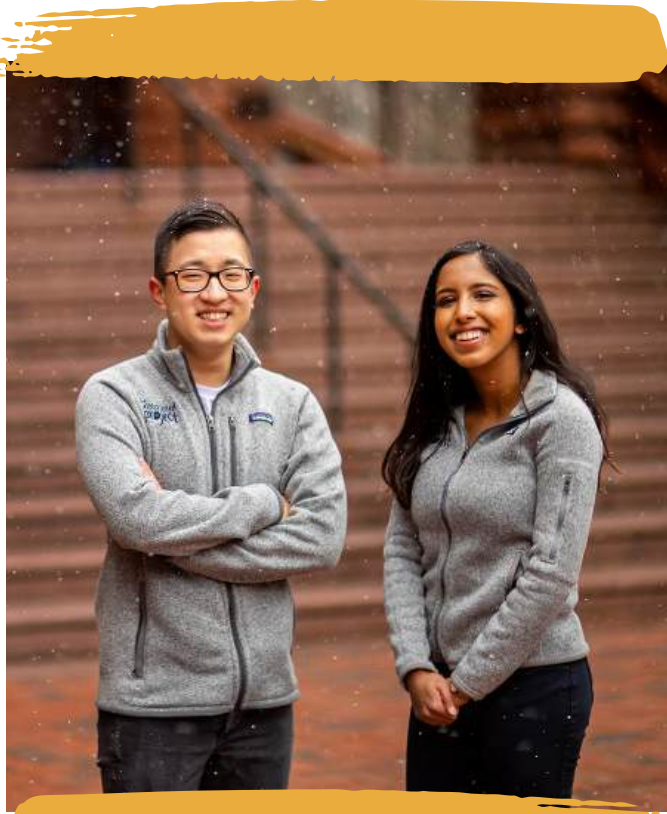
Every child leaves school prepared to embrace challenge, seize opportunity and unlock their own potential

About Us



The Unscripted Project is an award-winning, BIPOC-led Philadelphia-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to equipping students with critical social-emotional and interpersonal skills through the transformative medium of improvisational theater. We do this primarily through our core program, a free 10-week series of in-school applied improv workshops in public middle and high schools. Since our inception in 2020, we have worked with over 3,000 students. Through our workshops, students develop key life skills like speaking confidently, collaborating effectively, and growing from mistakes in a low-stakes and laughter-filled environment. In addition, we launched the Unscripted House Team, a free, after-school program for Philadelphia high school students that includes improv immersion, college and career mentoring, and arts-based field trips. For corporations and organizations, our Unscripted for Teams workshops provide customized improv-based training sessions to build teamwork, communication, and leadership skills.

Letter from the Founders



Dear Unscripted Family,

Happy four years! In this past year, we have worked with over 1,000 students in Philly and beyond; overall, we have worked with over 3,000 students. Thanks to your continued support, and belief in our mission, we have been able to grow both the scope and scale of our programs quickly, while continuously incorporating our learnings back into our organization.

This past year, we launched our Unscripted House Team, our new year-long afterschool program for high school students in Philadelphia. Designed to deepen both young people's improv skills and life skills, this program builds a unique community where students support one another, take creative risks, and develop confidence that lasts a lifetime.

We are also honored that Unscripted Project has been in the spotlight this past year: our leadership team served as the keynote for the National Education Association's national conference for urban educators over the summer. Together, through improv exercises, we explored how the art can support healing, storytelling, presentation skills, and community building.

As we enter our fifth year, we're energized to build our afterschool program, pilot our NYC program, and invest in our professional development and Improv for Teams. We look forward to welcoming new classrooms and partners, all while staying true to our mission of nurturing social-emotional learning through improv.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey. Here's to another year of creativity, courage, and growth.

With gratitude,

Philip Chen & Meera Menon
Founders, Unscripted Project

Letter from the Program Director

The 2023-2024 school year marked a transformative period for The Unscripted Project, reaching over 1,000 students and deepening our impact. Our dedicated teaching artists have become trusted figures in classrooms, with teachers eager to bring Unscripted into their schools and sharing our work widely. One teacher even called Unscripted "the most effective SEL tool they have encountered for the classroom."

This year, we proudly launched our after-school program, "The House Team," where students from different schools form strong, supportive communities. We've created a safe, nurturing space that offers meals, resources, and a chance to connect meaningfully beyond the classroom. Our new educator advisory board has also helped refine our programs to better address social-emotional needs and meet PA state standards in an interactive, engaging way. Additionally, we've deepened partnerships across Philadelphia and beyond, collaborating with nonprofits and advocating for arts education at conferences.

