



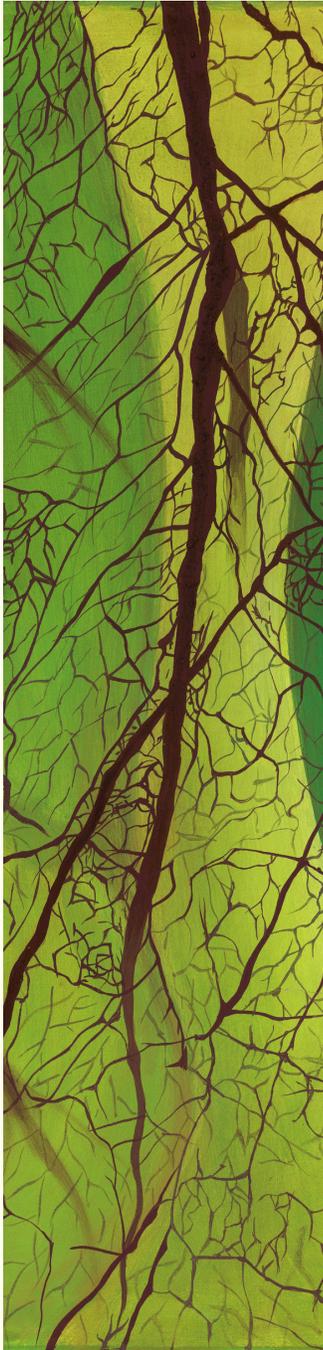
Trust Drum Circles Annual Report

2025



TRUST DRUM CIRCLES
EDUCATE • COMMUNITY • RHYTHM

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From the Director

With countless drums and instruments, and over a thousand miles traveled, Trust Drum Circles has served communities throughout Ohio and internationally in Africa this year. We brought inclusive, research-informed drumming and movement programs to youth and adults through schools, housing communities, disability services, rehabilitation centers, and wellness facilities, creating fun, welcoming spaces where people can connect, express themselves, and boost social-emotional well-being.

At our core, we believe rhythm builds resilience, opening pathways to leadership, emotional regulation, and joyful community engagement.

Thanks to your support, we've met growing demand, reached new communities, and strengthened collaborations rooted in music, culture, and wellness. Looking ahead, we're ready to keep the beat going, expanding partnerships and growing our impact locally and globally.

With gratitude,

Maseh N.



Maseh Nchang
Founder & Executive Director

Trust Drum Circles' Impact at a Glance



2861
Participant
Experiences



26
Drums
Donated



11
Counties
Served



17
New
Partners

Mission & Vision

Trust Drum Circles is on a mission to foster connection, inclusion, and personal growth through mobile, hands-on drumming and rhythm programs that engage people of all ages and abilities, while building communities strengthened through shared music, where every individual feels seen, heard, and empowered to express themselves creatively.

Core Values



Rhythm Revolution

Trust Drum Circles welcomes people of all ages and abilities, creating inclusive spaces where everyone can participate and thrive while fostering joy, emotional well-being, and a strong sense of belonging .



Cultural Preservation

Through international partnerships with local villages, Trust Drum Circles preserves cultural heritage through hands-on vocational programs that strengthen local economies and build skills in drum-making and performance.



Networking Alliance

Trust Drum Circles supports independent musicians through paid, high-quality rhythm programs that increase visibility, expand access to rhythm-based wellness, and broaden community impact.

Answering the Need



“Our time with Trust Drum Circle was fantastic! I was immediately blown away by how engaging they were with the crowd. One gentleman who attends the event frequently said this was his favorite of all time, and this event has been going on for more than a decade! There were several guests with disabilities who had smiles bigger than we've seen in a while, and they have been talking about it on Sundays since then. The group was professional, courteous, fun and brought so much enthusiasm and talent while also making a meaningful impact on the community. We are grateful for their time and will have them back again, for sure!”

~Dana Carlisle, Special Needs Ministry Assistant,
Grace Church CMA



"I have had such great feedback from campers and staff - everyone around the camp was talking about it! It was a really big hit, and thoroughly enjoyed!"

~Miri Bialo
Friendship Circle of Cleveland



“Everything! The hosts, the community, the instruments. The whole program was excellent!”

