



# 2025

DMF YOUTH ANNUAL

# REPORT



# A letter from the executive director

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Dear friends of DMF,

What a 2025 we had! We expanded our programs, grew our impact, and transformed the lives of youth across New York City. Among our many accomplishments this year, here are just a few that would have made 2015 Lindi's head spin:

- **Expanding to 8 sites:** After years on our waiting list, we officially launched at PS 146 in January 2025, building a strong and growing school partnership from the ground up. PS 146 has already committed to doubling the size of the program in Fall 2026. And, we're growing sustainably, hiring a full-time Associate Program Director to support the additional sites.
- **Offering bilingual capacity at all schools:** Many of our youth are multilingual, speaking English at school and one (or more) additional languages at home. This year, we added Spanish-language proficiency to each of our educator teams, ensuring that someone at every school can communicate with both students and caregivers for whom English isn't their primary language.
- **Strengthening our Music Video Curriculum:** We built on our 2024 pilot to create a more robust and scalable program experience, engaging professionals to film and support students with editing, elevating the final products to a truly professional level and giving students an authentic, real-world glimpse into careers in film and the arts.

The impact we generate is possible with the dedication of entire DMF Family: our broad network of donors, volunteers, and community leaders who give their time and their treasure to help us elevate underserved youth, foundations, companies, and governmental organizations who make transformative gifts to DMF, the educators and CBOs who advocate for our programming, and our passionate and talented staff who are in classrooms, summer camps, and shelters implementing our curricula every day.

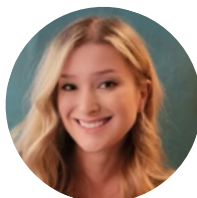
DMF began 10 years ago with a vision to provide every young person in New York City with the social-emotional tools to thrive. What started in a single classroom now reaches hundreds of students each year, and with your support, we'll reach thousands – or even millions – more.

With heart,



**Lindi Duesenberg**

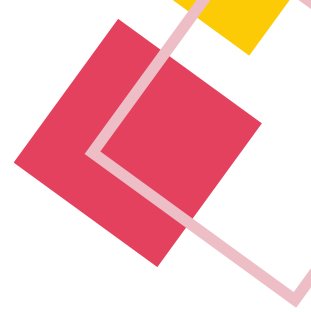
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





# DMF Youth's mission

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DMF Youth empowers underserved elementary and middle school students through comprehensive life-skill development programs that ignite their self-confidence, creativity, and determination. Our approach strategically blends three critical, yet missing components necessary for holistic youth development—physical mobility, arts education, and mental well-being. Driven by the vision of an equitable education system for all, we partner with Title 1 schools and homeless shelters across NYC to deliver free, accessible afterschool and summer programs that leverage dance education and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to inspire healthy bodies, foster healthy relationships, and build grit.

DMF Youth distinguishes itself by integrating physical, emotional, and mental well-being into a single strategic approach. We acknowledge that a student's overall well-being extends beyond academic achievement, recognizing the interconnection between physical health, emotional stability, and mental resilience.



# The DMF Youth curriculum

The DMF Youth curriculum blends arts education, healthy movement, and Social Emotional Learning (SEL)-based activities to promote a holistic journey of physical, mental, and emotional growth among students. Crafted alongside educators, psychologists, artists, and community members, our curriculum equips students with resources for academic achievement and life success, effectively closing opportunity gaps. Central to our methodology is the fundamental tenet of building a growth mindset.

Through engaging lessons and activities, we help students foster a constructive outlook when faced with challenges and help them build an unshakable belief in their innate ability to acquire knowledge and overcome adversities. Each program imparts vital life skills, such as mindfulness, positive self-talk, grit, and leadership, nurturing both personal strengths and a thriving school culture. This empowerment paves the way for students to excel within and beyond the classroom, catalyzing their comprehensive development.

Key tenets in the DMF Youth curriculum are:



**Building  
Growth Mindset**



**Developing  
Positive Self-talk**



**Impulse Control**



**Practicing  
Kindness**



**Mindfulness**



**Emotional  
Regulation**



# DMF Youth's programs

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**PS112** (535 E 119th St)

**PS206** (508 E 120th St)

**PS146** (421 E 106th St)

**PS38** (232 E 103rd St)

**Prospect Family Residence**

(730 Kelly St)

**Apollo Elementary**

(350 Linwood Street)

**River East**

(2351 1st Ave)

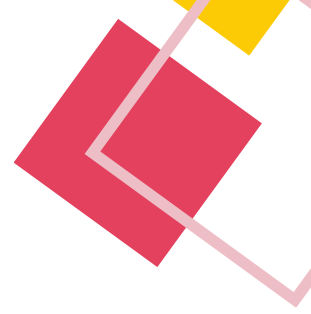
**Allie's Place**

(1600 Randall Ave)



# DMF Youth's impact

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## **DMF Youth's programs produce measurable fitness and social-emotional impact:**

- Reduced negative behavior
- Increased self-esteem
- 30-50% increases in core social-emotional skills
- Improved stamina and physical health

DMF also improves performance outside the classroom. Enrolling in DMF makes students more excited to attend school, and our students have lower truancy rates, higher attendance rates, and higher academic performance than school-wide averages.

