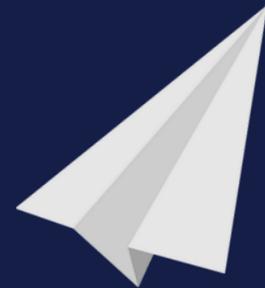


the unscripted project

20/21 Annual Report

NAVIGATING YOUR
WORLD THROUGH IMPROV





"For the longest time, I've limited myself from taking risks. Through improv, I was able to take risks and be my true authentic silly self"

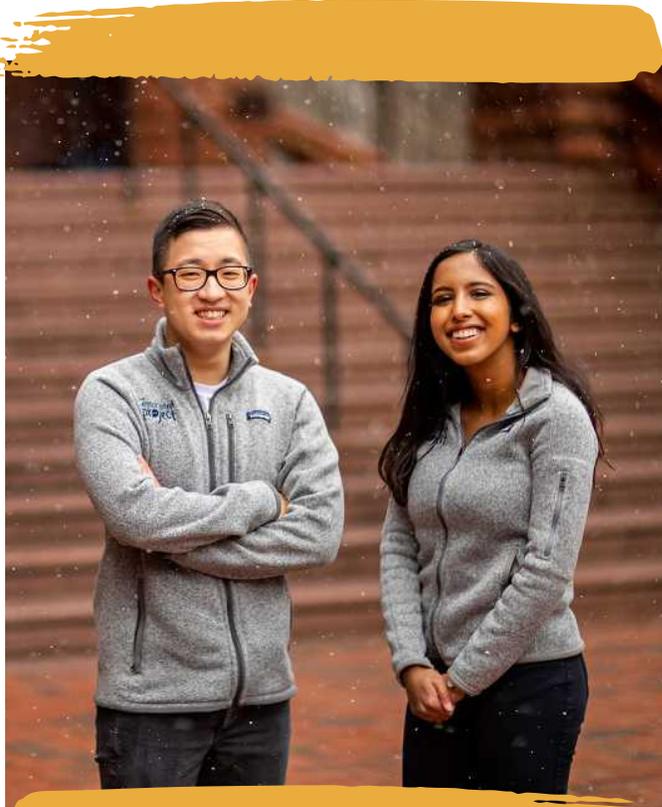
UNSCRIPTED STUDENT
9TH GRADE

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Letter from the Founders



The Unscripted Project is officially one year old, and we are so proud of the progress we have made. Despite a pandemic moving our students into virtual classrooms, our 9-week workshop series has been completed by 359 students across 10 public schools and 1 nonprofit partner this past year. We are humbled by the warm reception our program has received from the community, and deeply grateful for the committed school and teacher partners who believed in our mission and brought us to into their classrooms. What we have seen in our students over the past year has strengthened our core belief in the transformative power of an improv education. Skills like collaborating with others, developing confidence in our own voice, and adapting to uncertainty are now more important than ever before.

If 20/21 was a year for us to build the foundations of our organization - building strong partnerships, committing to robust impact measurement, and forming a strong team - then in 21/22 we hope to reinforce these foundations and go deeper. We are confident that the value of a program like ours will only increase as we are able to collaborate, form community, and share joy in an in-person instructional setting. We are also delighted to announce that Karin Potter-Simmons will be joining our leadership team as our Program Director, spearheading many of our initiatives moving forward.

Thank you to our incredible community of young people, educators, teaching artists, volunteers, researchers, mentors, and generous supporters for your continuous belief in us and your support in transforming The Unscripted Project from an idea into reality. We could not have done it without you, and we hope that you will continue on this journey with us.

Warmly,
Meera Menon & Philip Chen

Letter from the Program Director

Throughout my career, I have worked in many capacities in the support of our youth. In my hometown of Philadelphia, I have helped develop youth-focused non-profit organizations, led community outreach programs, and advocated for educationally disadvantaged students. The onset of a global pandemic forced me to evaluate my role in youth services and how impactful I actually was. I realized I needed to find more creative ways to support youth through the unique circumstances they would face as a result of the pandemic. I knew it was time to step into action and become a stronger voice for the often voiceless. Research led me to the arts, and the arts led me to The Unscripted Project.

