

2022

ANNUAL REPORT



TOTEM STAR



TO OUR FAMILY

A LETTER FROM DANIEL PAK

It was the morning of July 5, 2010. I remember Thadd and I pulling up into the Rainier Community Center parking lot, our eyes fixed on the group of young folks gathered out front. We had no idea that these ten young men, who we'd spend 250 hours mentoring and producing music with over the next two months, would be the first participants in what would one day be called Totem Star.

It took weeks to build trust. "A Black and an Asian?" one of them commented. "This \$#*t is 'bout to be hella weak." Another challenged me openly about the "work training" stipend they were each receiving versus what he speculated Thadd and I were being paid. "Just cause you make more than us doesn't mean we need to listen to you," he said, looking me in the eye.

Thadd and I would drive home every day, ranting about each of the young men as if they were our own children. The conversations would go late into the evening. We couldn't stop thinking about Antoine, K'Breyan, Shaun, and the rest of our new family.

A few weeks in, it happened. K'Breyan picked up a pencil and paper and started writing. He just sat there and wrote. He walked over to the mic, Antoine hit record, and that was it. The first Totem Star single, "Crazy," was officially in production. De'vonte' starting writing. Then Karl. Then Maika. From that point on, it was just work. Take after take. Feedback then more takes. Antoine received a phone call during the session. "Can't talk right now," he said. "I'm at work." Two weeks later we're all sitting in the large conference room in City Hall, Mayor McGinn calling in all of his staffers for a "listening party."

At the end of August, after spending 250 hours in that tiny recording studio at Rainier Community Center, we had completed an entire mixtape of music. We brought in a professional photographer, hired a graphic designer, and manufactured 1,000 copies of the Reality Mixtape. We're talking CDs, as Apple Music and Spotify didn't exist yet.

The guys were so proud. They achieved something together that not one of them could have imagined when we met on that first day in front of the building. We began the work training program with ten and we ended with ten. Unfortunately, two weeks later, we received news that a third of them had been rebooked into detention.

And that was the moment. That was when Thadd and I realized we would not, could not stop until our young people had a safe space to gather, make music, build community, and feel loved and appreciated.

Walking through the construction site at King Street Station today in the summer of 2023, watching drywall slowly cover metal framing in our new 2,000 sq ft recording studio and home, I hope we can reconnect with many of those first ten young men, now probably in their thirties, and show them what they helped build. Some are sadly no longer with us, and we dedicate this new home to them. Because it will always be their home, too. No longer will any of them have to ask for permission.

Late 2023 marks a new 30-year lease between Totem Star and the City of Seattle, via the Cultural Space Agency. Our new home is almost a reality. You all helped build it. Now help us build the next thirty years. For Antoine. For K'Breyan. For Shaun. And for every young artist who walks through our door searching for a song and a family.

Thanks for being part of our musical family. We are Totem Star. All of us. All together.



DANIEL PAK
Co-Founder, Executive Director,
Artist Mentor

OUR NEW HOME

SEE YOU IN FALL/WINTER 2023 AT OUR
NEW HOME IN KING STREET STATION!



Photo by Photo Bakery

Totem Star is partnering with the City of Seattle and the Cultural Space Agency to build a new recording studio and creative home for our young people at King Street Station in the heart of Seattle's vibrant downtown center between Pioneer Square and the International District.



Photo by Sellen Construction

The new studio at King Street Station will have:

- 8 times more space to serve our youth
- Common areas for group gatherings
- Multiple studios for learning and practicing recording skills
- Flexible creative space for teaching music video-related skills
- Greater access to public transportation

MISSION

Totem Star supports a diverse community of young recording artists learning music and life skills through mentorship and meaningful relationships. Our work in the studio and on the stage fosters growth in collaboration, leadership, and self-identity.

Totem Star envisions a more just society where all young people have access to music learning opportunities and youth voices are championed in support of healthy, engaged, and productive young people using music as a universal language.

VISION

Photo by Tracey Wong



PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships is a program where Totem Star Artists and staff partner with other organizations to speak, teach a program, or facilitate a workshop on music. We've partnered with orgs such as Middle College and The Beacon Academy this past year.



TLC

Totem Star Leadership Collective is a youth advisory board that provides valuable insight into Totem's Star's programs, structure, policies, and communications while also gaining leadership experience and knowledge of the inner workings of nonprofit governance. Their work includes providing input on studio policies and ensuring implementation, raising questions and suggesting edits to existing policies and guidelines.

PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS

THE STUDIO

The Studio is the creative heart of our programming, where our artists book weekly studio sessions to work with Totem Star artist mentors. Artists and mentors collaborate to work on songwriting, vocal technique, beat making, mixing, mastering, music business, performance, movement, and more.



THE STAGE

The Stage is a series of in-person arts showcases open to the general public where youth perform their original music and learn about live performance in the process. We currently have our annual showcases, Winter Magic and Summer Kickback, as well as our quarterly open mics.



