This year has not been for the faint of heart and I would like to take a moment to shine a light on the truly remarkable humans that worked tirelessly to get us to where we are today, our team. This brilliant group of humans found ways to exist, when everything we knew was turned upside down, and flipped inside out. This year, we did more virtual programs than ever before, released a second FREE downloadable program, and also were in nearly double the number of schools the year prior (Due to COVID). Personally, I feel like we have been sprinting for nearly 18 months, and I am now realizing that we haven’t paused for even a moment to look around and truly revel in awe of just how far we have come.

We went from a unique point in history where a global pandemic took hold of our world leading to arts organizations, venues, and creatives HURTING in unfathomable ways, to injecting hundreds of thousands of dollars into our community, through #The49507Project- one of the largest Black/Brown/Queer art projects our city has ever seen. We not only poured into artists, but also into seven remarkable business owners, and hundreds of community members through our listening sessions. At one point, no one was booking artists and many of us were struggling to pay our bills. Arts organizations were shuttering, venues were closing their doors, and we brought all of the magic usually found in those spaces and injected it into our Neighborhood.

Our team made SO much happen this year, along with the support of our individual donors, foundations, and local businesses. Our team did this while raising beautiful babies born months too soon, navigating loss, breakups, grieving their former lives, and battling terminal illness. Our team grew, not only double, but nearly FOUR TIMES the size we were!

I believe that is because, unicorn organizations like ours, ones made up of entirely Black/Brown/Queer folks, people who have lived their entire lives with societal pressures, truly know how to not only survive, but thrive when the world gives you what many deem an impossible hand.

This year, we did countless incredible acts, created numerous new partnerships, and found an abundance of new ways to interact with our community and those we serve. So much so, that I am sure we will leave several truly valuable partnerships out of this report; and for that I am sorry (if we dropped the ball).

In 2022, we have some huge news coming down the pipeline!

For nearly 2 years people have been pleading with us to bring back shows, bring back live community events, and to “get back to what we are known for.” We intend to take all the skills we have learned over the years, and intertwine them with our roots, as we announce what is on the horizon. But for now, I will say that our organization has hopefully found our permanent home, and we cannot wait for you all to help us create this hub for liberated art, right in the heart of The 49507!

This space will not only be unique to Grand Rapids, but unlike anywhere in the country, and the ideologies, lessons, smiles, and wisdom that blooms out of this sanctuary will hopefully last longer than we all are here.

Thank you for helping us to reach this monumental point in our organization’s history, with our help, together, we can do so much more, and truly create the change we all are starving to witness.
The Diatribe uses performing arts to empower young people to share their stories, raise awareness of social issues and create change within their communities.
JANUARY

- Brought on Alita of SEM for The 49507 Project
- Isaac Norris SEM The 49507 Project
- Poetry Empowered - Muskegon High School - 3 Programs
- Tony Whlgn- The 49507 Project

We worked with Google + Code Next to provide a “Connecting Creatives” class to students across the country.
FEBRUARY

- Brought on Petersen Research as Partners for The 49507 Project
- Writing to Right Wrongs - Godwin
- Octavia Thorns brought on The 49507 Project
- Brought on Project Manager for The 49507 Project (Candy)
- Erick Picardo brought on to The 49507 Project.
- Angelica - La Casa Da La Cobija - The 49507 Project Chat
- Brought on interim Development Director Megan Smith-Jovanovic
- Brought on Bo Torres for Community Outreach - The 49507 Project

Why Black Mental Health Matters (Online Event)

We got Benefits and Insurance for our Admin Staff!
The Diatribe visits Three Oaks in Muskegon

U of M Graduate Class: The Art of Uniting Through Story Writing to right wrongs Union Begins

Brought on board Marquel Speedy Casey - Community Outreach for The 49507 Project

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS

arts.gov
April

- Released FIRST National Poetry Month Video
- The 49507 Project Press Launch
- The Diatribe Fun’ Raiser - National Poetry Month Event
- Awarded Steelcase Social Innovation Lab Fellowship
MAY

- Public Thread x Artist Introduction Meeting
- Student listening sessions w/ 75 students for The 49507 Project 2021
- Boost Mobile x Artist Introduction
- Casa De La Cobija x Artist Introduction
- First corporate redlining workshop - CARNEVALE
- We held 4 Adult Listening sessions for Black & Brown English speaking folks with 120 people in each.
- We held 1 Adult Listening session for Black & Brown Spanish speaking folks with 25 people registered.
- The Old Goat x Artist Introduction
Started priming and prepping walls for The 49507 Project

Steelcase Global Learning Round Table

The 49507 Project x GPNA Unification Project canvasing begins (5,500 homes)

Year 4 of The Diatribe Summer Program Begins
Content creation for The Poetry Empowered “Our identities” downloadable content began.

Year 1 of Muskegon Summer Programming begins!

Michigan Learning Channel Summer LIVE Program.

Michigan Math Teachers Conference KeyNote

We Are Water Workshop July 9-11 at Blandford Nature Center

The 49507 Project “whats to come” live stream.
AUGUST

- Video documentary of The 49507 Project Begins
- The Diatribe has identified our Dream “Forever home” location.
- Pre-feasibility + Business plan creation with Kennari Begins!
- The 49507 Project Murals BEGIN.
- Summer Poetry Pop-Up (MLK Park) Student showcase.
SEPTEMBER

- Bands at Blanford x The Diatribe event.
- KDL Literary Libations performance + keynote.
- Greater Grand Rapids 100 Women who care - award recipient.
- Walk through of The Diatribe’s possible permanent home.
- Grand River Water Ceremony: Mayor’s Grand River Clean-Up via WMEAC (We Are Water)
The Diatribe brought on board Pure Archatects for this “top secret” project.

WOC Give - Annual Event - Student + Teaching artist performance.

Gleason won Young Non profit Professionals Network “From good to great” award.

Fable sat on YNPN Annual Event Panel
National Council of Teachers of English Workshop Facilitation. “Representation in the Classroom”

Started to identify the 8 artists and 8 locations for The 49507 Project 2022.

The Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce - DEI Summit Keynote

Kent County Health Department - Youth Advisory Council

“Con La Frente En Alto”

“The Divine Feminine”

“Change Makers”
DECEMBER

- Writing to right wrongs Union
- Writing to right wrongs Godwin.
- Poetry Empowered Southwest Middle High
- Poetry Empowered Discovery Elementary
- Kent County Health Department - Youth Advisory Council
- Artist listening sessions (for new physical space).
- Signed The Option to Purchase Agreement on our (hopefully) permanent home.
- Locked in 8/8 of The 49507 Project 2022 Artists
- The 49507 Project - Team Celebration
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You can donate directly at

www.TheDiatribe.org/Support