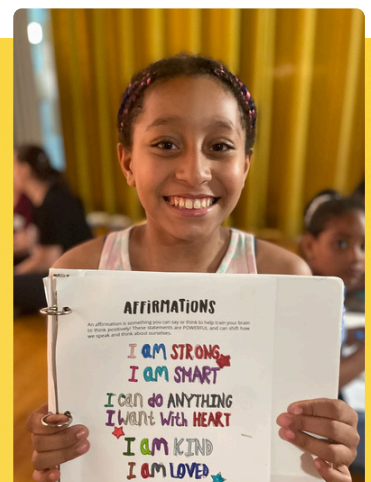
One of the starkest outcomes of our programs is the remarkable decline in aggressive behavior among students we serve. At the beginning of the year, many students face challenges in managing emotions and peer relationships, leading to instances of aggression toward teachers and other students.

Within just 3-5 months of joining our programs, students begin employing the tools they've learned to manage their anger effectively and communicate respectfully and empathetically with their teachers and peers.

We credit the SEL component of our curriculum with helping students develop stronger communication skills, problem-solving skills, empathy, and creative outlets for strong emotions.



A cornerstone of our Social Emotional Learning lessons is DMF Youth's signature 'Awesome Human Journal'. During the fall semesters, students engage with this custom journal, centering their exploration around personal strengths, kindness, growth mindset, and the “secrets of happiness.” Transitioning into spring, our students embark on a journey of discovery through DMF Youth's 'Awesome Human Journal: Global Leadership Edition', immersing themselves in diverse dances and cultures from around the world.





# Impact by the numbers



6

**Title 1 schools**



3

**Family homeless shelters**



6571

**Total instruction  
hours**



582

**Number of unique  
children served**

*To track our impact, DMF Youth collaborates with Hello Insight, an outside service that specializes in evaluating youth-serving organizations. Pre and post surveys designed by Hello Insight measure social and emotional learning outcomes for the students. These surveys are created based on evaluation tools that have been scientifically validated to be strong measures (with no age, gender, ethnicity bias) of the SEL outcomes including self management, social skills, positive identity, academic self-efficacy, social capital, and contribution.*

# Stakeholder testimonials

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“I feel happy. I feel excited. Like, if in school I was feeling down, when I come to DMF Youth I feel happy again.” - Student



“Something that I have learned at DMF is that I am brave, I am strong and I will always rise above” - Student



“For the past 4 years this beautiful DMF team has made a great change in my daughter’s life. She grew up to be stronger, ambitious and empowered with kindness. She learned how to face her challenges, appreciate teamwork, and most of all she learned amazing dance moves. Thank you DMF team for all the efforts that you do from the bottom of our hearts.” – Tala, Parent

# Stakeholder testimonials

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“Well, for me, it was a joy to see her thrive in DMF and I’ve seen my daughter Ja’mya find her voice, her confidence and her drive and that really is everything to me”  
- Rachelle, Parent

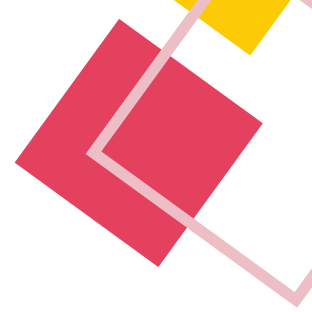
“I would say that DMF Youth really promotes positivity and really gives our children an understanding of how it’s important to feel good about themselves. DMF is really an inclusive program and that’s important because so many of our students are so different.” - Dr. Silfen, Principal at PS 146

“I think what DMF Youth does so well is building and maintaining relationships with the kids to the point where they talk about it all day or they talk about it at the end of the school year and they can’t wait until the school year starts again so they can continue that. They can’t wait to see their teaching artists. It’s a testament to what DMF Youth does day in and day out.” - Educator





# Bigger, Better, Bolder campaign



In 2025, DMF launched its BIGGER, BETTER, BOLDER Campaign to raise \$1 million! The campaign included three initiatives:

| BIGGER                                                                                                                                                | BETTER                                                                                                                                                                                              | BOLDER                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| To meet overwhelming demand for DMF's programs, DMF needs to grow bigger. The campaign will raise funds to welcome five new schools off the waitlist. | To help DMF validate its work today and improve its programs tomorrow, we partner with local universities and built an internship program revolving around innovating data and assessment measures. | Student needs don't end when they leave our classrooms. To support students and families, DMF is raising funds to build Community Corner – a resource for entire families and caregiving networks. |