Just a year old, Unscripted has had a major positive impact on the lives of hundreds of young people through the medium of improv. Being a member of this team is an honor and I am looking forward to my role as the Program Director. In my role, my goal is to provide students with the confidence and life skills necessary to be well-rounded individuals and strong members of their community. I appreciate Meera and Philip for giving me this opportunity and opening my eyes to the world of improv. I look forward to making major strides in the development of the Unscripted Project for years to come.

Kind Regards,
Karin Potter-Simmons



Who We Are

Need

Traditional education is not adequately preparing young people with the social-emotional and interpersonal skills necessary for life within and beyond the classroom

Mission

To equip students with the building blocks for personal and professional success through the power of an improv education

Vision

Every child leaves school prepared to embrace challenge, seize opportunity and unlock their own potential

About Us



The Unscripted Project is a Philadelphia-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to equipping students with critical social-emotional and interpersonal skills through the transformative medium of improvisational theater. We do this primarily through our core program, a free 9-week series of in-school applied improv workshops in public middle and high schools. Since our inception in 2020, we have worked with over 350 students. Through our workshops, students develop key life skills like speaking confidently, collaborating effectively, and growing from mistakes in a low-stakes and laughter-filled environment.

Year in Review

Core Program

We launched our Core Program, a free 9-week in-school workshop series, virtually across 10 Philadelphia public middle and high schools and 1 non-profit partner. Our innovative curriculum is aligned to state standards and was developed in partnership with advisors from the Magnet Theater NYC, Philly Improv Theater (PHIT), and Second City Chicago. We are eagerly looking forward to working with students in person again soon.

The series is taught by professional teaching artists in collaboration with classroom teachers. Using improv, we create a safe and nurturing environment for students to be themselves, make mistakes and grow with their peers. With a specific focus on developing one key life skill each week, our goal is for students to leave equipped with the improv toolkit - a mindset and a skillset that enables and empowers young people to be more adaptable, confident, and collaborative in life within and beyond the classroom.



"I learned how to think outside of the box and be prepared for anything thrown at me"

- Unscripted Student
9th Grade

THE UNSCRIPTED ROADMAP:



Year in Review

Professional Development



The Unscripted Project is an official Act 48 Accredited Professional Development (PD) provider, so Pennsylvania educators can receive continuing education credits from our PD program. We offer free workshops each semester for teachers in the Philadelphia School District, equipping them with the improv toolkit. By the end of our workshops, our goal is for educators to understand the key mechanisms behind why improv is a valuable educational tool and be able to apply it to fit the needs of their students. 26 educators have completed our 4-hour PD course to date, rating us on average a 10/10.

Corporate Workshops



We launched Improv for Teams in March 2021 for any organization interested in bringing the power of improv to their group. Improv for Teams are interactive, low-stakes workshops consisting of improv exercises, reflections, and applications to the workplace with all proceeds directly funding our free Core Program in Philadelphia schools. Our goal is to equip more people with the powerful toolkit of improv in a collaborative and laughter-filled environment. Clients have included start-ups (Neuroflow, Yipitdata), top consulting firms (McKinsey, Bain), Fortune 500 companies (Comcast), and universities (Wharton).