Looking ahead, we're committed to enriching students, empowering teachers, and uplifting communities through the transformative power of improv. We're also excited to expand our efforts after school, reaching more students across Philadelphia and extending our programs into new areas like New York.

With gratitude,

Karin Potter-Simmons

Program Director, Unscripted Project





OUR IMPACT



By the Numbers

2023–2024 SCHOOL YEAR IN REVIEW

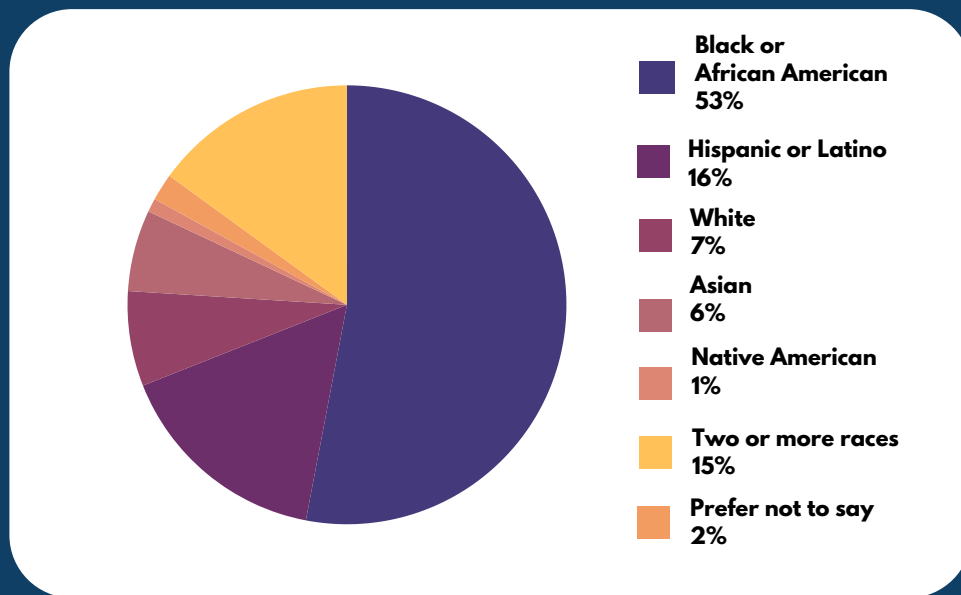
17 Schools

42 classrooms

946

500+ hours of improv education

students



Additional Programming:

200+ students completed one-time workshops

40+ teachers completed our accredited PD course

15 Unscripted for Teams Workshop Series

At the schools we work at, the average percentage of students who are classified as “economically disadvantaged” is 90% ⁽¹⁾

(1) Based on CEP rates obtained by the School District of Philadelphia which tracks the % of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch.

By the Numbers

THE IMPROV TOOL KIT IS TRANSFORMATIVE.

71% of students feel like they can better understand their own emotions and the emotions of others

72% of students feel more comfortable with their peers

65% of students learned how to become a better communicator

65% of students feel improv class will help them in their everyday life

62% of students feel more confident participating in class

75% of students would attend more Unscripted workshops

"Development of SEL skills leads to improved long-term outcomes in educational attainment, employment, and mental health"

Aspen Institute, 2019

By the Stories

Student



"What I found most valuable about improv class was that it gave me and my classmates a chance to understand each other better, how we act, how we speak and what mindsets we have. Improv skills can really help us form better relationships in the future"

-Unscripted Student, 11th Grade

Teaching Artist



"There are moments, working as a teaching artist for The Unscripted Project, that I'll remember always: the time a 6th grader who struggled with strong emotions stood up and delivered an impassioned, improvised speech, in gibberish, during our lesson on non-verbal communication; the class that managed to put on a whole improv show, online during the pandemic; the time a 9th grader who sat for weeks, away from the rest of the class, with his arms folded, came into the circle and started playing the improv games brilliantly. As an artist, it's rare to experience the immediate impact of work, but with The Unscripted Project, we see what improv is doing for students every week in the classroom. It's exciting and inspiring."

-Tara Gadomski, Unscripted Teaching Artist

Classroom Teacher



"The Unscripted Project does a fabulous job working with and motivating students. There was so much noticeable growth from start to finish. If you're looking for a program that can help your students build character while having a great time, The Unscripted Project is the way to go!"

