



*Shaw Community Center*

*ANNUAL REPORT*

*January 2020—September 2021*



# A HUGE SCC THANK YOU\*

## TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Smithsonian



\* see also pp. 13 and 14



At Shaw Community Center, we say “Culture is our operating system.” And as nonprofit leader Peter Drucker has said, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” Culture serves to bind people together and helps people communicate and collaborate.

At Shaw Community Center, culture — rooted in dignity, equity and respect — is essential to how we communicate, how we work together, and how we engage with our students and family members.

In June 2021, we quietly celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary amid a global pandemic. A lot has changed. And more has not! **Here’s what we learned from our members and stakeholders:**

- ⇒ **Recognize leadership among young people, because they have the solutions**
- ⇒ **Acknowledge assets rather than deficits to create trusted relationships**
- ⇒ **Economic opportunity is the best intervention for negative life outcomes**
- ⇒ **Resilience is a community affair; all members are essential**
- ⇒ **Disruptions to the norm can be great opportunities to “Build Back Better”**

***So, what did SCC do during the COVID-19 pandemic? Look and see . . .***



African Dancers & Drummers



Community Champions



Event Coverage by Real News Interns



Cultural Cuisine



SCC Clothing Design

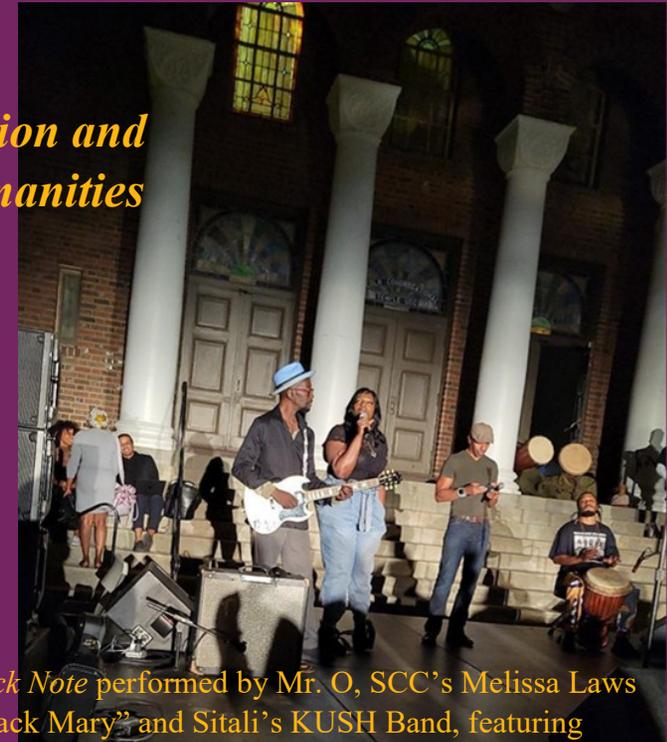
## *“Lee on 11th” — Art All Night September 25, 2021*

*Sponsored by The Smithsonian Institution and  
the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities  
(photos on pp. 4-7)*



Capoeira Performance

*After a challenging year of isolation and uncertainty, the Shaw community was finally able to gather and celebrate its cultural heritage through the arts. There was no better way to launch into re-opening — it was not only a showcase of SCC’s programming, but also a reunion!*



*A Black Note performed by Mr. O, SCC’s Melissa Laws as ‘Black Mary’ and Sitali’s KUSH Band, featuring Jabari Exum on Djembe drums.*



*“Capoeira is used as a vehicle to draw attention to certain issues, to mobilize people, to give voice to the voiceless, reach out to communities that have been ignored and marginalized and empower them through this vehicle we call culture.”*

*—Kojo Johnson, Capoeira Mestre*



*Thanks to a collaboration with The Smithsonian Brazil-In-DC residency program, SCC was able to engage Mestre Kojo Johnson to teach Capoeira to our youth for six weeks over the summer and present a final project at ‘Lee on 11th —Art All Night.’*

### What is Capoeira?

Capoeira is a complex set of practices found throughout the Maroon and other African Diaspora communities of southern America and the Caribbean. It is at once art – communal music, singing, acrobatics and dancing – and a powerful communication device. What passes to the white eye as informal dancing in-the-round is not only a form of martial arts training, but also an empowering act of communal self-determination, resistance tactics, and emancipatory logistics.