OUR IMPACT

By the Numbers

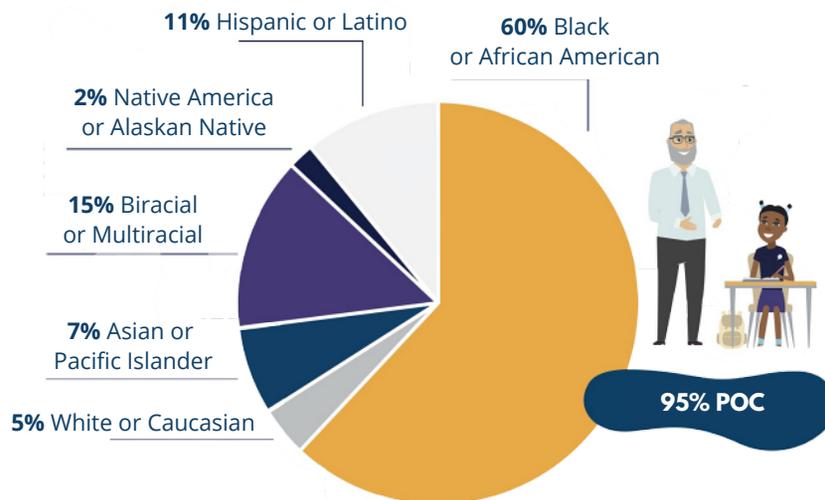
OUR FIRST YEAR IN REVIEW

11 Schools
inc. 1 non-profit partner

28 virtual classrooms

359 students

252 hours of improv education



At the schools we work at, the average percentage of students who are classified as “economically disadvantaged” is 90%

(CEP rate obtained by the School District of Philadelphia and is based on the % of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch)

By the Numbers

THE IMPROV TOOL KIT IS TRANSFORMATIVE.

82% of students feel like they can better understand their own emotions and the emotions of others

82% of students feel like they have become a better communicator

86% of students feel more confident participating in class

79% of students feel more comfortable with their peers

23% of students who initially screened positive for social anxiety screened negative at the end of the program

67% of students increased in social self-efficacy after the program

79% of students believe that the skills of improv can help with everyday life

"Development of SEL skills leads to improved long-term outcomes in educational attainment, employment, and mental health"

Aspen Institute, 2019

By the Stories

Student



"I loved the Unscripted Project and would definitely recommend this program to other students. I think my favorite thing was being able to create a scene and have the audience visualize something that you're visualizing, but that isn't really there. It made me be more open and more confident in my communication skills, and I think a lot of students could use that." *Hear more from Unscripted Student Sloan in this article [here](#)*

-Sloan Williams, Unscripted Student 8th Grade

Teaching Artist



"When we were playing a Job Interview game, one student was applying for a job 'making money grow on trees' and he came up with a plan about how he was going to give all families who needed it access to the tree so they could take the money they needed. It was very sweet and just another example of how this generation is really tuned into ideals of equality. It was inspiring and gave me hope for the world!" *Watch our teaching artist Tara's testimony [here](#) and read her blog post [here](#)*

-Tara Gadomski, Unscripted Teaching Artist

Classroom Teacher



"In this year of virtual learning, The Unscripted Project brought back the 'school feeling' - the feeling of excitement and collaboration that is vital in any learning environment. This community-building had been absent for most of the year and was hard to create in an online setting, but with Unscripted, students came to class that day because of Unscripted. Attendance and engagement in my classes increased because of the impact this program has had on my students."

- Classroom Teacher Partner, Wagner Middle School

By the Stories

Lenda Yan
Unscripted Student



**WATCH LENDA'S
STORY HERE**

"Whenever I'm sad, tired or hungry, improv makes me forget it and I always leave with a smile. I feel closer to my classmates because I know I can be myself and no one is going to judge me when I do something wrong."

-Lenda Yan, Unscripted Student

Bryant Fleming
Unscripted Student



**WATCH BRYANT'S
STORY HERE**

"Improv gets you wandering outside of your comfort zone. I learned a lot about myself. I grew to realize that I could do things that I never could have done without improv."

-Bryant Fleming, Unscripted Student

The background features several abstract, hand-painted elements. In the top left, there are overlapping brushstrokes in shades of purple and blue. At the top center, a thick, horizontal blue brushstroke is visible. On the right side, there are two dark blue shapes: one is a rounded shape with white vertical dashes, and the other is a vertical, elongated shape with a pink-to-red gradient. In the bottom left, there is a pink shape with white vertical dashes. At the bottom center, there is a thick, wavy blue brushstroke. In the bottom right, there is a dark blue, rounded shape. The word "HIGHLIGHTS" is centered in a bold, dark blue font.

HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights

President's Engagement Prize



In April 2020, we won the President's Engagement Prize, a \$200,000 grant from our founders' alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania. The largest award of its kind in higher education, it provides \$100,000 of seed funding for a new nonprofit as well as a \$50,000 stipend to each founder to work full-time on building the organization. We will always be grateful to Penn and President Amy Gutmann for believing in us, our mission, and what The Unscripted Project could do. With this grant, we have been able to build a strong foundation for a long-lasting organization.