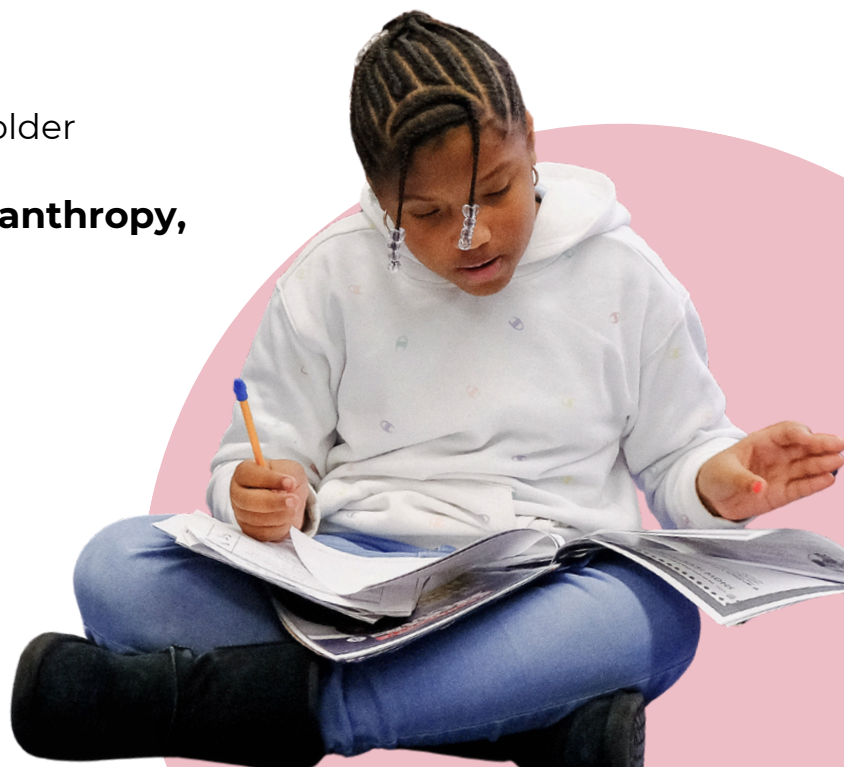
**After launching the campaign in September, we raised over \$380,000 toward our historic goal in 2025. With your help, we'll reach our goal of \$1 Million in 2026!**

**Get involved at:**

 [dmfyouth.org/biggerbetterbolder](https://dmfyouth.org/biggerbetterbolder)

**or reach out to Director of Philanthropy,  
Ronnie Plasters at**

 [ronnie@dmfyouth.org](mailto:ronnie@dmfyouth.org)



# TOGETHER!

## celebration of impact

Our 2025 TOGETHER! Celebration of Impact showcased everything that makes DMF special. Held for the first time at NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, TOGETHER! displayed the talents of DMF's professional dancer/teaching artist staff and 120 students. In between impressive and delightful dance numbers, we shared DMF's approach to combining dance with Social-Emotional learning, concluding with Cypher, a positive motivation-reinforcing ritual where each person in a circle gets a chance to dance their heart out and receive affirmations from their peers.

Receiving our 2025 Awesome Human Award was Jacqui Getz, a lifelong educator hailed as "New York City's Smartest Principal". When DMF was just getting started. Jacqui was one of the first educators to bring our programming into her school. We could not be more grateful for Jacqui's support, and were thrilled to present her with this well-deserved award.





# Run **for** DMF!

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Every year, a group of awesome humans represent DMF Youth in marathons across the world.

**In 2025, 9 marathoners raced for DMF in New York City and Berlin, raising more than \$30,000.**

We gathered to support our NYC runners as they crossed through East Harlem, cheering them on as they approached the 20-mile mark and entered the home stretch. Not only did Team DMF appreciate the boost, but our kids experienced firsthand that, with a growth mindset, “I can” attitude, and hard work, they can achieve anything – even running a marathon!

