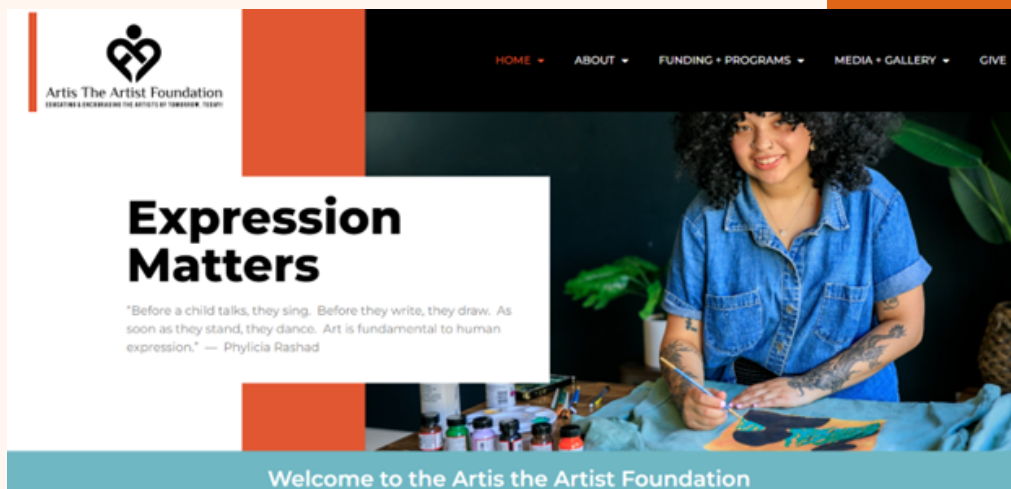


September 2023



# Artis The Artist Foundation

EDUCATING & ENCOURAGING THE ARTISTS OF TOMORROW, TODAY!



## EXCITING UPDATES:

### Check Out Our Brand New Logo & Website!

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our refreshed logo and website! Our team has been working tirelessly to bring you a fresh, modern look that truly represents our organization's values and mission.

Designed with care and creativity, our logo embodies the essence of our organization in a visually stunning manner. With two intersecting A's representing "Artis" and "Artist" that form both the shape of a heart and an individual embracing the A in Artist, the logo captures our spirit of love and support for artists of all types.

But that's not all. Our revamped website is now live and ready for you to explore. We have put a lot of thought into creating a user-friendly experience that makes it easier for site guests to navigate, find information, and engage with our foundation. From the sleek design and intuitive layout to the enhanced functionality, we have aimed to provide you with a seamless online experience. Make sure to check it out at [artis-the-artist.com](https://artis-the-artist.com).

We would love to hear your feedback on our new logo and website. Your opinion matters to us! If you have any thoughts or suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We value your input and are continuously looking for ways to better serve you and the young artists in our community.

Thank you for your continued support as we embark on this new chapter. With your help, we can achieve even greater things together! Stay tuned for more updates and initiatives to come.

Warm regards,  
The Artis the Artist Foundation Team

Follow us!



@flashesinthefog

# Tarrant County Educational Foundation (TCEF) Honors the Artis the Artist Foundation

ORGANIZATION RECEIVES RECOGNITION AT THE ART OF GIVING MAYOR'S LUNCHEON



On March 23rd, the Tarrant County Education Foundation hosted its annual Art of Giving Mayor's Luncheon at The Fort Worth Club. Arlener Steels Poydras, founder and Director of The Artis the Artist Foundation, was recognized along with Roy C. Brooks, L. Clifford Davis, and Mae Cora Peterson, for their lifetime achievements and contributions to the community.

Scholarships were awarded to four Tarrant County college students in their names. Keynote speaker, Mayor Mattie Parker, engaged the crowd with insights on how attendees could support our children in achieving higher education.

