

## I. Brief Description of Event or Program outlining event/program strengths and what could be improved.

The **3 Degrees Youth Arts Initiative** was designed to engage New Haven high school students in a multidisciplinary arts program that combined poetry, visual art, and dance. Recruitment began in the spring with direct outreach to schools, community partners, and social media.

The program included intensive workshops led by myself as lead facilitator, my mentee Tymani Pinkston, and a series of guest instructors across disciplines. Students developed original poetry, visual art, and choreographed performances inspired by one another's work, culminating in a final showcase at The Sandbox on August 24th, 2025.

Invites were sent to 80 unique individuals (not including youth participants and facilitators), resulting in 37 RSVPs and 47 total attendees at the final showcase (including 9 youth participants and 2 facilitators).

**Strengths** included the students' dedication and creativity, the expertise of our guest instructors, and the growth of our co-facilitator as the aim was not only to successfully execute a program and event but to also support Tymani in scaling her growth as a teaching artist and arts facilitator in collaboration with grant funding from the Teaching Artists Hub CT. The energy in the final showcase reflected the power of collaboration and community support.

**Areas for improvement** included outreach and logistics. Dance recruitment proved difficult, and while we ultimately saved the component at the last minute, more time and strategy should be dedicated to this in the future. Additionally, we faced challenges securing our initial preferred venue, though we were ultimately able to resolve this by leaning on my professional network and supplementing with paid targeted IG ads.

## II. What the Mentor/Mentee learned from the experience including targeted outcomes.

We learned the importance of foresight and building in additional time to anticipate and respond to challenges such as recruitment gaps and venue scheduling. We also gained clarity on best practices for outreach and marketing, including the importance of leveraging social networks alongside paid advertising for greater reach.

We did reach our targeted audience. Our participants represented a diverse group of New Haven high school students—ranging from rising freshmen to recent graduates—from schools including Eli Whitney, Common Ground, Metropolitan Business Academy, Wilbur Cross, Choate Rosemary Hall, and Betsy Ross Arts Magnet. The showcase also drew community members, families, and local supporters, highlighting the wide impact of the program.

### III. Program/Event rating and direct impact?

I would rate the program a **9 out of 10**.

The direct impact was multifold:

- **Facilitator Growth:** My mentee grew in her role as a facilitator and teaching artist, gaining experience in curriculum design, recruitment, and leadership.
- **Student Development:** Students were supported by field experts, produced original works, and performed publicly—an invaluable opportunity for creative expression and confidence-building.
- **Community Investment:** We intentionally centered New Haven throughout the program. From the student participants to the venue, catering, and media coverage, we highlighted local talent and resources. Materials were acquired at local shops such as Hull's Art Supply and media coverage was provided through the Arts Paper by a writer who is himself a former New Haven high schooler, further underscoring the program's community-rooted impact.
- **Equity & Access:** Ensuring travel equity by providing bus passes so all students could attend and hosting the showcase at a central and accessible location.

The project demonstrated how multidisciplinary arts can inspire youth, build confidence, and foster a sense of community while also strengthening the city's creative ecosystem.

### III. Mentor/Mentee Reflections

**Mentor (Yexandra Diaz):** Tymani showed up consistently and was fully present during the poetry workshops, demonstrating her natural ability to engage students in people-facing work and her strength in workshopping poetry. She also leveraged her network to support dance cohort recruitment and shined in her hosting role during the final showcase. However, challenges arose with missed meetings, slow turnaround on deliverables, and visible presentation. Additionally, while Tymani was receptive to feedback, she was not always receptive to tools intended to build capacity. The purpose of the mentorship was to scale as a teaching artist and arts facilitator across all parts of the work, and it was evident her strength lies in direct student engagement rather than capacity-building. These are important growth areas moving forward.

**Mentee (Tymani Pinkston):** "I appreciate being able to utilize my expertise confidently during the poetry sessions and dress rehearsals with the students, as well as develop key objectives that helped to refine my skills as a teaching artist. I felt well balanced as co-leads and within our mentor/mentee relationship when coordinating space together, and when sharing ideas in the many shifts we had to make. With grace from our need to urgently navigate around obstacles, one subject I felt we could have improved on was communication and clarity surrounding roles and requirements on my behalf. Some strengths and growth points may have been better

developed if we were allotted more time and flexibility. However, my ability to observe Yexandra, and retain information throughout her executive display in the program, made this mentorship fulfilling. Overall, this was an invigorating experience for my progressive development as a teaching artist and curator. I'm immensely proud of our success in creating and operating a courageous space for the youth and community to come together, making this idea for an art workshop, showcase, and work opportunity alive and tangible."

#### Program Event/Participants

# of Artists 3

# of Youth 9

# of Volunteers 0

# of Paid Professionals 6

# of Program Participants 9

Total in attendance 47

#### Demographic Information (estimated)

Male 11

Female 36

Teens/Young Adult (13-17) 12

Adults (over 18) 22

Seniors (65 and over) 4

Youth 12 and under 9

#### Persons with Disabilities 7

White 4

Black 19

Hispanic/Latino 6

Asian 0

Other 18