Fall '20 Virtual Fundraiser



We launched our first annual campaign in November 2020. Our Fall 20/2020 Campaign was capped off with a live-streamed virtual event to celebrate our team and highlight the successes of our first semester. We were excited to feature Unscripted students and teaching artists, President Amy Gutmann from the University of Pennsylvania, and student groups Penn Masala, Penn Glee Club, and Without a Net. With the support of our incredible community, we raised nearly \$25,000.

Highlights

Innovation Awards



In January 2021, we won the Greater Philadelphia Social Innovation Awards in the category of Education Entrepreneurship. Nominated by Dr. Michael Golden and John Gamba of Penn's Graduate School of Education, we were honored to receive this award in our very first year of operation and join a community of people committed to improving education for young people.

Trivia Night

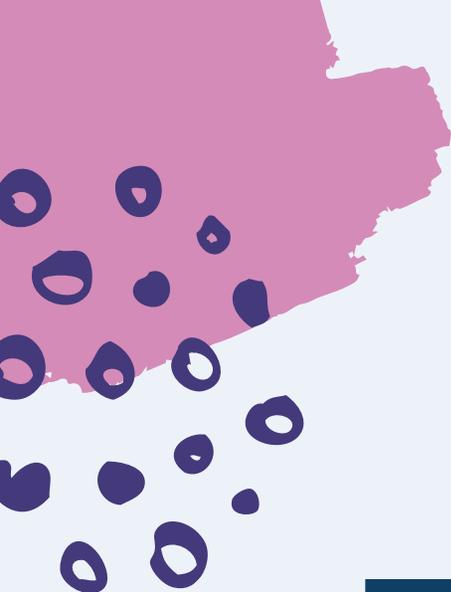


In March 2021, we brought the Unscripted community together for our Trivia Night fundraiser, featuring two local comedians: Tom Cassidy and Darryl Charles (one of our very own teaching artists!). Over 60 guests attended and we raised over \$1,000 in this night of laughter and friendly competition. Our grand prize winners won a luxury spa package, a Lush gift basket, and a La Colombe coffee set.

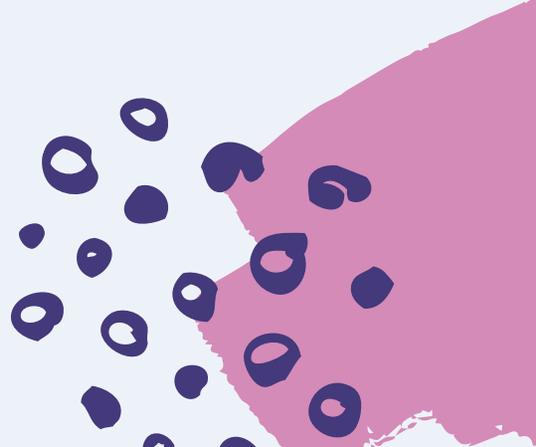
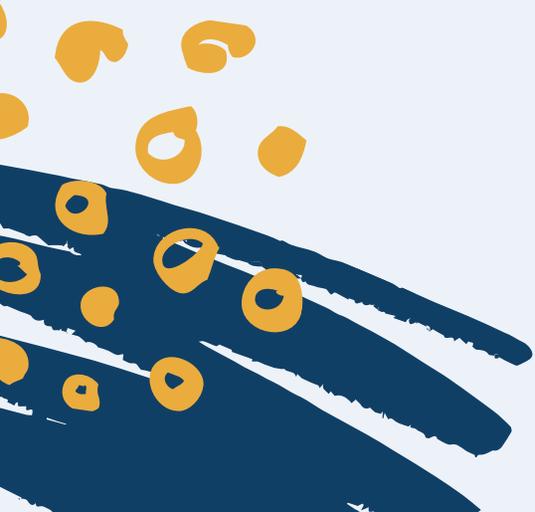
Team Summer Party



In June 2021, our close-knit team was finally able to meet in person for the first time since our organization was born during the pandemic. During our summer party, we had a lovely time catching up and celebrating our first year over drinks and dinner. We also introduced our new Program Director, Karin, to the team.



