



NEWS

SPRING 2024

IT'S SHOWTIME!

We need YOU to make it happen.



CATA artists are ready for the spotlight in our Gala & Annual Performance!



It's SHOWTIME for CATA artists!

All they need is YOU.

Jessica raises her arms above her head. As the music starts, she and her fellow CATA dancers move in sync, rehearsing steps they've worked on all year. Soon, they'll take their place on stage for their moment in the spotlight.

"It feels really good to see everybody in the audience," says Jessica.

CATA artists are rehearsing lines, exploring new dance steps, and crafting costumes and set decor. Now, they're ready to share their talents with YOU at the CATA Gala & Annual Performance!

"This is CATA's biggest moment of the year and YOU are the final ingredient!" says Margaret Keller, CATA Executive Director. "We can't have a show without you as our audience—and your support at our Gala makes our year-round programs possible."

CATA's Gala & Annual Performance is both a vibrant showcase of our artists' work and a much-needed fundraiser: One-third of our annual budget comes from this one event. CATA relies on funds raised at our gala to keep our work going day in and day out.

"CATA is serving more people with disabilities than ever before," says Margaret. "Every dollar raised underwrites 2,200 programs for 1,000 people with disabilities we are serving right now."

Left: CATA artists like Kellie, Richard, and Esther share their talents in CATA's Gala & Annual Performance—thanks to you!

With your support: A teenager with a developmental disability will discover her love of dance. Adults with brain injuries will share their ideas in an original song. Students in a special education classroom will use improv and storytelling to build important life skills.

At the heart of the gala weekend is a joy-filled performance by CATA artists in dance, juggling, acting, drumming, and more.

"The theme of our show this year is *CATAverse*," says Kelly Galvin, CATA Program Director and director of the annual performance. "Through their performances, CATA artists will take you into a world of community, creativity, and unlimited possibilities— a world like the one we're all building together at CATA. One that's beautiful *because* it's inclusive."

Behind the scenes, CATA artists are playing a big role in bringing the show to life. "We've launched new workshops for CATA artists in costume and set design, and they'll even be taking on new roles in the sound and lighting booths," adds Kelly.

"Everyone connected to CATA plays a big part in making the *"CATAverse"* possible," says Margaret. "When the curtain goes up, we're counting on you to be cheering in the audience. Join us and get ready to have your heart blown wide open!"

Top right: CATA artists Franck, Krystal, and Jessica perform with the People's Tap Dance Theater— one of CATA's performing ensembles you'll see in "CATAverse!"



Join us for CATA's Annual Performance!

CATAVERSE

MATINEE PERFORMANCE Sunday, May 12 @ 1pm

at Shakespeare & Company's
Tina Packer Playhouse (Lenox, MA)

Join us for a dazzling performance by CATA artists— followed by a fun and free "Meet the Artists" Cast Party!



Tickets start at just \$5 (Pay-What-You-Will pricing). Buy tickets at Shakespeare.org or call the Box Office at (413) 637-3353.

Interested in our Gala on Saturday, May 11? Call CATA at (413) 528-5485 to add your name to our wait list.



For 30 years, Teresa has tapped into her creativity in CATA workshops...



...with The Moving Company (led by former CATA Artistic Director Dawn Lane)



...visiting elders in our Art Cart program (led by faculty JoAnne Spies)...and so much more!



Teresa is active at CATA today (seen here with CATA Program Director Jeff Gagnon, CATA artists Ali & Jessica)

CATA IS A **LIFELINE** FOR ARTISTS LIKE **TERESA**

Teresa Thomas has expressed her creativity at CATA since the organization's early days. "Teresa always knew she was an actress and dancer," says June Thomas, her mother. "She's a show-person. She loves to be on stage."

"I always felt that people needed to see what people like Teresa can do. If it weren't for CATA, I don't know if any of that would have happened."

Teresa's first workshops with CATA were in her classroom at Monument Mountain High School— only a few years after dance therapist Sandy Newman founded CATA in 1993. **Now 30 years later, Teresa is joined by countless artists with disabilities** who are discovering their talents as part of CATA's dramatic expansion across our community.

Back in the 90's, as Teresa got close to graduating, she wondered what would come next. "Your life doesn't end when you graduate," says June. "CATA was there for her. We called it 'CATA College'."

Since then, Teresa has been involved in nearly every program CATA has offered. "She's filled her whole life with CATA!" says June.

Teresa's CATA scrapbook, which she's compiled since the beginning, holds a treasure trove of CATA moments: dance performances with The Moving Company, visits to nursing homes with CATA's Art Cart, poetry readings, exhibits, and more.

From that scrapbook, one theme is clear—and that's **growth**: Personal and creative growth for CATA artists like Teresa. And CATA's own growth, deepening and expanding life-changing opportunities for people in our community.

"We're now reaching 1,000 people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, autism, brain injuries, and dementia across 16 towns and cities," says Margaret Keller, CATA Executive Director.