The movement-based form of Capoeira that Mestre Johnson shared with Shaw youth emphasizes physical movement, discipline, wellbeing and exercise as empowerment tools. Like their activism work in the #Don'tMuteDC movement, Shaw youth do not see performing Capoeira as simply entertainment; they understand it is an intentional act of communal cultural identity and non-violent place keeping.

This Capoeira collaborative project grew directly from the youths' earlier activism in the 'DC Gogo and #DontMuteDC' exhibits, featured in The Smithsonian's Folklife Festival on the National Mall in 2019.

# *“The Ladies of Shaw” Fashion Show*



Some of Shaw’s youngest designers.



Are you Shaw or Nah?



*Led by Mr. Gabriel Parker, Shaw youth “the Ladies of Shaw” designed and created the fashion worn and featured at our AAN 2021 Fashion Show.*

**The Andrew Cacho African Drummers & Dancers** troupe, one of the oldest AfroGarifuna troupes in the US, enlivened the crowd with their dancing, drumming, traditional music and storytelling. Founder Andrew Cacho started the troupe to provide youth with positive alternatives in their lives and believed that artistic disciplines inherently provide a structured way of carrying oneself physically and psychologically. SCC's executive director Sudi West studied drumming and stilt-walking with Cacho as a youth.



## Champions of the Community

Our youth look up to and model themselves after community champions. ED **Sudi West** introduces **Jalil 'Major' Hackett**, World Boxing Federation junior champion, **Jabari Exum** choreographer of the dance/fight scenes in Marvel's *Black Panther* movies, and **Mike Easton**, a long-time Shaw credible mentor and UFC champion known as "DC Hulk" — all of whom have a connection to the Shaw neighborhood. These champions had an inspiring and simple anti-gun message: "Guns down — we go with the hands."

## ***MEN ACQUIRING LIFE SKILLS (MALS) ENDS VIOLENCE***

*SCC began the pandemic shut-down mourning the loss of one of its own – 13 year-old Malachi Lukes. The twin calamities of his death and the pandemic heightened the need for programming to reconnect youth to their community; thus **MALS** (Malachi's nickname) was born. Deceptively simple in concept, it offers stipends to older youth who consistently participate in exercise and mentoring sessions led by trusted community members. It's also a restorative justice and alternative sentencing program, and a gateway to SCC's work-force development program, the **Cultural Asset Incubator (CAI)**.*



## ***A TRIBUTE TO MALACHI LUKES***

*“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



March 5, 2006-March 1, 2020

Malachi was an exceptional young man who was tragically killed by gunshot. Son of Melissa Laws, SCC Program Director, he epitomized all the best of our youth – a leader among his peers, a storyteller, a truth-to-power speaker, a catalyst for change, and an activist for racial equity.

Malachi struggled emotionally after being unjustly and mistakenly handcuffed by Metro police, yet he channeled his anger to try to make change. He gave an interview to WUSA-TV news about the incident with police and talked to lawyers at the American Civil Liberties Union. He and the friend who was handcuffed with him became known as the “Lincoln Temple Two” (styled after the Central Park Five). His mother wants his death to be a wake-up call.

*Malachi, we won't forget you. We cannot remain silent. We will speak Truth to Power.*

## *Providing Childcare for Essential Workers*

In April and May 2020, with pandemic uncertainties and closures hitting hard, SCC was selected by the DC government to operate a childcare facility for essential workers and first responders - the only community-based organization so chosen. Staff was trained in Covid -19 safety and cleaning protocols, and we purchased individual desks, supply caddies and water bottles for participants. Then we opened and operated for nearly 14 hours per day, in two shifts.



