



Communities Create
Empowerment through Art





Communities Create Annual Report 2023

*Arts for Well-Being
in Community*



a community based
nonprofit organization

founded by
Karen Silton

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EIN # is 83-0698676

Our mission is to foster self-expression, self-efficacy, imagination and a sense of community for vulnerable communities

WHAT WE DO

Communities Create offers and facilitates both hands-on and Zoom mixed-media expressive, healing-centered arts workshops in Los Angeles and nationally the our most vulnerable communities who are experiencing homelessness, intimate partner violence, incarcerated and post carceral, foster youth and veterans.

Our Arts for Well-Being programs provide a space and a holistic approach to individual and collective trauma which includes culture, spirituality, civic action and community well-being. In collaboration with partner non-profit organizations and social service agencies to encourage a collective view of well-being.



ART IS VITAL

Artmaking in community has the capability to promote a holistic view of well-being by collectively engaging beyond trauma itself.

Artmaking in community can cultivate the awareness of a positive sense of self, belonging and confidence.

Artmaking in community can instill optimism, hopefulness and the ability to dream and imagine new possibilities.

Artmaking in community has the potential for engaging communities in a collective creative experience that dissolves difference and offers a sense of belonging.



According to the Los Angeles County Women’s Needs Assessment “Findings from the 2022 Survey of Women Experiencing Homelessness.”

Homelessness among women is a complex issue that is often overlooked and poorly understood in broader policy discussions about homelessness. With more than 14,000 unaccompanied women experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County—75 percent of whom are unsheltered, per the 2022 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count—women face distinct and multifaceted challenges that demand urgent attention.

On any given night in 2022, there were more than 14,000 women experiencing homelessness as individuals—meaning they were seeking services without partners or children—in the Los Angeles City and County Continuum of Care.



Across the United States, homelessness has increased since 2016, driven by a 19 percent increase from 2016 to 2022 among people experiencing homelessness as individuals—more than half of whom lived in unsheltered situations in 2022 (de Sousa et al. 2022). Between 2015 and 2019, the share of the population of individuals enduring unsheltered homelessness across the United States who identified as women or transgender individuals increased by 3 percentage points, from 26 percent of unsheltered individuals.

Communities Create “Arts for Well-Being” Workshops serves individuals experiencing homelessness. According to The Health Evidence Network Synthesis Report 67 (© World Health Organization 2019) arts activities can improve health and well-being.



Arts activities can provide opportunities for emotional expression, emotion regulation and stress reduction as well as opportunities for learning and skills development.



Social interaction while participating in the arts can reduce loneliness and lack of social support.



Physical activity while participating in the arts can reduce sedentary behaviors associated with chronic pain, depression, and dementia.



OUR STORY

Karen Siltan has been a professional ceramist, fine art mosaicist and educator for over thirty years. She has a BA degree in Sociology from UCLA and is a doctoral candidate in the Depth Psychology Program at Pacifica Graduate Institute, CLIE Program (community, liberation, indigenous, eco psychologies) in Carpinteria, CA. She has received numerous private and public commissions and her artwork is in collections worldwide.

In 2018 she established Communities Create to work collaboratively with Los Angeles community-based non-profit health and social service agencies and organizations to improve well-being by providing high quality "art making in community" programs for individuals experiencing homelessness.



As a trauma-informed community psychologist and professional artist, Karen works with partner health organizations and agencies to provide "Arts for Well-Being Workshops". These organizations understand the need for creative activities in a holistic approach to serve their clients. They also understand the added benefit of working with a trained professional to provide this arts component as an integral part of the programs and services.

The founding of Communities Create came after years of artmaking in marginalized communities and concentrated study in the importance of creativity as a catalyst to create change in ones own life and in communities.



OUR TEAM



KAREN SILTON

Founder, President, and Executive Director

Karen is a professional artist, arts educator, community psychologist.