Photo by Amy Pirion

LAVENDER SESSIONS

Lavender Sessions is a space for Totem Star artists of marginalized genders, including women, non-binary folks, and trans men ages 14-25 to convene to share music and stories, and provide mutual support and care for one another. Our gatherings range from self-defense workshops to discussions on collective care.



ARTIST BOOKING

Performance opportunities in the community with organizations such as the Seattle Art Museum, Gates Foundation, Seattle Public Schools, ACES, and more. Totem Star manages contracts for our artists and we are able to either advocate for and negotiate fair pay from partners or pay artists directly.



Photo by Tracey Wong

TOTEM STAR



"TOTEM STAR HAS HELPED TO PROVIDE ME MORE ACCESS TO CREATING MUSIC THIS PAST YEAR."



"I HAVE LEARNED VALUABLE MUSIC AND LIFE SKILLS FROM TOTEM STAR THIS PAST YEAR."



"TOTEM STAR HAS HELPED MENTOR ME IN MUSIC AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN 2022."



Photo by Daniel Pak



Photo by Tracey Wong

ARTIST DEMOGRAPHIC

RACE & ETHNICITY

38% BLACK

29% WHITE

15% LATIN/ HISPANIC

14% ASIAN

2% INDIGENOUS/ NATIVE AMERICAN

1% PASIFIKA

1% MIDDLE EASTERN/ NORTH AFRICAN

GENDER IDENTITY

53% MALE

45% FEMALE

2% TRANSGENDER &
GENDER NONCONFORMING

OUR IMPACT IN 2022



OF
HOURS OF
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
& LEADERSHIP
2,000
HOURS



OF HOURS OF
PROGRAMMING
1,000+
HOURS



Photo by Tracey Wong

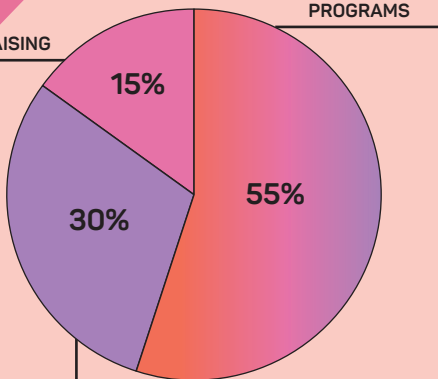


OF TOTAL
AUDIENCE
7,600+

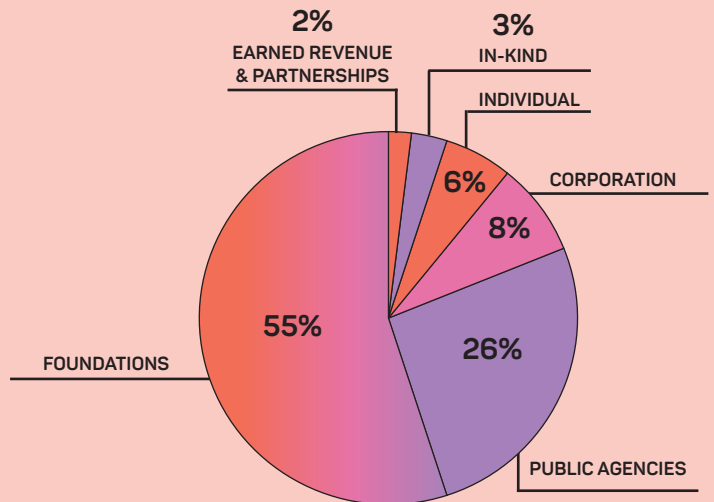


OF YOUTH SERVED
208

FINANCIAL SUMMARY



TOTAL EXPENSES
\$446,342



TOTAL REVENUE
\$ 738,689
NET INCOME: \$292,347

WHAT TOTEM STAR MEANS TO US

"I've met some life-long connections at Totem Star. I remember creating my first song with Pak and realizing the power of using my voice. Music is so important to me and in this community, I feel the most seen."

NIKAI, (SHE/HER)
SINGER-SONGWRITER



Photo by Amy Piñon



Photo by Teag

"I released a 4 track EP, an 8 track album, and 3 singles in 2022, and recorded an EP and several singles to release in 2023, and wrote about 50% of the material for what will hopefully be my third album released in three years.

I did about 75% of that work with my Totem Star mentor, Matt, but even the stuff I did solo or with friends was informed by the work ethic and confidence Totem Star has instilled in me as a musician. I know I can be prolific because Totem Star allowed me to be, and now that belief anchors me in all the music I do."

**MIRABAI
KUKATHAS,** (SHE/THEY)
SINGER-SONGWRITER



“Totem Star has made me see music for what it is. The music world is magic. Thanks to Totem Star, I am now making a name for myself larger than I ever could’ve imagined. Thank you Totem Star.”