*Taking on a Pandemic  
SCC Pivots its Programming to  
Meet Unexpected Challenges*



BMR neighborhood models built by SCC youth.

## *SCC Develops a Distance Learning Protocol*

When DC Public Schools shut down in March, SCC purchased 15 laptops and paid our IT contractor to help families with setup and cybersecurity in homes. It then developed a distance learning protocol that delivered academic support integrated with a socio-emotional learning component called the “Black Mister Rogers (BMR)” platform. Built on Fred Rogers’ fundamental approach that “[a]nything that’s human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable and less scary,” BMR provided a forum within which even our youngest students could express their feelings about the pandemic aloud. Our older youth used the BMR platform to dispel the misinformation about COVID that spread on social media in their PSAs, *The Real News on COVID: Fact vs. Fiction*.

## Community-Building Partners

- ◇ DC Central Kitchen, an SCC partner for over ten years, rose to the occasion during the pandemic, providing enough prepackaged food to supply 200 meals to our families each week.
- ◇ Area UCC churches donated \$20-\$25 grocery gift cards to help 75 families living in the nearby Heritage of Shaw Station, Channing Phillips and Lincoln-Westmoreland apartment complexes enjoy their Thanksgiving meals, and contributed gifts and money to ensure that 95 of our youth did not miss out on the Angel Tree giving experience at Christmastime.
- ◇ Through the generosity of numerous individual donors, SCC was able to give \$27,500 in scholarships to college-bound youth.
- ◇ Passion City Church donated household essentials baskets to 211 Shaw families and 100 winter coats for our youth as the winter surge of the pandemic hit, coordinated a day of beautification by cleaning the grounds and re-launching the Shaw Garden in the summer, donated 30 bookbags for our youth at the start of the school year, and awarded SCC \$20,000 from its Above and Beyond mission.



## *Reopening and Reconnecting in Summer Camp and the*

*New School Year* After a year of virtual programming, we were finally able to reconnect during SCC's in-person, socially-distant summer camp. We missed one another terribly. Using our COVID protocols, we were able to have our 6-week camp without a single transmission and enter fall after-school programming with an understanding of how to keep our students safe while providing them with high-quality enrichment programming.