She established Communities Create to work collaboratively with Los Angeles community-based non-profit health and social service agencies and organizations to improve health equity through community artmaking workshops for individuals experiencing homelessness.

She has recently completed her Master's in Community, Liberation, Indigenous and Eco psychologies at Pacifica Graduate Institute and is presently in the doctoral phase of her studies.



BARRY O. BALIN

Vice President

Barry is a lifelong, avid collector of American cultural memorabilia with a professional career in graphic design and marketing spanning 40 years.

He has been deeply involved in the non-profit arena working with a variety of organizations which include Children of the Night, that serve youth sex trafficking victims in Los Angeles and Clickers and Flickers, a photography education organization, among others.



CLAUDIA I. CORONADO

Treasurer

Claudia I. Coronado is the president of CiC Properties, a successful realty firm in Riverside, and has thirty years of experience in the accounting field in nonprofit organizations, event rentals, manufacturing, and real estate.

She trained bookkeepers with real life experience and has a genuine love for teaching. She's a native Southern California girl, with a strong love for the city of Los Angeles and its surrounding neighbors. Her heartfelt interest in foster youth challenges her to look for solutions "outside the box."



PAM SAELIEB

Secretary

Pam is a social impact professional with broad experience designing and implementing strategies for employee engagement, leadership/talent development, philanthropy, and corporate citizenship/social responsibility programs. Masters from USC in Organizational and Consumer Psychology, Bachelors from UCLA in International Development Studies.

She is a Senior Strategist for the Center for Non-Profit Management in Los Angeles, CA and was previously the Director of Operations and Programs for the Roy and Patricia Disney Family Foundation.

MOSAIC



JEWELRY



OUR APPROACH

Participants are invited into an intimate, safe, and quiet environment with a limited number of participants to engage with a variety of professional grade art materials. Participants are encouraged to engage in art making according to their individual skills, desire, and capacity allowing them to choose their own project, as well as learn and share their skills with other participants and their community.

Workshops are facilitated by a professional artist trained in trauma informed teaching methods to provide arts activities aimed at increasing individual and collective well-being. A classroom atmosphere is created in a way to encourage capacity building and skills, and the development of new relationships built on self-awareness and sharing.

Participants are invited to participate in six consecutive expressive arts workshops where they are free to create images and art works of their own choice, and to “play” with a variety of mediums and materials including clay, mosaics, ceramics, wood and paints, as well as poetry and journaling.





OUR PARTNERS

The Downtown Women's Center 2018-2023

the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving and empowering women experiencing homelessness and formerly unhoused women.

People Assisting the Homeless 2022-2023

one of largest homeless service providers in California providing a variety of services for our neighbors experiencing homelessness

Safe Place for Youth 2022-023

empowering young people experiencing homelessness to thrive by providing lasting, community-driven solutions that address racial and social inequity.

Communities Create works with partner leadership, staff, & case managers:

- *to promote* workshops and track registration of participants,
- *to purchase and distribute* supplies,
- *to complete* client documentation and consent form,
- *to track* participation, survey and interview participants and staff and with consent, and
- *to document* artworks for the Communities Create website and social media pages.



Arts for Well-Being Workshops encourage:

Aesthetic Engagement - Social Interaction

Involvement of the Imagination - Evocation of Emotion

Cognitive Stimulation - Physical Activity

Measurable Outcomes

Psychological – enhanced self-efficacy, coping and emotional regulation, and self-reflection

Physiological – lower stress, increased attention, and awareness

Social – reduced loneliness and isolation, enhanced social support, and increased empathy

Behavioral – adoption of healthier social behaviors, increased positivity and motivation, and skills development

Goals

To provide opportunities for participants

to increase a sense of belonging and through community art making

to support and recognize one another's artistic accomplishments

to build relationships with others

to increase self awareness and improve self regulation

to create personally designed art works to keep or to give as gifts

Trauma Informed Methodology

Distinguished from “art therapy” models that may inadvertently pathologize the unhoused, our workshops are facilitated by a trained community artist and educator who uses a holistic approach that integrates self-expression and self-efficacy while encouraging participants to create art together with others to develop a sense of belonging and community.