~Anonymous from event survey



“Seeing them guide the children from training all the way to the final performance was a masterclass in collaboration, [Trust Drum Circles is] opening doors we couldn't have reached on our own.”



“You guys have done great work.”

~Miranda Newsome. M.A.
Akron Metropolitan Housing
Authority

~Susan Aliero
COMECH, Kenya

Methodology

In 2025, our biggest impact was through the Rhythm Collective program where we supported disability communities, senior wellness, youth programs, community spaces, and rehabilitation centers through evidence-based rhythm programs that support health and wellbeing.

What Research Tells Us

Research has consistently shown us that structured rhythm experiences support emotional regulation, social connection, cognitive engagement, and resilience (Bittman et al., Chen, Hurst).

An Evidence-Based Approach

Rather than positioning rhythm experiences as purely recreational or spiritual activities, our approach draws on these research findings to design facilitated sessions that support specific community needs.



These sessions keep the arts alive, help our club youth with social and emotional learning, and teach valuable communication skills and camaraderie.”

Kimberly Shemo
Music Program Manager
Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast, Ohio



What Findings Reveal

The experiences and outcomes we observed across these settings are informing the development of more focused program tracks in 2026, allowing us to better align our work with the communities we are most consistently called to serve.

The following pages offer snapshots of the communities, partners, and participants who shaped this year’s impact.

Research at a Glance

Key Studies on the Benefits of Group Drumming

- Emotional & Cognitive Development**
 Structured music supports emotional regulation, creativity, and social connection. (Chen)
- Mental Wellness Through Rhythm.**
 Students with IDD showed measurable increases in confidence, empathy, and resilience. (Bittman et al.)
- Inclusive Development Gains**
 Group groove-based music strengthens cognition, connection, and wellbeing. (Hurst)

(Bittman et al., Chen, Hurst)

Programs & Projects

Trust Drum Circles is organized into programs and projects that bring drumming experiences to youth, disability communities, wellness centers, senior living, and international partners. In doing so, it seeks to form partnerships that work to promote wellness and cultural arts preservation.



Programs

The Rhythm Collective

TDS' flagship program delivers inclusive drumming experiences across all populations. Sessions combine evidence-backed data on rhythm, movement, and collaborative music making to build confidence, social-emotional skills, and community connection.

▶ **2861 participant experiences**

Financial Rhythm

This STEAM-based program uses drumming and interactive music to teach basic accounting and financial literacy concepts to youth, making money management concepts fun and accessible.

▶ **Pilot curriculum launched**



“The immersive and hands-on experience allowed our children to engage in a journey of self-expression and creativity.

Lyndsey Heffern,
Youth Program Director
Shaw JCC of Akron

Projects

Trust Drum Circles Network

The Trust Drum Circles Network connects independent musicians and artisans to inclusive rhythm programs that foster mentorship, skill development, and vocational growth. Through collaborative events and initiatives, artists gain visibility while supporting local and global creative economies.

▶ **Pilot vocational program launched**

1000 Drums Project

The 1000 Drum Project collects and distributes drums to children in foster care, orphanages, and underserved communities, expanding access to music and cultural connections. Often working in tandem with the TDC Network, the initiative brings transformative rhythm experiences to at-risk youth in Ohio and orphanages in Cameroon, Kenya, and Tanzania.

▶ **26 drums donated**



Rhythm Collective



TDC's Flagship Program

The Rhythm Collective is Trust Drum Circles' signature program, bringing inclusive, rhythm-filled fun to communities across Ohio.

Year-round drum circles blend drumming, movement, and playful exploration, helping participants build confidence, strengthen social-emotional skills, develop leadership, and connect through the shared power of rhythm.

These lively, welcoming spaces empower people of all abilities to express themselves, collaborate with others, and experience the joy of music and motion, fostering lasting personal growth, teamwork, and community connection.

Program Evolution

As The Rhythm Collective grows, we're expanding into three tracks, youth leadership, adaptive rhythm, and rehabilitation/wellness, while refining our STEAM and SEL curriculum to make every session engaging and impactful.

