



Selected Impact Highlights 2020-21

With support from The REAM Foundation from 2014 - 2020, *Albany Park Theater Project* (AFTP) helps



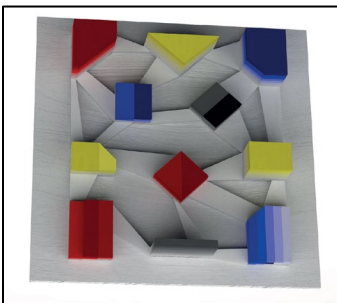
teens explore the world around them and **create original theater** from real people's stories. One participant, Nely, reflected on her experience in her college essay: *"Even though it was out of my comfort zone, I decided in middle school to join AFTP. At the end of the year, the directors asked me to join the cast of Learning Curve...A single thought darted through my mind: 'You're going to mess up.' My instinct to please others and my instinct to remain invisible were in conflict. 'Yes! That'd be awesome!' I lied...One of our missions at AFTP is to express the voices and stories of those in our community who can't speak up or are afraid to--people like me when I was younger. My journey of growth with AFTP wasn't simple, but it was necessary to discover who I am meant to be: a girl who grew from an ideology of obedience into a young lady who speaks up against the wrongs she sees in the world."*

Supported by The REAM Foundation, *Intonation Music* provided tools, motivation, and support for



Chicago Public School students to **unleash their creativity** through virtual music education in under-resourced neighborhoods this past year. One artist-instructor noticed that *"some students who had never played a lick of music were playing through complicated musical theory exercises within just a few months."* Graduating senior Laveric described how the program gave him "a voice" and a "second family," as well as a way to connect with people. He says, *"I'm also able to communicate in a whole new way with the people around me and make long-lasting relationships due to my art. I envision using my creative skills to collaborate with others in the city and around the world."*

The REAM Foundation's Graduate Merit Scholarship at the *School of the Art Institute (SAIC)* provides key



financial support for students from Israel. The 2020-21 scholarship recipient, "Uri" (MFA 2022), earned a BFA from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. At SAIC, Uri is pursuing advanced study in the Department of Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects and shares *"When I applied, I was at a turning point in my life and I decided to make new decisions about educational options with the hope to accomplish a new future career path, while the pandemic was rearranging and affecting everyone's lives. Due to the circumstances of Covid-19 I had to take my first semester at SAIC online, from Israel... This semester I focused*

on improving my skills in digital fabrication, and I am happy to say that I'm very satisfied with my progress. With your help, I believe that I would be able to accomplish more of my future goals."

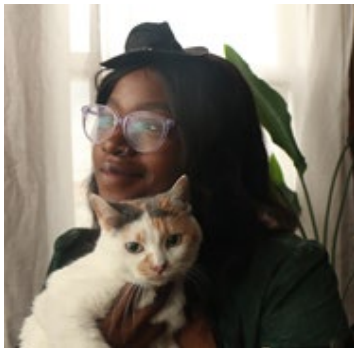
Family Service of Glencoe (FSG) was able to adapt all of their programming to virtual platforms, **offering**



critical services, partly thanks to The REAM Foundation’s support. The Vibrant Living senior discussion group meets twice monthly via Zoom, averaging 14 participants per meeting. New senior-related workshops include the topics of elder law and senior scams, as well as virtual yoga for seniors, which has proven popular. FSG has continued to implement casework services for seniors virtually, as well as consultations with families where there is a diagnosis of dementia. Last year, FSG piloted a “Virtual Memory Café,” which provided patients and care partners an opportunity to “leave their disease at the door” and participate in fun,

fulfilling activities like poetry, music, and dance sessions. One participant shared about her caseworker, *“Joan is the most wonderful, thoughtful, informed, intelligent, caring, accommodating, sweet, kind and helpful human being. I count my stars every day that I was connected with her, and that she is working with FSG.”*

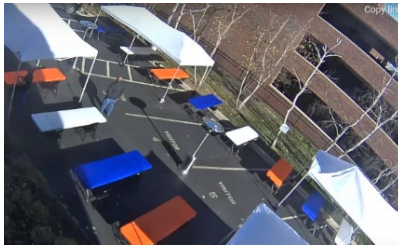
The REAM Foundation’s flexible funding helped *Marwen* **honor the voices and lived experiences of young**



people in a new virtual program design. Summer programming was co-created by a cohort of Teaching Artists, education staff, and current Marwen students, all of whom were paid for their contributions. This ensured that programming was relevant and responsive to the needs of the community. The hands-on experience helps young people discover their strengths, improve their leadership skills, and foster a desire to make a positive impact on their communities. Ameerah, a participant in Marwen’s Emerging Teaching Artist program for alumni ages 18 – 24 (“META”) said, *“META has reinvigorated parts of me that have withered in quarantine and realigned me with what I feel is my purpose, building*

meaningful connections through art. . . I've stepped out of my comfort zone and into an enriching and affirming space. I can't wait to dive deeper and continue to grow alongside the beautiful people in my cohort and teaching group. It's been dark times but META is a shining light, a beacon of what can be cultivated even in chaos. We are creating a space for what we need most; community, love and expression.”

Thanks to support from The REAM Foundation, the *Hillel at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign* (“Illini Hillel”) truly **persevered throughout the pandemic**.



They were able to creatively and strategically re-think the safe opportunities for students and find new ways to create strong relationships. Shabbat is one of the many programs Illini Hillel was able to innovate for the community, including offering virtual services and safe Shabbat dinners. Students were able to pick up Shabbat dinner to go at curbside if preferred, or gather in person safely. The

REAM Foundation’s grant supported large tents in Hillel’s parking lot, so students could gather for “pre-Shabbat hangout,” and even enjoy safely-distanced, outdoor Shabbat dinner under the large, open-sided tents set up in Hillel’s parking area.