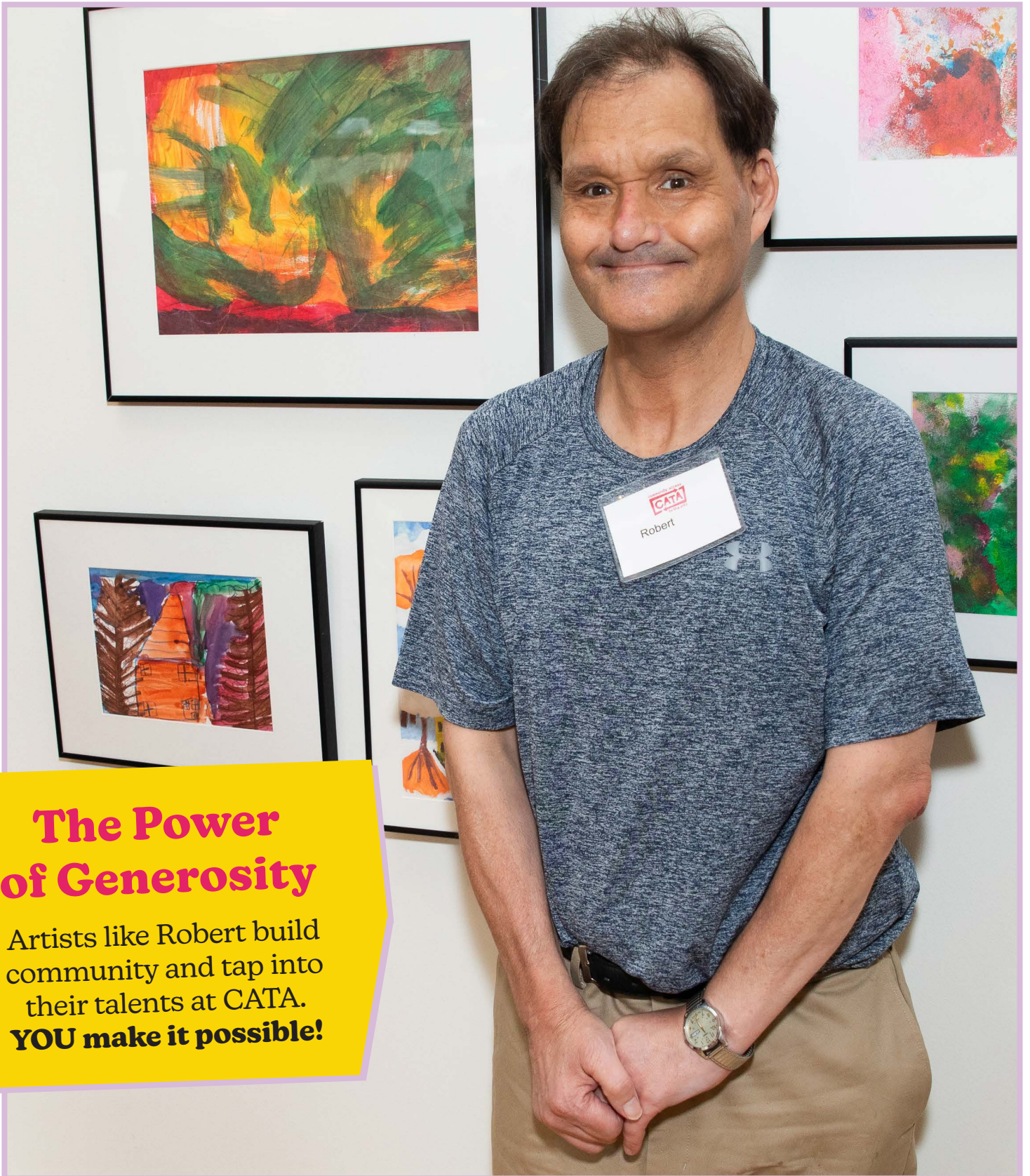




NEWS

FALL 2024 *and*
WINTER 2025



The Power of Generosity

Artists like Robert build
community and tap into
their talents at CATA.
YOU make it possible!

Your gift will bring life-changing arts

“ I don’t know what I’d be doing without **CATA**.”

