



2020 IMPACT REPORT

PEGASUS

FEBRUARY 2020

Dear Friends,

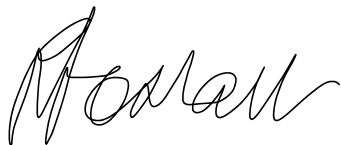
Our world is undergoing a period of historic strife and change. During a time in which social distance has become commonplace, banding together in community is more important than ever. With your generous support, New Era Creative Space has risen to the challenge of our guiding mission: to build stronger communities through creative programming. It is with my deepest gratitude to our dedicated circle of friends and stakeholders that I present our 2020 Impact Report.

This past year has been particularly challenging due to the pandemic. Our participation numbers initially dropped due to the inability to meet in person. However, the virtual format enabled NECS to expand its reach overall. Certain challenges our community faced—such as families conducting school from home, racial tensions, and the violent death and shooting of several youth in our community—drove NECS to create virtual spaces of solidarity and community for youth and adults to come together to address these challenges collaboratively.

We invite you to examine the programs and community-betterment initiatives we have conducted in 2020. With odds against us, we managed to offer a diverse and engaging program list, as well as host a number of renowned grass-roots activists to work one-on-one with our students, community leaders, parents, and resident educators. It was only through the support of others and our community's desire for unity and growth that we were able to persist. Our greatest strength was each other.

As always, we extend great thanks to you for investing in our programs and in the creative potential of the next generation of social agents. What we do for the children and youth of Peekskill, and beyond, is impossible without you and your continued belief in our cause. I wish you a happy New Year, that you find moments for pause and for peace amidst the chaos.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ridvan", written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ridvan Foxhall
Executive Director



2020 IN NUMBERS

\$32,500

in scholarships
awarded to 135
program participants

50

boys and young men
mentored, in
collaboration with the
Peekskill City School
District, through My
Brother's Keeper
Initiative

400+

community members
entertained and
educated through our
Children's Theater
Collaborative

100%

of students indicating
need received
discounts and/or
scholarships to attend

\$19,000+

of capacity and skill-
building programs
provided at no cost to
75 community
members, educators,
and leaders

200+

children and youth
engaged in programs
and workshops

94%

of students benefited
from subsidies to
defray tuition costs

10

teaching artists and
educators trained in
Culturally-Responsive
Learning, Positive
Discipline, and
Restorative Justice

240

individual, corporate,
and foundation donors
chose to support NECS



Program Highlights - Winter/Spring



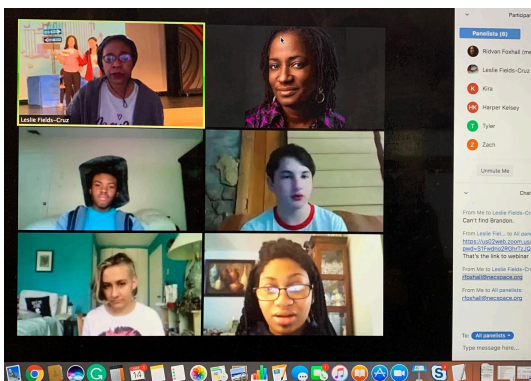
Pegasus Theatrical Production

In February 2020, NECS presented the premier of *Pegasus*, an original musical written and composed by award-winning playwright, Steven Hayet, and composer, Britt Bonney. Over 400 hundred community members attended and were inspired by our students during two weekends of performances.

Youth Leadership



We partnered with the Peekskill City School District for the third year to provide leadership and empowerment programs to middle school boys through the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative. This program met in-person up until we went into lockdown. Our girls leadership and empowerment program transitioned to a virtual format in March and the girls were able to meet more frequently virtually.



NECS Goes Virtual

In the spring, NECS successfully ran several virtual programs including Monologue, Songwriting, Hip Hop Dance, and Girls Leadership and Empowerment workshops. NECS also provided a virtual parenting workshop and a space for local youth to meet and discuss the racial tensions present in our society.



Socially-Distanced Summer Fun

In the summer, partnering with local organizations, artists, and educators, NECS offered three socially-distanced programs in the community.

Nature Connection

NECS safely provided four weeks of our Nature Connection Camp. In collaboration with Longhaul Farm, Hudson Valley H2O, and local artists and educators, students met three days a week outdoors to learn about the environment and sustainable living practices while engaging in art projects, hiking, and so much more. Activities took place in Garrison, the Peekskill Riverfront, and Depew Park.

Dance as Activism

In response to the racial unrest during the summer, nine youth collaborated with teaching artist Belle Ritter, a professional dancer and choreographer. Using their own words and movements, participants expressed themselves through choreography to create a dance performance addressing issues of equality and justice. This program was made possible by a grant from ArtsWestchester.

Stories & Crafts

Working with the Peekskill Housing Authority, NECS launched Stories & Crafts at Dunbar Heights, a literacy program for children. Twice a week, the children enjoyed culturally-specific stories from around the world and created related crafts. Thanks to the Peekskill Rotary Club and the Baha'i community, children received their own boxes of art supplies and copies of each book.