WAIKS, (HE/HIM)
SINGER-SONGWRITER

“Totem Star has helped me so much these past years. My music career wouldn’t exist if it wasn’t for the team. It’s a safe place to create freely without judgment with amazing mentors that are very proficient and fluid in their specific niches.”

**SATURN
STAR,** (THEY/THEM)
SINGER-SONGWRITER, PRODUCER



Photo by Anya Kochis

“Totem Star has made progressing in my music and vocal skills so incredibly accessible by offering sessions remotely for free. I am also very grateful to be able to create such meaningful connections with mentors. I have learned so much about my craft and life in general from sharing space with Totem Star.”

**BRITTANY
HIGGS,** (THEY/THEM)
VISUAL ARTIST,
SONGWRITER



MEET THE FAMILY

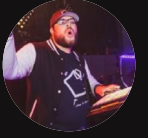
TOTEM STAR ARTISTS



Aleyanna
Grae
(she/they)



AJANI
(he/him)



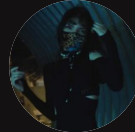
Close
to the
Sun
(he/him)



Delphine
Elliott
(she/her)



Aditi Joy
(she/her)



Brittany
Middlebrooks
(she/her)



Goddess
(she/they)



Haley
Graves
(she/her)



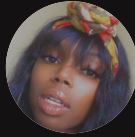
Brittany
Higgs
(she/her)



Ezrael
Sarmiento
(he/him)



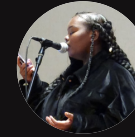
Jack
(he/him)



Kaya Blount
(she/her)



Elijah Hills
(he/him)



AMINA
(she/her)



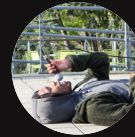
Jordan
Johnson
(she/her)



Lily
Indigo
(she/her)



Kid Cobb
(he/him)



Kiddus
Fecto
(he/him)



MoonGurl
(she/her)



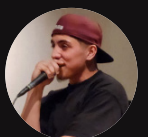
Mr. Business
(they/them)



Nikhil
Bagga
(he/him)



Mirabai
Kukathas
(she/they)



PRIMOE
(he/him)



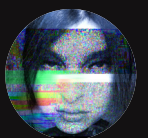
Reitor
(he/him)



René Amada
Lopez
(she/her)



Pablo
(he/him)



Saturn
Star
(she/they)



Vrhilio
(he/him)



Waiks
(he/him)



Samuel
Kemp
(he/him)



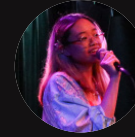
Yung
Fuego
(he/him)



YoungDub
(he/him)



ZAG
(he/him)



Xandra
Yugto
(she/her)

MEET THE FAMILY

STAFF



Amy Piñon
(she/her)
Artist Mentor,
Lavender Sessions
Program
Manager



Christina Nguyen
(she/her)
Assistant
Program
Coordinator



**Cornelius
Cambronero**
(he/him)
Assistant Program
Coordinator,
TLC Liason



Daniel Pak
(he/him)
Co-Founder,
Executive
Director, Artist
Mentor



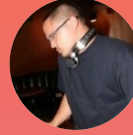
Matt Sablan
(he/him)
Artist Mentor



Mirabai Kukathas
(she/they)
Fundraising &
Development
Manager



Momma Nikki
(he/they/she)
Artist Mentor



Paul Laughlin
(he/him)
Deputy Director



Rose Nobleza
(she/her)
Accountant



**Thaddeus
Turner**
Co-Founder,
Artistic Director,
Artist Mentor



Tracey Wong
(she/her)
Communications
Manager,
Artist Mentor



ZAG
Assistant
Program
Coordinator

BOARD



Brian Myers
(he/him)
Board Member



Janie Hendrix
(she/her)
Board Member



Jon Stone
(he/him)
Board President,
Nominating
Committee Chair



Michelle Tran
(she/her)
Board Treasurer
& Finance
Committee Chair



**Shawna
Angelou**
(she/her)
Events
Committee Co-
Chair



**Wendy
Simmons**
(she/her)
Board Vice Chair,
DEI Committee
Co-Chair

TOTEM STAR LEADERSHIP COLLECTIVE



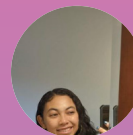
Aleyanna Allgood
Totem Star
Leadership
Collective Co-Chair



Aditi
(she/her)
Totem Star
Leadership
Collective Member



Brittany Higgs
(they/them)
Totem Star
Leadership
Collective Member



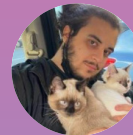
Goddess
(she/they)
Totem Star
Leadership
Collective Member



Lily Garrity
(she/her)
Totem Star
Leadership
Collective Co-Chair



Mirabai Kukathas
(she/they)
Totem Star
Leadership
Collective Member



ZAG
Totem Star
Leadership
Collective Member

THANK YOU



Photo by Daniel Pak

MUCH LOVE

to our supporters like you!

Thank you for your help in building up our next generation of recording artists and community leaders who will create positive impact in our world through their art.

TOTEM STAR