Every Monday afternoon, CATA artists gather for a drumming class. Roman, a young artist with disabilities, greets everyone with a smile as they arrive. When Aimée, a CATA faculty artist, begins a warm up, Roman joins her—confidently playing a rhythm on the dundun drum. ‘Follow Roman!’ says Aimée. Soon, the class is playing in time together, following Roman’s lead.

Roman has always had a bright light within him and a big personality to share. But as a young adult, he struggled to find a place where he could shine. “It was hard to find a place that would embrace him and give him opportunities to grow,” says his mother Danielle.



Entering adulthood is hard for most young people. And that’s especially true for people with disabilities: Many support systems they rely on in school vanish after graduation. It’s easy to feel isolated and disconnected. Parents of children with disabilities often say it’s like “falling off a cliff.”

Finding CATA was a turning point for Roman.

He quickly made friends. And he dug deeper into his talents: He discovered the thrill of playing a solo on the djembe drum, and heard the roar of applause when he nailed his lines in an acting workshop. Now, he feels a sense of belonging like never before.

“I don’t know what I’d be doing without CATA,” says Roman. “It’s where I see all my friends and I can be myself.”

“If your whole life you’re told what you can’t do, imagine how powerful it is to say ‘I’m an artist.’” says Danielle. “That’s what CATA does for people like my son.”



“CATA is where I see my friends and I can be myself.”

Your support makes CATA possible!

programs to people with disabilities.



“CATA gives Roman the opportunity to stretch his skills and grow as an artist. And just as importantly, he can socialize and build community. For Roman, the social part of CATA is critical,” says Danielle.

Recently, Roman got a call. CATA staff saw his skills and confidence growing. They knew Roman was ready for more. So they invited him to help lead a CATA drumming workshop—as an Assistant Teacher. All of a sudden, this young man who had been searching for his place in the community was being recognized in a whole new way.

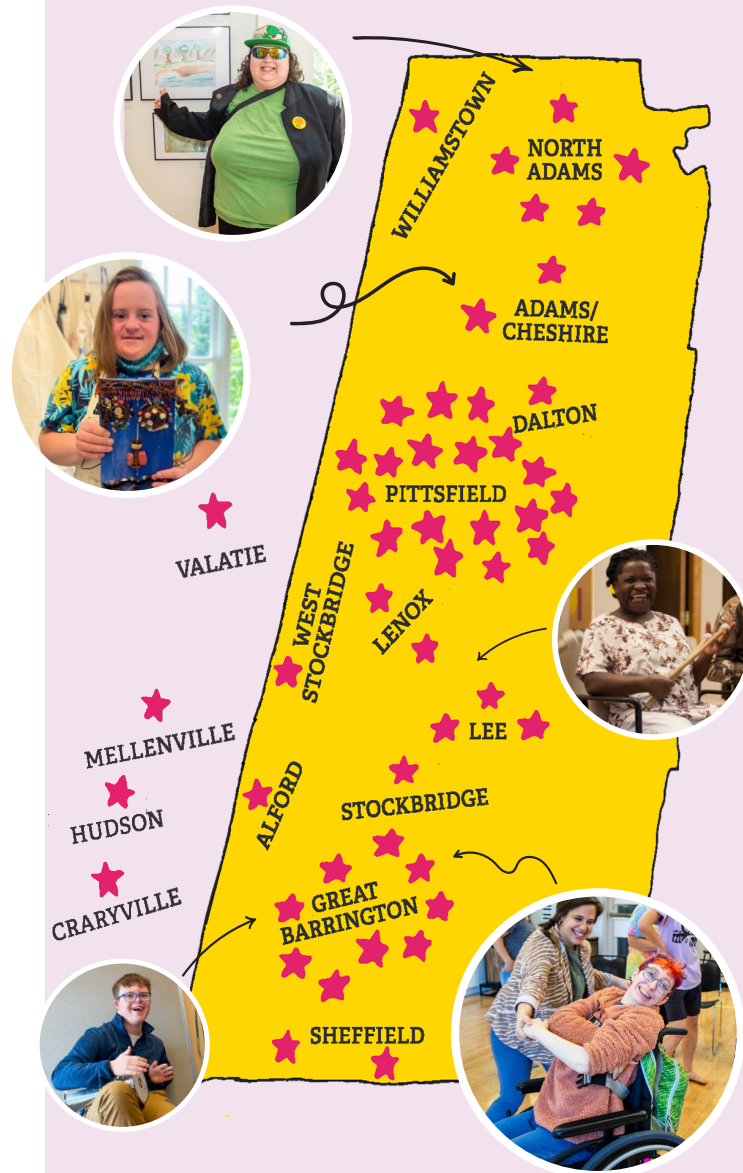
“When CATA asked me to help teach drumming I was like ‘Wow - *this is serious!*’” says Roman. “Our teacher Aimée has me play a rhythm and everyone follows me. I feel special and honored.”