Inside The Rhythm Collective

▶ Rhythm Leaders

A **youth leadership** and after-school program. Interactive rhythm experiences that build confidence, teamwork, creativity, and leadership for youth.

▶ Rhythm Without Limits

A **disability-centered** adaptive rhythm program bringing inclusive drum circles designed for individuals with developmental disabilities, autism, sensory challenges, and visual impairments.

▶ Rhythm & Restore

A **rehabilitation and wellness** rhythm program with sessions supporting older adults and individuals in recovery, rehabilitation, and wellness programs.

Rhythm Leaders Survey Highlights

- 100% of youth played a drum or instrument
- 98% of youth attended weekly sessions
- 84% reported having lots or some fun
- 79% enjoyed drumming and making music
- 100% of program partners invited us back
- 100% of youth reported feeling at least a little more confident after the program



Inclusive Engagement

In 2025, Trust Drum Circles expanded its inclusive programming for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Northeast Ohio. Partnering with six disability-service organizations, we delivered **Rhythm Without Limits**, an adaptive, research-backed drumming series that built emotional regulation, confidence, social engagement, and creative expression. Every session is participant-led, hands-on, and designed so **everyone belongs in the circle**, fully joining the rhythm and having fun.

Organizations Reached

2024

1



2025

6

Drum Sessions Provided

2024

1



2025

21

Rhythm Without Limits

100% of participants actively engaged in every drum session

100% of partners observed increased confidence and focus among participants

95% of partners invited us back for future programming

Workshops Designed for Accessibility and Inclusion



Adaptive Instruments



Participant-Led Engagement



Emotional Regulation



Social Skills Development



Funder Support

The **Good Shepherd Foundation** of Ohio played a critical role in expanding Trust Drum Circles' disability programming in 2025.

Their support helped remove financial barriers, purchase adaptive drums for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and deliver multi-session programs rather than one-time workshops.

Partner-Observed Outcomes

- ▶ Increased engagement and peer interaction
- ▶ Visible joy and enthusiastic participation
- ▶ Growth in confidence and self-expression
- ▶ Opportunities for movement and physical activation

Community Partners

- United Disability Services Akron
- The Society for Handicapped Citizens
- NPower Services
- HELP Foundation
- Friendship Circle of Cleveland
- Foundation Fighting Blindness

Additionally, several community events included youth with disabilities among participants and audience members, expanding access to inclusive rhythm experiences beyond formal program partnerships.



“

Maseh and his team consistently create an inclusive, welcoming environment that enriches everyone involved.

Lori Webber
Executive Director
Npower Services

”

International Impact



Trust Drum Circles has always followed the need.

In November 2025, that commitment led us back to Mombasa, Kenya, where long-standing relationships with the Child of Mercy Children’s Home (COMECH) revealed a deeper opportunity. Youth had musical talent, cultural knowledge, and creative drive. What they lacked were sustainable vocational pathways.

Rather than delivering a single workshop, TDC partnered with local artisans, musicians, and cultural leaders to launch a vocational pilot program, equipping teens and young adults with drum-making skills, performance training, and music production experience designed to generate long-term economic opportunity.

A New Rhythm Begins

- **Location: Mombasa, Kenya**
- **Program Type: 3-Day Vocational Pilot**
- **Participants: 14 Youths**
- **Drums Built: 26**
- **Public Performances: 1**
- **Original Songs Released: 1**

Collaborations in Action

- **Akamba Handicraft**
- **COMECH Likoni**
- **Kitaa Records**
- **Rapala Cultural Dancers**

2026 Vocational Model Expansion



Workshop to full vocation program



Increase youth participation



Embed performance opportunities



Secure long-term funding & partnerships



Replicate models across African cities

International Spotlights

COMECH Students Performance

What began as a workshop became a public celebration of Kenyan heritage. On December 13, COMECH students performed at Akamba Handicraft alongside elder cultural groups, showcasing traditional Luo dance while playing drums they had built with their own hands. After the event, the COMECH group received a token of appreciation from Mombasa Gov. Abdulswamad Shariff Nassir, who attended the event.



Original Music Release

Artist Name: Abdul Mwadzini & The Straysurfers

Debut Single: Best Friend

Produced By: Producer Nau (Kitaa Records)

Through recording, mixing, and mastering, students gained hands-on experience in professional studio production while preserving local musical traditions.