FINANCIALS & OUR FUTURE

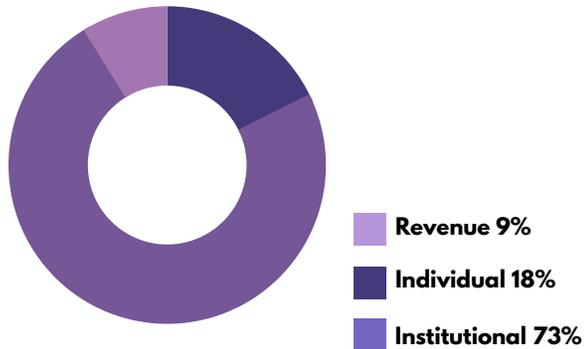


Financials

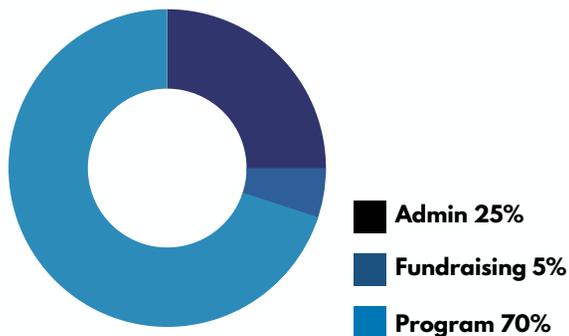
Budget Y20/21:
\$100,000

Budget Y21/22:
\$150,000

Revenue 20/21



Expenses 20/21



3 Year Strategic Plan



Evidence-Based Programming

We are looking forward to in-person learning in the fall. Our goal is to work on adapting and refining our curriculum through continuous feedback and impact measurement. We are committed to building a strong, evidence-based program prior to scaling our organization further.



Strengthening Our Community

We aim to solidify and magnify our connections to the communities we serve. Our program is built for our students and it is vital that the voices of our stakeholders continue to inform the work we do and the organization we become.



Established Funding

We have been fortunate to have received several grants and are in the process of applying to more foundations. Over the next 3 years, we hope to secure reoccurring grant funding to cover most of our admin costs. We are also in the process of building out our revenue streams.



Strategic Scaling

While we continue to refine our program and establish recurring funding (~3 yrs), our target is to maintain steady growth. In fall 2021, we will start at 16 classrooms per semester and aim to grow to 25 classrooms per semester by 2023.



TO OUR UNSCRIPTED FAMILY

THANK
YOU



In Gratitude

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Lead Instructor, Magnet Theater

Adjunct Professor, Columbia University

Philip Chen

Co-Founder, The Unscripted Project

William Crowley

Director of Marketing, NeuroFlow

Dr. Marcia Ferguson

Senior Lecturer, University of Pennsylvania

Meera Menon

Co-Founder, The Unscripted Project

Teaching Artist Team

Darryl Charles

Paul Deichmann

Tara Gadomski

Katherine Perry

Susan LaPalombara

A special thank you to our network of advisors, mentors, and experts who continue to support the growth of The Unscripted Project.

Volunteers

Julia Barnard

Carolyn Carson

Michael Di Martino

Couloir Hanson

Adrienne Hines

Katie Jenaway

Isabella Schlact

Christina Scordia

Brandon Singer

Coco Wang

Arthur Zhou

School Partners

A Better Chance (Radnor, Lower Merion, Strath Haven)

Charles W. Henry School

Franklin Learning Center

Franklin S. Edmonds Elementary School

General Louis Wagner Middle School

KIPP DuBois Collegiate Academy

Northeast High School

Paul Robeson High School

Samuel Fels High School

Science Leadership Academy (Center City)

Science Leadership Academy (Middle School)

In Gratitude

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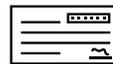
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Link works for Schwab Charitable, Fidelity Charitable, BNY Mellon. For others go directly to your DAF



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*For stock transfer instructions, please contact
philip@unscriptedproject.org*



The Unscripted Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations are tax deductible and a receipt will be provided for any contribution. We have a Platinum Seal of Transparency from Guidestar (the highest level), which means you can access financial, board, and impact information on our profile [here](#).