“Often when you have a disability, you’re defined by that disability. CATA flips that upside down,” says Danielle. “CATA honors every person for their strengths and capacities. They see everybody in the room and draw them in.”

Your gifts help Roman build community and dig into his talents. With your support, we can bring life-changing programs to every CATA artist who needs them.

You can bring CATA all across our community:

Roman is one of many CATA artists—children, teens, and adults with disabilities—tapping into their talents in CATA workshops. With your support, we can bring CATA to people at schools, disability agencies, day programs, and residences across our community.



Demand for CATA has skyrocketed! YOU can help

Right now, people with disabilities across our community are counting on CATA to grow and find community. Families, schools, and disability agencies are asking CATA to expand programs for people in their care. *But without your support, our programs simply can't happen.* **Take a look at a few ways your support makes a difference for children, teens, and adults with disabilities:**



Sarah is at a local day habilitation program...

Sarah (BFAIR) carefully weaves a green strand of yarn over and under the threads of her loom. She pulls the thread through to the end, holds up the loom and smiles. When it's finished, Sarah is excited to have her artwork featured in a CATA art exhibit. "Everyone will see it," says Sarah. "I hope it sells!" **Your support will bring vital programs to adults with disabilities at day habilitation programs, residences, and disability agencies across our community.**



Sandra is at the CATA studios...

It's an exciting day at CATA—Katie Drablos, a dancer with the Radio City Rockettes, is here as a guest artist! Katie shares techniques from the Rockette's famous Christmas Spectacular, adapting the movements so everyone can participate. Sandra, a CATA artist who joined CATA for the first time this year, steps to the center of the room to perform high kicks—beaming with pride as everyone applauds. **More new families are joining our workshops than ever before. Your support will help us keep these life-changing programs going for every CATA artist.**

elp us reach more people with disabilities this year.



Asher is at North Adams Public Schools...

“You’re a dancer, a musician, too!” sing CATA faculty Beth and Wes. Asher, an elementary school student (one of our youngest CATA artists!) plays along on a drum. “There are so many a-ha moments with CATA,” says special education teacher Amy Mandel. “My students are now able to pick up patterns with musical instruments, which is so helpful for the pre-math skills we teach.” **Your support will help reach more children and teens with special needs in local schools, where demand for CATA is higher than ever.**



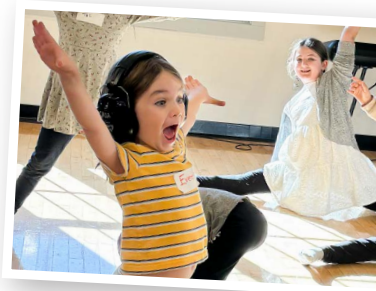
Terry is at the CATA studios...

In a new adaptive songwriting workshop, Terry (Nonotuck) strums a one-of-a-kind string instrument— built just for her by CATA faculty Wes Buckley. Terry had been eager to play guitar, but needed an instrument that she could play on her lap. Now, she creates a vivid soundtrack by plucking, strumming, and bowing the strings. Carrie, another CATA artist who has limited use of her hands, uses a special iPad app that translates her head movements into music. **With your support, CATA artists will express themselves in new adaptive workshops—exploring talents that might otherwise have stayed hidden.**



Everett is at CATA’s Art & Tea program...