Fall Programs



Nature Connection

By popular demand, we offered our Nature Connection program again in the fall, providing six weeks of outdoor programming for middle school students. NECS partnered with the Ecological Citizen's Project to launch the Peekskill, Regenerative Farm, uniquely situated in downtown Peekskill to become a community hub for nature-based educational opportunities.



EmpowerED - Girls Leadership

Once again, our girls leadership program resumed in the fall. This program empowers girls to be leaders in their communities, engage in healthy relationships, and champion their own and others' equality, safety, and respect. 13 high school and college age young women meet monthly in workshops facilitated by [Relation-Shift](#). Five of these young women have been trained by NECS as mentors to facilitate the program weekly for eight middle school girls.



Children's Theatre

NECS launched a ten-week virtual theatre program for 9 - 12 year olds which culminated in an online performance. [The Truth of Friendship](#), an original play created by the participants, tells the story of former friends navigating changes in their relationships and learning how to listen to support each other as they grow. This year, our high school students will take a journey to educate, empower and build community through their performance of **Melanin Magic**, a performance highlighting the resilience of people of color and celebrating our common humanity. Stay tuned for the performance in the spring of 2021!

CELEBRATING THE PROMISE AND POTENTIAL OF YOUTH

NECS VIRTUAL FUNDRAISER

On October 22, 2020, we celebrated NECS' years of impact, leadership, and community building. The event was [streamed](#) on YouTube/Facebook Live and viewed by over 200 people. Thank you for a successful evening celebrating the promise and potential of our youth. We are immensely grateful for the generosity of all of our supporters who helped us reach our goal by sponsoring the event, purchasing raffle tickets, bidding on art, and donating before, during, and after the event. We raised over \$20,000!

Hosts: Leslie Fields Cruz and Arianna Hurtado

Featured Speaker: Dr. Rabi Musah

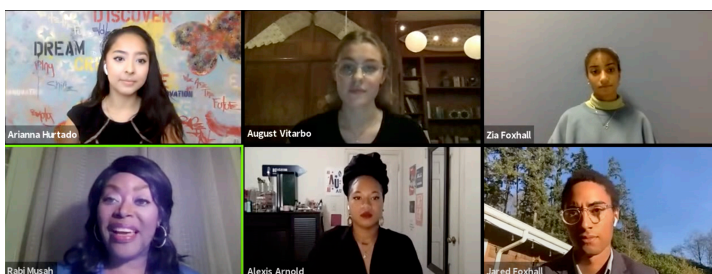
Guest Appearance: Tony Porter

Featured Artists: Bria the Artist, Eric Dozier, Andy Grammer, Daisy Joplin

Featured Youth Artists: Zia Foxhall, Alyssa and Aimee Schneider, Justin Smithson

Members of our community joined us in celebrating and sharing heartfelt testimonials about NECS. The event is available to view on

[NECS' YouTube channel.](#)





NECS has cultivated numerous partnerships with community leaders and organizations which have enabled us to amplify our impact. We met with peer organizations, local government officials, the Youth Bureau, and the Peekskill City School District (PCSD) to discuss creative programming for our youth and opportunities to build a stronger community.

Out of deep concern for the high school dropout rate among our young people of color, NECS sought counsel from [Dr. Joy DeGruy](#), renowned social scientist, and Tony Porter, founding partner of [A Call to Men](#), to develop an empowerment and mentorship program for at-risk young men and women in our community. We initiated a virtual meeting with Dr. Joy to meet with key local leaders, followed by a citywide virtual meeting with Tony Porter and nineteen engaged community members, including the superintendent of schools, the mayor, a city council member, and a Westchester County legislator. This meeting led to a commitment by eight adults from our community, who have since undergone training with Tony Porter, with the intention of launching a Live Respect Healthy Manhood mentorship program for young men in our community.

This summer, NECS was invited to partner with Too Young To Wed (TYTW) to launch [Resilient Girls](#), a virtual programmatic initiative by TYTW to develop a periodic virtual series of inspirational. The program is led by girls and told by girls from countries that span the globe. The principal objective of the program is to raise global awareness about issues faced by the most vulnerable girls in the world while highlighting and honoring their resilience.

Plans for 2021

The pandemic has brought NECS to the attention of numerous organizations interested in partnerships and has opened new avenues of service to explore. This, in turn, will lead to an expanded reach to a greater number of children, youth, and adults in our community. Recently, the PCSD contracted NECS to provide leadership workshops and STEM programs for young men through the My Brother's Keeper initiative. In addition, a collaboration with Microsoft to offer virtual programs is poised to attract the participation of even more students in the district. Finally, NECS has been approached by the Westchester County Attorney's Office develop a program to offer mentorship and empowerment opportunities to youth in the juvenile justice system in an effort to prevent the cycle of incarceration.



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