

February 6, 2023

Dear Committee Members,

As a Youth Intervention Program grantee, East Side Neighborhood Services has had the opportunity to provide expanded Creative Arts Therapy (CAT) to youth and families for the past 6 years.

CAT services are the intentional use of creative and expressive arts as therapy to provide alternative, private and deliberately designed therapeutic spaces for youth to heal psychologically from chronic stress, trauma or other changing factors that may put youth at risk. CAT services are often more culturally accessible and developmentally appropriate than traditional therapy models – but can be financially inaccessible to low-income households. **Fortunately, our YIP grant has eliminated this financial barrier for East Side families.**

In 2022 alone, we have been able to serve 18 youth through individual and family therapy, and over 150 youth through group interventions at school and community-based sites – all at no cost to participants. Individual CAT services can be provided at home, school, or in the community, further reducing barriers to access. One current recipient is an 8-year-old who moved in with extended family after their parent abruptly lost housing due to chronic substance abuse. This youth now has a positive relationship with our CAT provider who has created a safe space to process and grow – preventing maladaptive coping behaviors and increasing positive functioning at school and home.

**We urge you to support deeper investment in YIP funding, so programs like ours can continue to provide high quality, accessible interventions for youth who have been deeply impacted by poverty, trauma and the upheaval of the past few years.**

Best Regards,



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