To thank her for her support of the Foundation, TCEF also awarded a scholarship in her name. Learn more about TCEF and their upcoming projects at [tcefoundation.org](http://tcefoundation.org).



# 2023 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

## Carlandre “C.J.” Bussey, Jr., Visual Artist & Designer



“Art directed me to my true passion. Ever since I was a kid, I’ve had an affinity for art. I used to think that I simply enjoyed watching cartoons as a child. I would get up in the morning for school to watch Adult Swim and the Cartoon Network. Most of the time, I would see iconic shows like Aqua Teen, Hunger Force, Robot Chicken, Adventure Time, Courage the Cowardly Dog, Chowder, and tons of other cartoons. I used to think I just liked cartoons; however, as I grew older, I realized that I appreciated the art and graphics.

Art is an expression of emotion only a human can make and experience. Art has helped me find my own identity in a way nothing else has or ever will. Art is not just drawing.



When I found out what true art was, I realized what path I wanted to tread on going into my career and throughout life. Being able to make a shirt and start designing clothes for my brand helped me to find a way to express emotions in a way I didn’t know. Art is the epitome of human emotion, ecstasy, tragedy, and spirit. Without art, we could be in a world full of fleshly robots that wouldn’t know how to express emotions without popping a pill or downing some liquid courage.

I came to terms with my artistic roots later than I should have, but I don’t regret anything. Art has taught me that life experiences occur for a reason and it’s up to you to either make the most of it or say, “I can’t do it.” Either way, someone will be happy that they did something and someone else in the future will be wondering, “Why didn’t I?”

Artist CJ is a member of The Young Men’s Leadership Academy and will be attending Southern University A&M College.



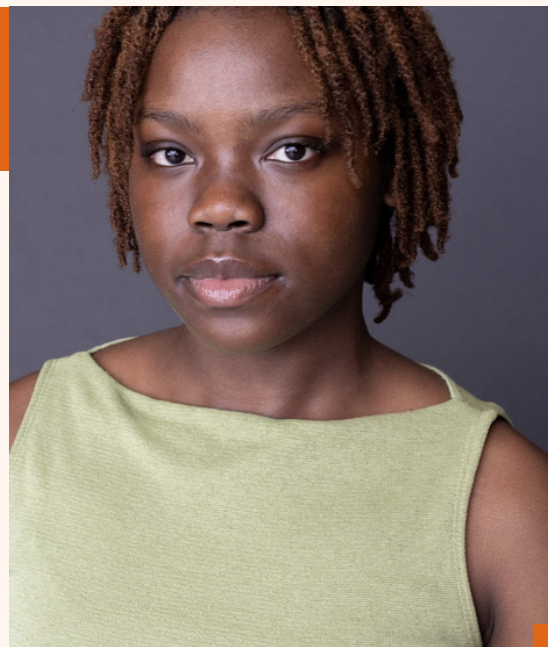


# 2023 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

## Maria Shorunke, Performing Artist



“I first became interested in the art of musical theatre in 3rd grade during music class. We were planning our end-of-the-year recital and the theme was “Broadway hits.” I didn’t know what Broadway was at the time, but something about that word made me excited. I was given a solo to do in “You Can’t Stop the Beat” from the musical *Hairspray*. It was the finale of our show, so I felt a big responsibility, at my young age, to do it justice. As I was learning my solo, I began a deep dive into this fascination. I was discovering so much about *Hairspray* and its musical history. It was my favorite musical, even if it was the only one I knew.



That was, until my music teacher gave us another song to prepare: “Popular” from the musical *Wicked*. My obsession was quick and never ending that day. The day of the recital was here and I felt excited and nauseous at the same time. It was my first performance ever in front of an audience of people other than my family and I was feeling the heat. It was time for the 3rd graders to gather on stage and perform, and suddenly, I snapped into what felt like a performance mode. The music started, and I became one with it, dancing my way through the beginning and chorus and finally into the last “You can’t stop the beaaatttttt!” Seeing everybody cheer for our class was a joyous feeling. I couldn’t understand at that moment, but I now realize the impact that had on me.