On a recent Saturday morning, families and children with special needs gather for Art & Tea, a new monthly program at CATA. “Everett is really shy in groups,” says his mom Annie. “When CATA faculty asked if anyone wanted to dance a solo, Everett’s hand shot up! I’ve never seen him jump up and dance a solo in front of everyone. We’re so grateful for the experience.” **Your support will help families of young children with special needs who are craving opportunities to connect and build community.**



CATA supporters Kate & Sarah Burdsall:

“CATA fosters a vital community for people with disabilities”

Kate and Sarah Burdsall are passionate about creating a community where every person is celebrated for their talents and abilities. When they first learned about CATA’s work nearly 20 years ago, they knew they wanted to jump in and make a difference.

“CATA is so important to the Berkshires and to the community of people with disabilities,” says Kate, who serves as Special Education Director with Berkshire Hills Regional School District. “CATA’s focus on abilities instead of disabilities is so important. It’s all about developing skills, personal growth, and inclusion.”

“CATA fosters a vital community for people with disabilities,” says Sarah, a physical education teacher with Lenox Public Schools. “They become friends and develop connections and relationships with each other. That’s so important. Without CATA, it might not happen.”

Kate and Sarah have been supporters since CATA’s early days—as volunteers, gala committee members, and donors. Kate, a former board member, now serves on CATA’s Advisor & Ambassador Council— a newly created advisory group that engages people with disabilities and those closest to them to help guide CATA’s work.



“I’ve worked with people with disabilities since I was in college,” says Kate. “It’s so important to me to be an advocate for people with disabilities, for them to be fully valued members of our community. **CATA does just that. CATA brings this value and their contributions to light.**”

A growing part of CATA’s work, and one that’s near to Kate and Sarah’s hearts, is in local schools. CATA now partners with 9 school districts to provide arts programs for 400 students with special needs. Kate sees the impact of CATA first hand.

“Our students benefit so much from CATA,” says Kate. “After each workshop, we see so much growth in their self-confidence, self-esteem, and social skills. The students practice and develop skills through CATA, and build on their successes from week to week. It’s simply incredible.”

Looking back to her time teaching at Lenox High School, Kate recalls CATA’s first workshops in her classroom. “Now, those students are in their 30s— and they’re still involved with CATA today. It’s been a tremendous experience for them.”



Ali (Riverbrook) learns new dance techniques in a CATA workshop with guest artists from the Alvin Ailey dance ensemble. Your support makes our work possible!

As donors, Kate and Sarah know how vital their support is to keep CATA programs going for people with disabilities.

“It’s such an easy choice to support CATA,” say Kate and Sarah. “Seeing the artists, their joy and passion. And the ways our whole community is touched by CATA’s work. CATA is an amazing organization doing amazing work. It’s so important to support them however you can.”

“CATA isn’t just a building, it’s not just a place with classes. CATA is truly about relationships and community. They’re bringing together so many different groups of people. We love being a part of that.”

Join Kate and Sarah Burdsall and make a gift to support programs for CATA artists. Visit CATAarts.org to donate now.



What CATA artists love about programs YOU make possible



“I love CATA, I dance!”
- Peter Daniels
(BCArc)



“I love making art and showing it to everyone. It makes me really proud.”
- Lisa McSheen
(BFAIR & UCP of Western Massachusetts)

**We need YOUR help to reach
1,250 people with disabilities in 2025.**
Will you join us?



David and Myles (BCArc) tap into their talents and find joy in CATA workshops. You make our work possible.

Right now, demand for CATA is at an all-time high. We're receiving record calls from CATA artists, families, schools, and disability agencies asking us to expand workshops for people in their care.

Please give today to keep life-changing programs going for all CATA artists. We can't do this work without you!

MATCH CHALLENGE:
Donate today and your gift could be DOUBLED!

A group of anonymous donors has pledged an additional \$30,000 **IF** we can raise \$30,000 in *new or increased* gifts by **December 31**. Give now and your donation to CATA will go even further to support programs for people with disabilities.



PS: Make a gift of stock—or through your IRA or DAF!

You can make a difference by giving stock/securities, or through your IRA or Donor Advised Fund. For questions, call Kelly Rybczyk, Development Director, at (413) 528-5485.

community access



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