## **Team DMF Youth 2025:**

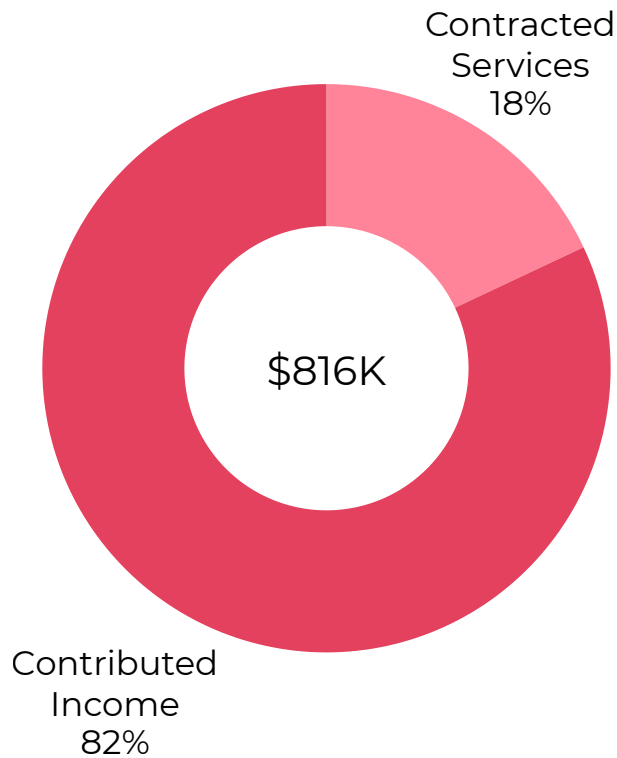
- Julie Cobble
- Xavier Gonzalez
- Andy Matsukawa
- Joi Matsukawa
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- Hans Seignon
- Erik Warnquist



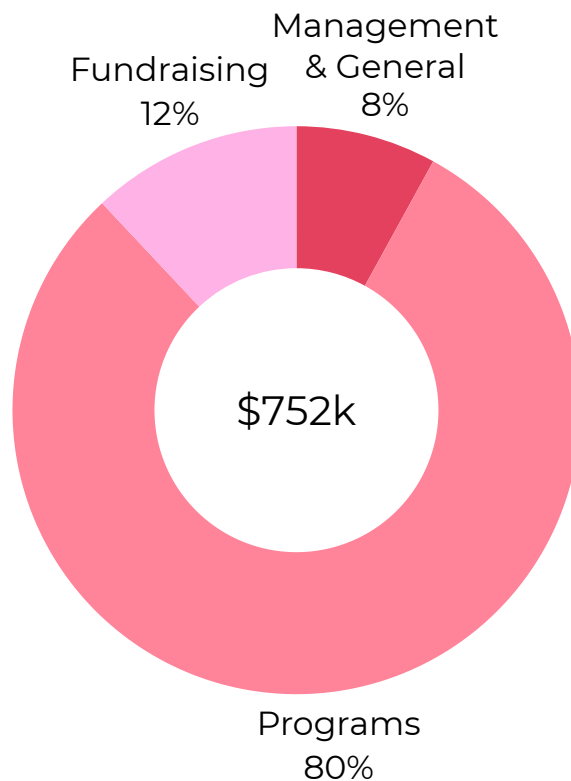


# 2025 Budget

## Revenue



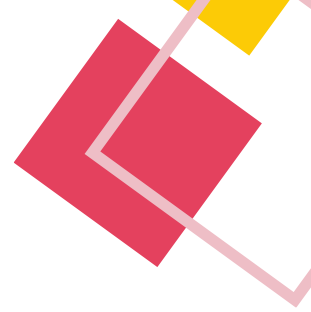
## Expenses



\*The above financials are unaudited as of publishing

# Our Donors

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## **\$50,000+**

Pinkerton Foundation  
SparkYouth

## **\$20,000+**

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The Baker Family Foundation  
Michelle Dekkers  
Cindy Duesenberg  
Jacqualyn Fouse  
New York State Council on the Arts  
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs  
On, Inc. Right to Run  
Stern Family Charitable Fund  
Allison Maher Stern Foundation  
Cathy Torelli\*

## **\$10,000-\$20,000**

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Family Foundation  
JP Morgan Chase  
Nancy Silverman  
The Soloviev Foundation

## **\$5,000-\$9,999**

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## **\$1,000-\$4,999**

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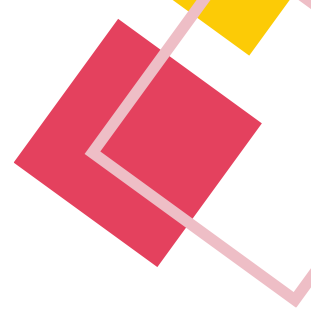
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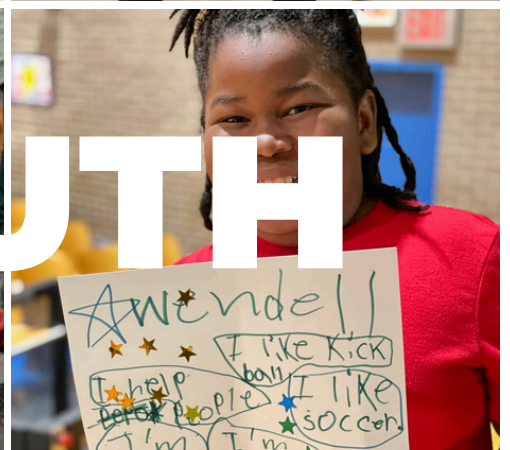
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