# SCC STAFF — 100% BIPOC



**Sudi West**  
Executive Director



**Melissa Laws**  
Program Director



**Greg Windley**  
Program Coordinator



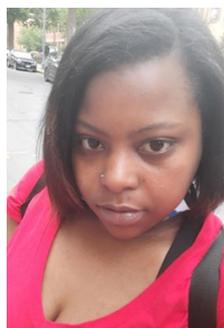
**Gwen Howard**  
Program Coordinator



**Marquetta Washington**  
Program Coordinator



**Sharita Howard**  
Program Assistant



**Michelle Young**  
Program Assistant



**Selena Laws**  
Program Assistant



**Delonte Howard**  
Program Assistant



**Ronte Hinton**  
Program Assistant



**Anne Troy**  
Development Director



**Sara McDonough**  
Research & Curriculum  
Developer

# Support We Could Not Do Without



**Julie Hamre**  
Bookkeeper  
Since 2010



**Jerry Tracy**  
Evaluator  
Since 2009

## SCC Board

**Serena Wiltshire**  
*President, Treasurer*

**Marjorie Hoffman**  
*Vice President*

**Addie Lewis**  
*Community Representative*

**Carolyn Erskine**  
*Board Member*

**Dale Ostrander**  
*Staff Liaison*

## *A Shout Out to our Funders and Donors:*

- ◆ To our longest serving partner, **DC Central Kitchen** who has fed and nourished us in so many ways. From purple broccoli (!) to certifying our staff food handlers. A special thanks to **Crystal** for her help.
- ◆ To the **DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities** for funding our Lee on 11<sup>th</sup> Art All Night event with a Projects, Event and Festivals grant, and for the acknowledging our status as an arts organization through its FAB-R and GOS grants. Many DCCAH staff members merit mentioning: **Robert Nuñez, David Markey, Kevin Hasser, Kamanzi Kalisa, Jeanne Hisle and Krystle Seit.**
- ◆ To the **Smithsonian Institution** for sponsoring a Capoeira residency for Mestre Kojo Johnson as part of its Folklife Festival's *Brazil in DC* program. A special thanks to **Julie Gutierrez-Rivera** and **Sojin Kim** for their assistance in making the residency a reality.
- ◆ To **Natasha Muhammad** and **ICIMS** for a \$10,000 gift in Malachi Luke's name towards our Men Acquiring Life Skills (MALS) program and internships.
- ◆ To the District of Columbia's **Out of School Time and Youth Outcomes** office for the 3-year continuation grant so we have the capacity to plan for this year and the next two years. Thanks to **Ashley Grant, Vonja Bowen, Debra Eichenbaum** and **Mila Yochum** for their un-failing support.
- ◆ To the **Nita Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center** grant for waiving the carryover amount and being so flexible. And to **Dr. Valrie Brown** and **Dr. Tanisha Brown** for their inspirational leadership and to **Myles Cliff** who ever patiently answers our questions.