-Classroom Teacher, Wagner Middle School

My students often feel insecure in my classes, and I have wished I could get to know them better. Unscripted gave both me and them the opportunity to let our guard down and build a deeper and more trusting community. Thank you so much!

-Classroom Teacher, Frankford High School



YEAR IN REVIEW

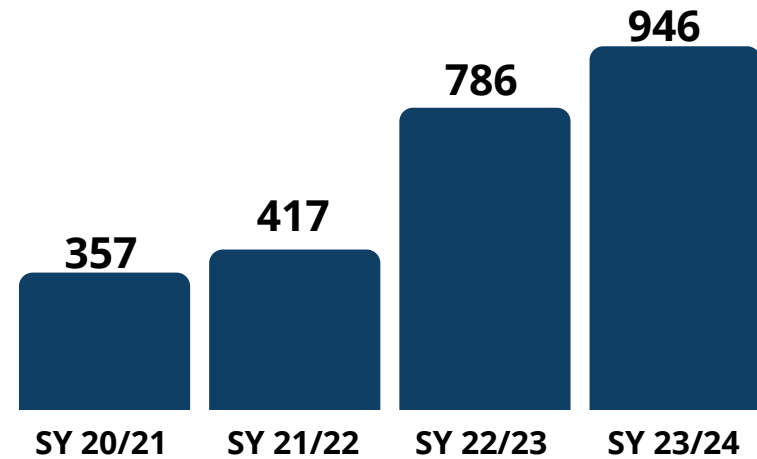
Year in Review

Core Program

This year, we were fortunate to work with our largest cohort yet across 17 public middle and high schools in 42 different classrooms. Our innovative curriculum is aligned to state standards and was refined to focus on building communities that support learning recovery and classroom engagement.

The series is taught by professional teaching artists in collaboration with classroom teachers. Using improv, we create a safe and nurturing environment for students to be themselves, make mistakes and grow with their peers. With a specific focus on developing one key life skill each week, our goal is for students to leave equipped with the improv toolkit — a mindset and a skill set that enables and empowers young people to be more adaptable, confident, and collaborative in life within and beyond the classroom.

Students Served Annually: Core Program



THE UNSCRIPTED ROADMAP:



Year in Review

Unscripted House Team (Afterschool Program)



Launched in 2024, the Unscripted Project House Team is a free after-school program for high school students in Philadelphia, fostering critical life skills such as confidence, communication, and teamwork through improvisational theater training. We have 12 students in our first cohort who are gaining valuable experience in a safe, laughter-filled, creative environment. Students learn to express themselves, think on their feet, and collaborate with peers. Led by professional teaching artists with the support of volunteers, the House Team provides students with high-quality improv instruction, college and career mentorship, and unique field trip experiences. Students also have the opportunity to earn community service hours through performances and public engagements. The program emphasizes consistent attendance and culminates in a final showcase, celebrating the growth and accomplishments of each student.



Year in Review

Community Partnerships



We were thrilled to partner with a number of incredible organizations this year. We collaborated with Mighty Writers on afterschool and summer programming, MakeSPACE Project on teacher professional development, Heights and Summer Search for enrichment programming and we were chosen by MailChimp + their NFL partners (go Eagles!) as part of their “Give Where You Live” campaign.

Improv for Teams



We are continuing to grow our corporate workshop offering — Improv for Teams! These are interactive, low-stakes workshops consisting of improv exercises, reflections, and applications to the workplace with all proceeds directly funding our school program. Our goal is to equip more people with the powerful toolkit of improv in a collaborative and laughter-filled environment. Clients have included start-ups, top consulting firms, Fortune 500 companies, universities and non-profits.

Professional Development



The Unscripted team offered our Act 48 accredited professional development program to 40+ Philadelphia School District teachers this year. Our accredited professional development course is 4 hours and split into 3 modules: Improv as a Pedagogical Tool, Becoming an Improviser, and Classroom Applications of Improv. Over 200 teachers have now participated in this course with 100% of teachers recommending the program.

Year in Review

Presenting at the NCUEA and VEA



The Unscripted Project recently had the honor of presenting at the National Council of Urban Education Associations (NCUEA) Conference and the Virginia Education Association (VEA) Conference, both affiliates of the National Education Association (NEA). The NEA is the largest professional organization of educators in the U.S. with over 3 million members. At these conferences, our team shared how improv education enhances life skills and social-emotional learning. These platforms were pivotal opportunities to showcase how our improv-based curriculum aligns with the NEA's mission to foster students' academic, social, and emotional growth. Thank you to the NEA, NCUEA, and VEA for this inspiring experience.