Rehabilitation that Heals

This year, Trust Drum Circles increased its presence within rehabilitation, recovery, and wellness communities. Through growing partnerships, TDC expanded its Rhythm Collective programming, establishing Rhythm & Restore as its dedicated rehabilitation and wellness focus, using rhythm-based experiences to support somatic grounding, restoration, and hope in spaces dedicated to healing.

Workshops Infused Evidence-backed Strategies to Foster



Nervous system regulation



Emotional expression and release



Group morale and shared connection



Cognitive stimulation and engagement



Healing-centered community building

Partner Spotlight

A special thank you to The Summit FM, whose Music & Wellness programming aligns with Trust Drum Circles' mission of using rhythm to support health and community connection.

Serving Akron-Canton (91.3), Youngstown-Western PA (90.7), and Athens (90.1), The Summit partners with nonprofits and artists to promote music as a pathway to wellness.

Through this partnership, TDC incorporated chair yoga and guided breathwork led by Music+Wellness Coordinator **Sarah Swirsky**, along with live guitar by **Marc Lee Shannon**, expanding the therapeutic scope of each workshop.



Celebrating Our Artists

Mark Hitchcox, mbira musician and longtime student of the tradition, performs Zimbabwean mbira music.



Matthew DeRubertis, ambient guitar composer creates immersive soundscapes



Kauzeni Lyamba, Tanzanian multi-instrumentalist, performs flute, saxophone, percussion, and vocals in cross-cultural music collaborations.



TDC Network

The **Trust Drum Circles Network** supports independent musicians and artisans by connecting them to inclusive, high-quality rhythm programs that facilitate mentorship, skill development, and vocational guidance through networking opportunities. Under the TDC network umbrella, programming and events are delivered through a collaborative environment that increases visibility while supporting local and international economies.

Global Rhythm & Artistic Collaboration

- **Amplifying Global Voices:** Platform for African painters and musicians.
- **Expanding Our Reach:** Maseh's album brings rhythm beyond live sessions.
- **Artist Collaborations:** Original art, music, and storytelling in programs.
- **Community Through Rhythm:** Connecting people across backgrounds & abilities.



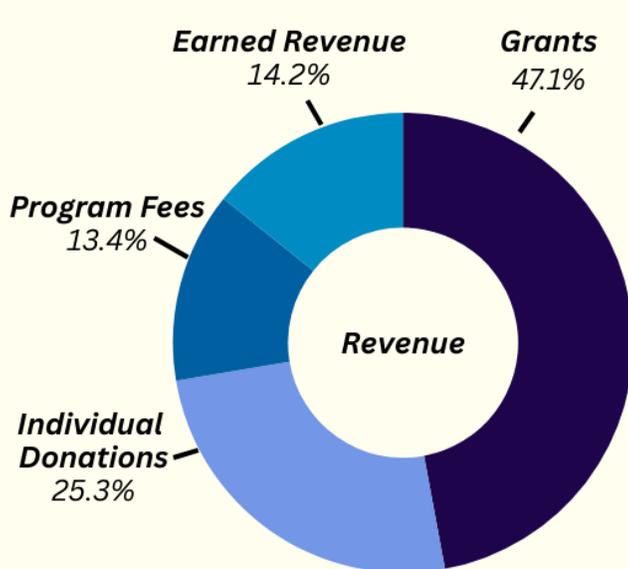
2025 Collaboration & Production Highlights

- Musicians & Songwriters **17**
- Cultural artisans **8**
- Original Singles Released **2**
- Albums Produced **2**