Additional ways to support

Connect

Building a strong network of educators, partners, community members and researchers has been critical to our success. We welcome any connections to those who you think might be interested in our work.

Share

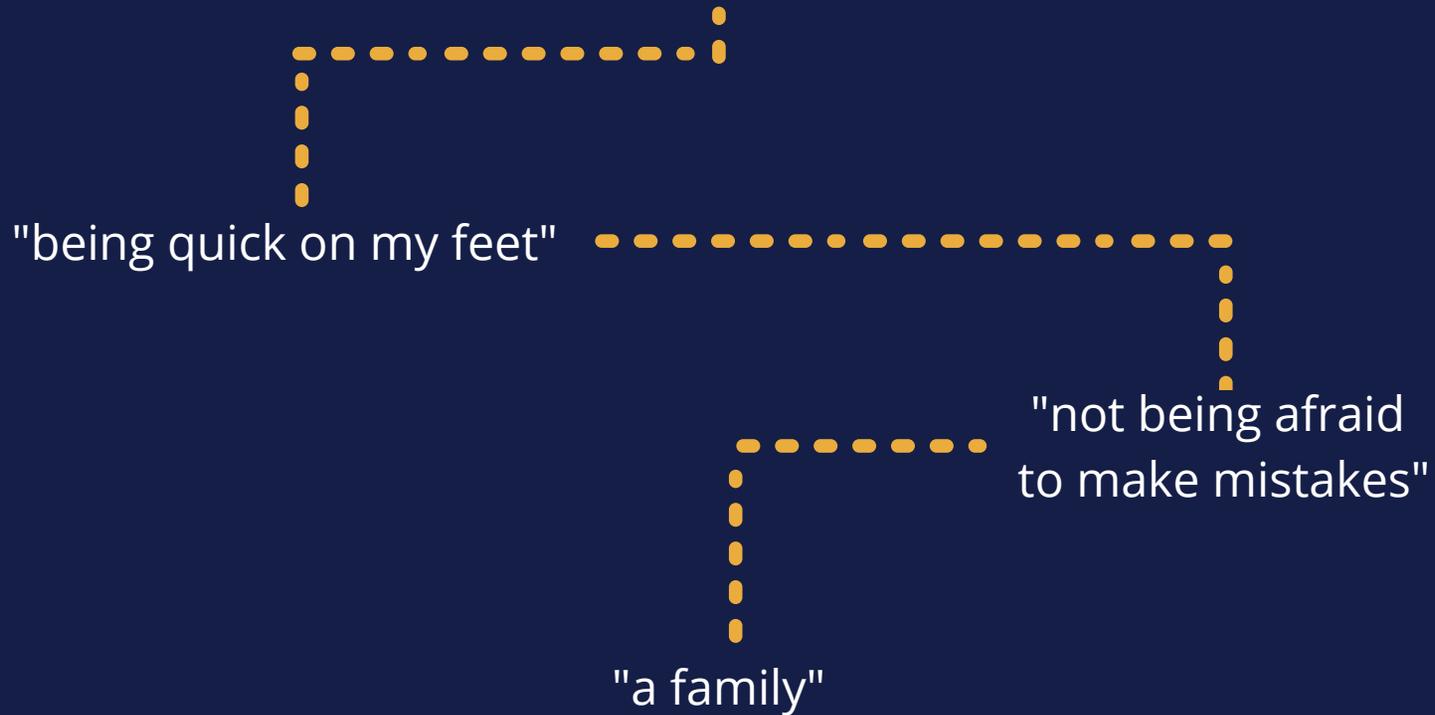
As a new nonprofit, it is important for us to get the word out about who we are and what we do. Share us on your social media and spread the word!

Grow

We are always looking for volunteers and pro-bono support (especially in marketing & web development, non-profit admin and fundraising).



IMPROV TO ME IS...



the unscripted project

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