I’ve always loved to perform and to make people feel something with my art (I was very self-aware at 9 years old). Being the class clown who liked to be weird and sing at random times in class was my outlet for feeling inadequate in myself. Finding theatre put things in perspective for me and made me figure out my passion and purpose early on in my life. Though I’ve strayed from it and found my way back many times, I always felt that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Musical theatre has helped me in my never-ending journey to becoming and staying my truest self. It’s been my outlet of creativity and expression and has gotten me through some of the hardest times I’ve been faced with in my life. Without the art of musical theatre and its impact and the joy it brought and continues to bring in my life, I don’t know what life I’d be leading right now. But I know it’d be one not touched by the beauty that is musical theatre.”



Maria is a powerful singer and dancer. She will be attending Texas Christian University in the fall. Listen to Maria on the Artis the Artist Foundation’s Facebook page.

# 2023 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

## Myles Sturns-Thomas, Performing Artist



“For the past 10 years, all I’ve known is music. I’ve focused so intently on that singular artform for the majority of my life, and then I saw my first show on Broadway. After seeing it, something clicked and from that point on, I knew that the stage was the only place I could ever be. It’s the place that sparks my desire to do more, to grow, to be someone beyond who I currently am. The stage pushes me to be uncomfortable, to stumble before I achieve the goals I seek. The unconfined joy I find as I work on a new monologue, or as I try to stretch my vocal range, or even as I work to stick the perfect triple pirouette, is never ceasing because of my passion to constantly grow as a performing artist.

I had a revelation this past summer after attending two very different types of summer programs, one being a musical theater intensive, and the other being an environmental science summit. During my time at the science summit, I found myself only wanting to sing and work on my art. After training myself to become a stronger and more well-rounded performer prior to the summit, having my voice stripped from me because I couldn’t continue to work on my craft was like a crushing blow. From that point on, I knew that the arts would be a key factor throughout the rest of my life. After I graduate from high school, I will remain just as devoted to the arts as I am now. I am continuing to strengthen the training I received in high school to become the well-rounded performer I need to be to perform on national tours and on Broadway in the future.”

Myles is already on the move! He was also awarded a full ride to the Interlochen Center for the Arts, a 6-week program for performing artists. He is playing Coalhouse Walker, Jr. in the musical production “Ragtime.”. Myles will be attending Oklahoma University in the fall. Listen to Myles on the Artis the Artist Foundation’s Facebook page.





# “UP AND COMING” ARTISTS TO WATCH

Charity Varnado, Visual Artist



The future is in creative hands. Artist Charity Varnado was introduced to art at three years old by her pre-kindergarten teacher, Shaqula Aubrey. After observing Charity, the teacher recommended to her mother that she take art classes. In the words of Phylicia Rashad, “Before a child talks, they sing. Before they write, they draw. As soon as they stand, they dance. Art is fundamental to human expression.”

This honor student and gifted artist is now a high school freshman and is well on her way to greatness. In addition to awards from her school and participation in many art exhibits, her artwork has been displayed twice in the Dallas Contemporary Museum, at Café Brazil, and commissioned for the March of Dimes organization. Artist Charity says, “I am interested in furthering my knowledge in visual arts and receiving a quality education by attending Grand Prairie Fine Arts Academy. I would like to learn more about composition and developing my own art style that is unique and different. I also have some interest in character design and animation.”

This Artist the Artist Foundation will follow Artist Charity through her high school career and beyond. You can follow Charity on Instagram @Picturesbypickles.