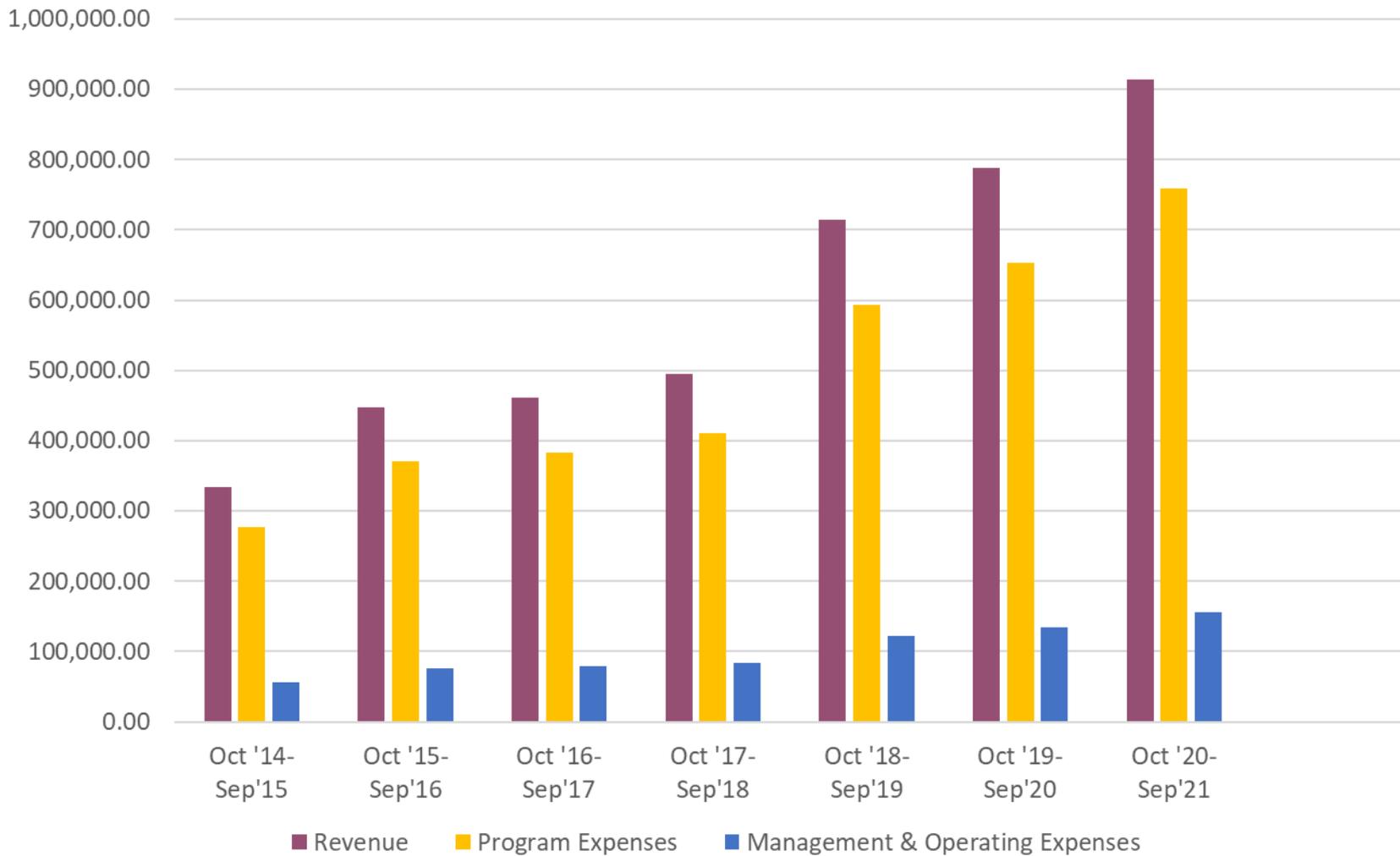
*(cont.)*

## *Shout Out (cont.)*

- ◆ To the **Hattie M. Strong Foundation** for general operating support to buy laptops, software and set up for distance learning. Thank you, **Jessica Trevelyan**.
- ◆ To the **Meyer Foundation** for general operating support in our never-ending quest to end racial inequity. Meyer, thank you for weekly workshops on the Payroll Protection Program, auto-renewal of our grant, and waiver of 2020 grant reporting. Thanks to **Nadine Kearns**.
- ◆ To the **John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation** for general operating support in addressing social and racial injustice in our community. Thanks to **Suzie Loungeway**.
- ◆ To our team from **Compass DC** nonprofit consulting who set us on a path for building a more effective and sustainable board structure: **Veronica Morales, Morgan Herman, Amanda Richardson, Bonnie Politz, Chris Healy, Holly MacMoran, Joey Chadwick, Kenita Doss and Monty Vallabhapuram**.
- ◆ To **Passion City Church** and **Morgan McCrory** for all that you do for our Shaw families and for your generous \$20,000 gift.
- ◆ To our **United Church of Christ** partner churches for your continued generosity in supporting our programs – from Thanksgiving meals, to Angel Tree giving to volunteerism to general donations.
- ◆ To the **Lincoln Temple** transition team, **Jeanne Cooper and Michael Hargreaves** for their support and welcome in the building we occupy.
- ◆ *And a HUGE thank-you to all of our other institutional and individual donors whose generosity warms our hearts and keeps our doors open, but who are too numerous to name here.*

***WE SALUTE YOU!***

## Revenue and Expense History\*



\*For the last seven years SCC's program expenses have comprised, on average, 83% of its budget.

# The Shaw Community Center 'Apresenta'

9/25  
7-10pm

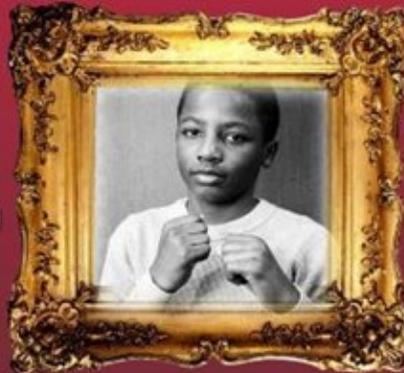


**ART ALL NIGHT**  
MADE IN D.C.

Gogo x Roda - the Beats & the Blockchain (Interactive Presentation of Cultural Assets) Location: 11th & R st NW



Capoeira Demo  
ft Brazil In DC x  
Andrew Cacho  
Garifuna Reunioin



Jalil Hackett  
Non-Violent Call  
to Action



"A Black Note" Ft.  
Black Mary and Mr.O

Blockchain Demo:  
WTF is an NFT?

C3W Pro Wrestling  
Showcase Ft. Richie Blanco

Black Panther's Jabari Exum

CosPlay Competition & Fashion  
Show w/ Celebrity Designer  
Cheryl Lofton and DJ Senpai



Smithsonian



Community Catered Plates  
Cultural Bartering Demos