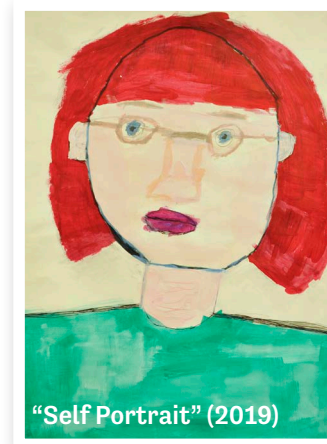
"Our growth in local schools has been especially dramatic," adds Margaret. "Since those early school workshops that Teresa took part in, we've grown to reach 300 students with special needs each year across eight school districts."

All of that growth has been rooted in the needs of our community. "Partners and families are turning to us to create more opportunities for people with disabilities to build skills, explore their interests, and express themselves," says Margaret.

Teresa is still active at CATA today, and continues to paint, act, and sing with friends and fellow artists in our studios.

"I like any art I'm doing," says Teresa. "I like to be on stage and make people smile. I'm always meeting new people at CATA."

Your support fuels vital arts programs for 1,000 CATA artists like Teresa



"Self Portrait" (2019)



"Teresa is a show-person," performing in every CATA performance at Shakespeare & Company

"CATA has been Teresa's lifeline," says June. "She has so much confidence in herself and such strong self-esteem. She never doubted that she could do anything at CATA."

"These years with CATA have meant the world to Teresa and our whole family. It brings me so much joy because she's been so happy. **All that she ever wanted or dreamed for herself, it's happened—because of CATA.**"

CATA supporters Mitch & Caitlin Nash:

CATA IS MORE THAN AN ORGANIZATION. IT'S A MOVEMENT.

Mitch and Caitlin Nash have a passion for making their community “the best it can be.” When they first encountered CATA’s work over 20 years ago, they jumped right in to make a difference.

“There’s a strong social justice element to CATA’s work,” say Mitch and Caitlin. “That really spoke to us. Everyone should have the opportunity to create and know that their talents are valued.”

Mitch and Caitlin have been supporters since CATA’s early days: Caitlin has taught visual arts workshops, Mitch has served on the board, and they both served as Gala co-chairs. Seeing the impact of the programs, Mitch soon started offering CATA workshops to his employees with disabilities at Blue Q, the off-beat gift manufacturer that Mitch runs with his brother Seth.

“CATA is like an essential vitamin or mineral,” says Mitch. “The benefits linger long after the workshops. People feel grounded and appreciated, and their self-esteem is stronger. CATA yields happier people.”

“CATA helps us see art and disability in a new way”, says Caitlin. “Nobody should be underestimated. Everyone’s on the same



footing with their ability to create. It’s joyous seeing barriers and differences slip away when CATA artists are given that opportunity.”

At every CATA event, Mitch and Caitlin see first-hand how their generosity is making a difference.

“Whenever we go to a CATA exhibit or performance, we think— Wow, our support’s really making that happen! You see how you are helping to enrich the lives of other human beings.”

“It makes us feel good to know that our funds are being used wisely. We’re proud to be part of helping CATA thrive and make a difference for people in our community.”

“CATA is a movement as much as it is an organization. At CATA, everyone’s got an equal seat at the table. And the whole community benefits.”

Join Mitch & Caitlin Nash and make a gift to support programs for CATA artists.

Exciting News!

CATA Awarded MacKenzie Scott’s Yield Giving Open Call – Your support will go even further!

One year ago, CATA submitted an application for a grant funded by MacKenzie Scott: The Yield Giving Open Call. Over 6,350 nonprofits from across the U.S. applied and were evaluated by national experts for the chance to receive a \$1 million grant to help improve the well-being of people in their communities.

After a rigorous review process, CATA has been selected as an awardee of MacKenzie Scott’s Yield Giving Open Call! *And because CATA was among the highest-scoring applicants, the panel DOUBLED our award!* We are receiving \$2 million to support our innovative work serving people with disabilities through the arts.

We hope that you feel a profound sense of pride in this achievement! **YOU have helped build a trailblazing organization that has profoundly impacted the lives of people with disabilities— one that stood out among thousands of others, nationally.**

We could not do this work without you!

How CATA will use the funding:

We will use this *one-time only grant* to seed and launch the **CATA FOR ALL Capital Campaign** to help more people with disabilities thrive through life-changing arts programs. We know there is unmet need in our community— especially for people with disabilities who are struggling financially and for children with special needs.

We want this award to be a catalyst to inspire more people to support CATA so we can do more for our community. Look out for more news in the coming weeks about our plans. **Your support for CATA will go even further!**



CATA faculty Wes Buckley leads a workshop for students with special needs at a local public school.

Chris White & E.E. Winters: “Please join us in supporting CATA this gala season!”

“This gift from MacKenzie Scott is an incredible stamp of approval for CATA. It proves what we’ve known all along: CATA is an innovative organization with exceptional leadership and vision, and BIG impact on our community.

“We’re proud to see that CATA is using the funding in the most strategic way— to seed a special campaign that will help CATA grow its work into the future. We’re behind CATA every step of the way. And we know they need our loyal support so they can continue to bring programs to people with disabilities who need CATA right now— like our son Eric, a proud CATA artist. Please join us in supporting CATA this gala season.”



Thank you CATA Gala Underwriters!

We're grateful to the following individuals and businesses who are making a difference for CATA artists. Without you, our work simply can't happen.

community access



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