CBS Feature



The Unscripted Project was thrilled to be featured on CBS Mornings with Gayle King, which was our first introduction to a national TV audience. This segment highlighted our impactful work in Philadelphia schools, where we provide a free 10-week workshop series designed to help students build essential skills in communication, confidence, and interpersonal development through the joyful art of improv. We extend our gratitude to Jericka Duncan, the CBS team, and the students and staff at General Philip Kearny School for bringing this story to life.



FINANCIALS & OUR FUTURE



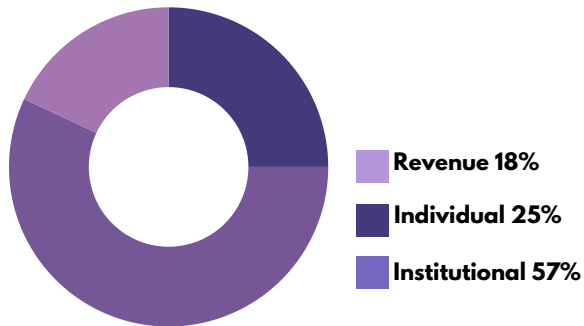
Financials

Revenue FY23/24:
\$222,115

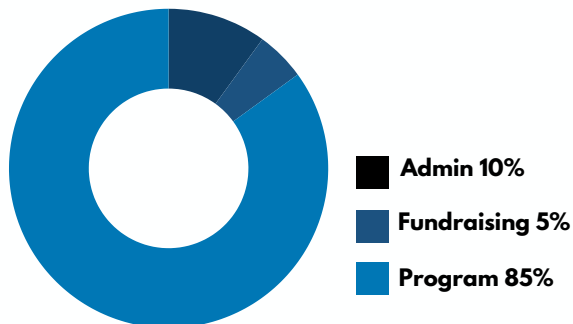
Expenses FY23/24:
\$188,997

Budget FY24/25:
\$250,000

Revenue FY23/24



Expenses FY23/24



Strategic Initiatives



NYC Expansion

We are thrilled to be expanding to New York City public schools through a pilot program in 2 schools. We hope to replicate the successful model we have built in Philadelphia and start paving the way for future national expansion.



Afterschool Program

The Unscripted House Team was officially launched in Fall 2024 as a free afterschool program with a pilot cohort of 12 students. We aim to build on this program by growing the cohort, incorporating college/career readiness through community partnerships, and art enrichment experiences for our students.



Strategic Partnerships

Leverage local, regional, and national networks of advisors, donors, and media partners to strengthen organizational reach and ensure impactful & responsive programming.



Sustained Financial Health

Build a balanced and sustainable revenue model through diversification, with an emphasis on earned income, philanthropic contributions, and partnerships.



TO OUR UNSCRIPTED FAMILY

THANK
YOU

In Gratitude

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Rebecca Wizov (Frankford High School)

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Castor Garden Middle School

Crossroads Academy

Dobbins Technical High School

Frankford High School

Franklin Learning Center

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General Philip Kearny School

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In Gratitude

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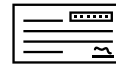
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Secure & easy. Accepts card, bank transfer, PayPal & Venmo



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The Unscripted Project
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Philadelphia, PA 19104



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Let your company increase your impact. Ask if they have a matching gift program.



Donor advised fund

give now

Link works for Schwab Charitable, Fidelity Charitable, BNY Mellon. For others go directly to your DAF



Corporate Workshops

Upskill your team while supporting Philly students. Learn more on our website or email info@unscriptedproject for a quote

the unscripted project



The Unscripted Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations are tax deductible and a receipt will be provided for any contribution. We have a Platinum Seal of Transparency from Guidestar (the highest level), which means you can access financial, board, and impact information on our profile [here](#).

Additional ways to support

Connect

Building a strong network of educators, partners, community members and researchers has been critical to our success. We welcome any connections to those who you think might be interested in our work.

Share

As a growing nonprofit, it is important for us to get the word out about who we are and what we do. Share us on your social media and spread the word!

Grow

We are always looking for volunteers and pro-bono support (especially in marketing & web development, non-profit admin and fundraising).