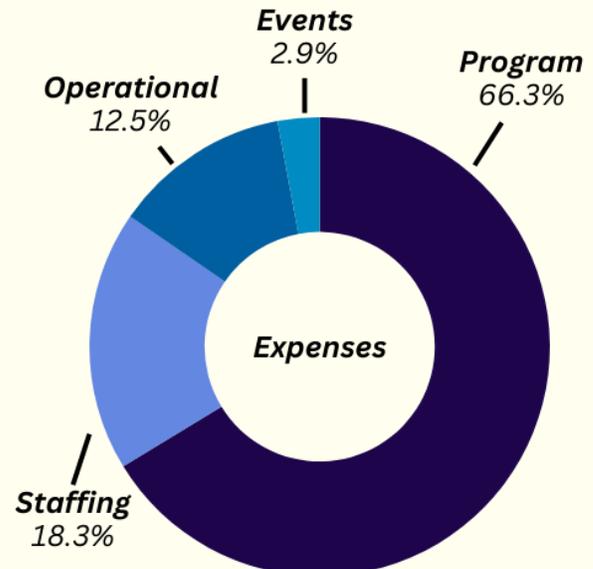
Financials

Revenue



Total Revenue = \$48,953.52*
Individual Donations: \$12,368.73
Program Fees: \$6,566.64
Grants: \$23,050.00
Earned Revenue: 6,968.15

Expenses



Total Expense = \$44,790.57
Program: \$29,679.89
Operational: \$5,578.80
Staffing: \$8,214.38
Event: \$1317.50

Our Funders

- Anonymous (7)
- City of Akron Sports & Wellness
- Good Shepherd Foundation of Ohio
- James H Hower (Akron Community Fdn)
- Jewish Federation of Cleveland
- JWRR Family Fund
- Kaulig Giving (Hudson Community Fdn)
- Kurt Updegraff
- Walmart Foundation

*Year-over-year growth rate of 322.4% increase compared to 2024 total revenue of \$11,592.05.

Strategic Priorities



Redefine TDC's Rhythm Collective Tracks

Organize **The Rhythm Collective** into three focused tracks - *Rhythm Leaders*, *Rhythm Without Limits*, and *Rhythm & Restore* - so every beat reaches the right audience and each program's unique impact shines.

Expand Capacity & Network Growth

Train **new lead artists**, strengthen partnerships, and grow program hubs, spreading the joy of rhythm across Ohio and beyond.

Strategic Plan

Revisit and refresh the strategic plan to **guide growth**, strengthen board governance, and amplify the lasting impact of our rhythm-based work.

Strengthen Quality & Impact

Refine **STEAM and SEL** curriculum, conduct research, and elevate evaluation systems to capture meaningful outcomes in social-emotional learning, creativity, mental health, and community wellness so every session hits the right note and leaves a lasting impact.

Advance Cultural Preservation

Grow the **1000 Drum Project** to honor and celebrate cultural traditions while expanding inclusive, community-based rhythm experiences and vocational programming that unite, inspire, and empower participants of all abilities.

Staff & Board of Directors



Since its inception, I have been a devoted supporter of Trust Drum Circles. I am incredibly proud of what this organization has accomplished in such a short amount of time. The growth we have experienced is a testament not only to the dedication of our team and supporters, but also to the clear need for programming that fosters connection, healing, and belonging.

I am excited for what lies ahead. I believe in the power of Trust Drum Circles to bring people together, deepen connection, and help individuals reconnect with the essence of who they are. By inviting people into the present moment, this work creates space for reflection, community, and peace.

Dr. Jessica Bennett
Board Chair

Board

Jessica Bennett, Chair
Laurel Hurst Vice Chair
Mason Dorrian, Treasurer
Dick Nchang, Secretary
Manny Hall, Member
Luke Krizan, Member
Glory Mafor, Member

Leadership

Executive Director - Maseh Nchang. MBA
Development Director - Jess Morgan. M.S. NPA
Communications Specialist - Sonney Wolfe M.A.
Drum Instructor - Berhane Okantah



Man in Rhythm

Following the introspective journeys of *Betterment* and *Malak Light*, which explored music as a tool for growth and personal transformation, Maseh's second studio album, *Man in Rhythm*, continues the evolution.



Set for release in June 2026, it captures the journey of finding, and learning to trust, your own pace in life. Created in collaboration with a collective of musicians and songwriters, the project traces the full arc of connection and knowing thyself.



Unite the World with Rhythm!



TRUST DRUM CIRCLES
EDUCATE • COMMUNITY • RHYTHM



Phone

+1 (614) 216 - 8026



Email

contact@trustdrumcircles.org



Mailing Address

1501 S Cleveland Massillon
Rd. Akron OH 44321