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Kayla Barnes, Visual Artist



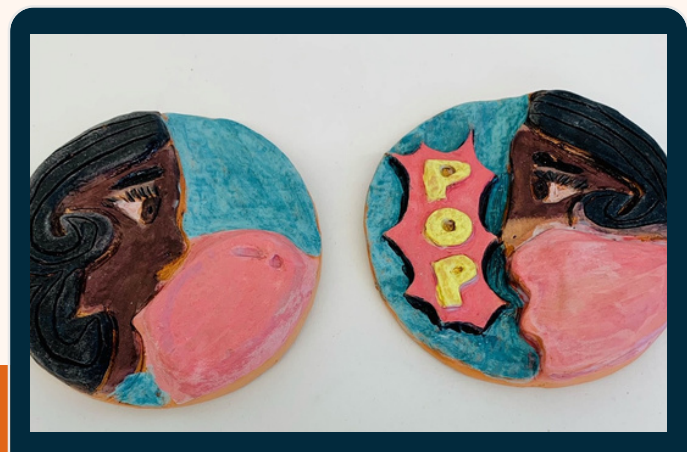
Artist Kayla graduated from Sam Houston University on August 5, 2023, with a bachelor's degree in Art and a minor in Art History. Kayla remained in contact with the Foundation each year of her journey.

“Attending college is a good experience to have because it allows a person to expand their horizons, and it allows them to take on new challenges. Personally, I see college as a means to try new things and have new experiences that you likely would not have had in high school. Additionally, attending college opens up opportunities to meet new people. That said, I will say that I have learned new skills, and I continued to build on pre-existing skills. Independence is one of those skills that is constantly being developed, and being in college greatly helps with that. As far as post-graduation plans go, I do not have a concrete plan for what I want to do moving forward. I am currently in the process of applying for internships. Uncertainty ironically provides the opportunity to discover what you do like, and it gives you a chance to continue to experience new things.



That said, all I can do is continue to grow as a person, because that naturally means that something may open up for me even if it is not a career in art. With this, I continue to develop my skills as an artist because it may be something that I reconsider visiting, and art is something that you have to continuously work at in order to improve. Learning new mediums has been a slight help because it gives me something else to try, and it is another means of developing my skills. A byproduct of being an artist is that things can be spontaneous, slow, or a combination of both. College allows you to grow as a person, and it also allows you to see a different version of yourself you would not have been able to see otherwise.”

- •
- •
- •
- •



- •
- •
- •
- •

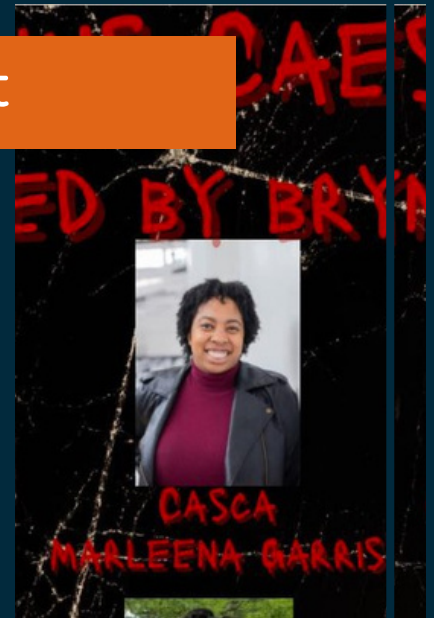


# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Marleena Garris, Performing Artist

Performing artist Marleena Garris has been very busy over the last two years. This year, she started a venture with the Commonwealth Shakespeare Apprentice Company in the Boston area. She was also the recipient of the Spark Scholarship for BIPOC actors. Marleena plays Casca in a punk rock retelling of *Julius Caesar*, which opened August 1st.

Marleena says, “I am having a blast working and learning so much about myself through this body of work. I am grateful to have the chance to not only dive into classical work but without barriers! See you on (and around) the common!”





# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Isabella Rios, Visual Artist

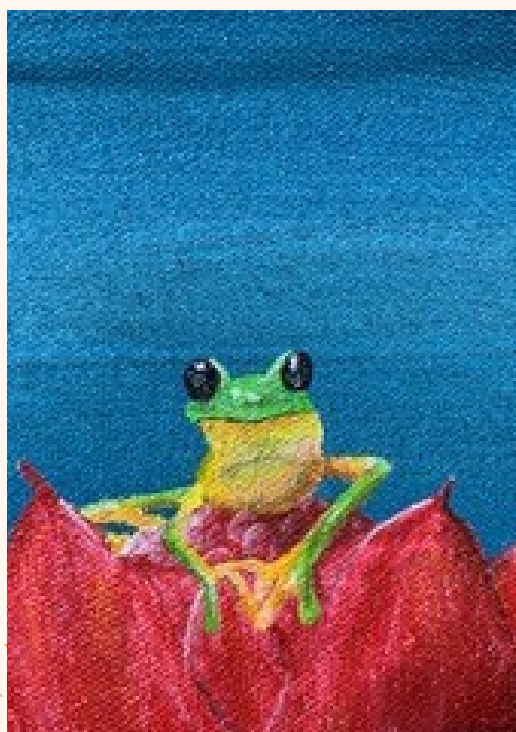


“My first full year in college has been much better than I would have ever anticipated and I owe a lot of it to the Artis the Artist Foundation. Without the financial stress, I had the time to truly enjoy this first semester, and things will only get better with the second semester! My academics are all over the place, but because of the extra courses I took in high school I have the room in my schedule to try it all. I don’t want to waste an opportunity.

During my explorations, I stumbled across the Studio Art building at the University of Texas at Arlington, and it is so beautiful. It’s a tad bit old, but they have this little garden in the center of it all and it looks and sounds like it came right out of a Disney movie. There, I found they have a minor available in glassblowing, so that’s what I’m going to try and minor in. It seems fun, and everyone in the glassblowing club was really nice. My art skills are growing, and I am learning new techniques.

Over the summer, I’m planning to study abroad in Spain and strengthen my Spanish speaking abilities. I will be returning to the University of Texas at Arlington school in the fall to start my sophomore year.”

• •



# Coming Soon:

## THE ARTIS THE ARTIST FOUNDATION'S ASPIRING AUTHOR PROGRAM



This fall, the Artis the Artist Foundation is looking forward to the upcoming launch of our highly anticipated "Aspiring Authors Program"! This program, which will support literacy programs and engage students in storytelling, writing, and publishing, is tailor-made for young individuals who have a passion for writing and view it as a form of creative expression.

While painting, dancing, and singing often steal the spotlight in the world of art, we believe that writing deserves its own place in the limelight. Writing is a powerful medium through which stories, ideas, and emotions can be brought to life, yet it is sometimes overlooked in the realm of artistry. With our Aspiring Authors Program, we aim to nurture and support the budding writers within our community.

Follow us on Facebook to receive more details regarding program registration, information session dates, and application procedures.

Remember, writing is an art form waiting to be unleashed, and we believe that young people have the potential to create something truly extraordinary through the literary arts. Join us this fall for the Aspiring Authors Program, which will allow youth creativity to soar!



# SAVE THE DATE!

COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION of TEXAS

— NTX —

GIVING DAY

9.21.23 *presented by* **amazon**

## Why Support the ATA Foundation on the North Texas Day of Giving?

We invite you to join us in making a lasting impact on our community during the upcoming annual North Texas Day of Giving! This incredible day presents a unique opportunity for us to come together and create positive change that will uplift and transform the lives of young artists.

Why should you support our foundation? The answer lies in the remarkable work we do and the difference we make in the lives of those we serve. By supporting us on this special day, you become an integral part of our mission to educate and encourage the artists of tomorrow, today!

Your support on North Texas Day of Giving will enable us to continue these vital efforts. Your contribution, no matter the size, will be a catalyst for change.

Thank you for your unwavering support and for being a champion of change. Together, we can create a brighter future for all.