Participants are invited into an intimate, safe, and quiet environment with limited participants to engage with high quality artist grade materials, according to their individual skills, desire, and capacity. A classroom atmosphere is conducive to healing, encouraging capacity building and skills, and the development of new relationships.





Testimonials and Qualitative Responses

You really see me. you know me. -

Participant

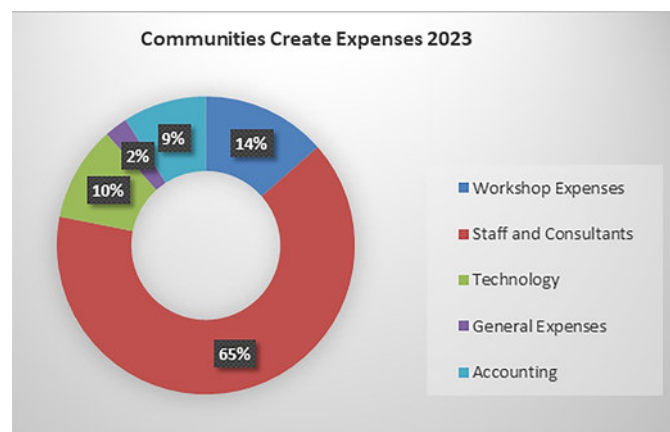
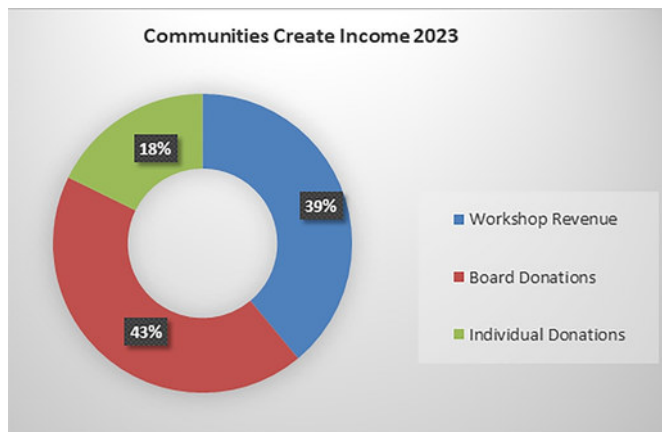
I can find who I am again. - Participant

*I feel so good and proud of myself the way I
made those ceramic pieces. -* Participant

*I realize that it's culturally responsive in
this work to have art. -* Partner Staff

*Your model has proven the effectiveness
and the need. -* Partner Staff





Organization Budget 2023

The Communities Create 2023 total expenses included \$1,487 for workshop supplies and materials, \$1,137 for technology including our website and webmaster, \$276 for general supplies, \$995 for accounting, and \$7101 for staff and consultants totaling \$10,997. We received \$5,000 Board of Directors donations, \$2,048 in individual donations, "Arts for Well-Being" Workshop revenue totaled \$4,500. We remained with a surplus of \$551.

Funding Sources

Communities Create receives revenue from our collaborative partner organizations to provide "Arts for Well-Being" Workshops. We receive foundation grants, individual donations and acquire revenue from sales out of the Communities Create Store.

Financial Records

Community Creates fiscal year is January through December. Each December we compile an in-house year-end financial report and our IRS 990 Tax Form the following January. Both of these documents are available on request. Our profile including financial reporting is also available on [Guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org)

CCStore

The Communities Create shop raises funds needed to present “Arts for Well-Being” Workshops for at-risk communities in Los Angeles.

We invite our supporters to purchase an item designed by our Founder, Karen Silton. Karen has designed magnets, journals, notepads, pencil holders, and buttons taken from original works of art inspired by her walks in the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve and other Los Angeles river natural sites that express our interconnectedness with nature.

If there were dreams to sell...What would you buy?

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES



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