



LiveConnections

ANNUAL REPORT—November 2015

collaboration & connection

We use a lot of powerful words: Interactive. Educational. Accessible. Innovative. Boundary-crossing.

Last winter, as part of LiveConnections' first strategic planning process, we focused on those words and re-imagined our mission statement: "**To inspire learning and build community through collaborative music-making.**"

Collaboration. That word especially comes up a lot.

Whether we're **bringing together artists** (from rising stars to Grammy winners) for concerts and educational sessions; or **partnering with area schools and organizations** to develop programs that meet their unique needs; or **building diverse audiences** of students from public schools, people with disabilities and all kinds of music-loving people—we're doing it in a spirit of enthusiastic collaboration.

We're doing it because **the whole is always greater** than the sum of the individual parts.

At the 2015 Big Hurrah, we were thrilled to **honor Liz Dow of LEADERSHIP Philadelphia** with our first Connector Award. Thanks to her amazing people-connecting ability, LiveConnections has been able to grow our capacity and spark all kinds of new collaborations.

We hope YOU will continue to connect with us through our educational programs, concerts and live video streaming. Join us in expanding the collaborative spirit!

Thanks for being part of our community!



Hal Real
President



Melinda Steffy
Executive Director

LiveConnections

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about liveconnections

LiveConnections **inspires learning and builds community through collaborative music-making.** Since our founding in 2008, LiveConnections has re-imagined the landscape of live music and music education through unique collaborations that join artists from different genres to highlight how music crosses cultures and creates bridges of understanding. Programs reach people who would not normally experience this kind of music—such as youth from urban schools and people with disabilities—as well as musically adventurous audiences.

LiveConnections has reached more than 24,000 participants through our interactive **Bridge Sessions** at partner venue World Cafe Live. The sessions connect youth from city schools and individuals with disabilities with some of the best musicians across the region, allowing participants to explore diverse musical cultures and express their own creativity. In-depth **residencies, after-school programs and workshops** give participants additional hands-on music-making experiences. As arts education has been disappearing from city school budgets, and as people with disabilities face barriers to accessing the arts, LiveConnections helps fill the gap.

The **LiveConnections Presents** concert series (formerly ClassicAlive) features six concerts each year highlighting unique artistic collaborations and adventurous music. Called “breathtaking” by the Philadelphia Weekly, the performances give musicians the chance to create distinctive, boundary-crossing music, frequently involving new commissions and world premieres.

In addition, through our **LiveStudio** video initiative for underserved audiences, concerts and select Bridge Sessions are streamed live to reach people who wouldn’t otherwise be able to travel to the venue.

one year of music =

5,000+

K-12 students who attend **50** Bridge Sessions, **1** week-long summer camp & **24** weeks of after-school workshops

99%

of students **attend for FREE**, many with little music at school

35+

Philadelphia schools & organizations that participate, including Freire Charter School, Houston Elementary, Science Leadership Academy, Drexel University’s ExCITe Center & Art-Reach

60+

performing artists collaborating across the musical spectrum, including musicians from the Philadelphia Orchestra, Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, Astral Artists, Alô Brasil & the Curtis Institute of Music

5

world premieres in 6 public concerts, featuring collaborative music for adventurous music-lovers

800+

adults with disabilities who participate in Bridge Sessions or concerts either on-site or through our LiveStudio video initiative

(based on 2014-2015)



Angela Zator Nelson, *percussion*
Jacob Winterstein, *spoken word*



interactive education



Charlotte Blake Alston, *kora*

“Who of these students will walk (or skip, or dance) out of a Bridge Session with a new awareness in herself of a skill, a passion previously dormant?

Whose spark will light?”

—Yumi Kendall, cellist with The Philadelphia Orchestra

“You have really inspired me to go after my dreams.”

—Kayla, 6th grade

Bridge Sessions are our signature educational programming for students from public schools and people with disabilities. Since our founding in 2008, we have reached more than **24,000 participants**, 99% of whom **attend for FREE**. Sessions take place at our partner venue World Cafe Live, where schools bring anywhere from 60 to 150 participants to the space for an intimate performance with **professional sound, lights and atmosphere**. Teaching artists blend **live performances with hands-on activities** that build skills in listening, expressing ideas and synthesizing new information.

In recent years, we've expanded our educational programs to provide opportunities for young people to work with teaching artists in **sustained, in-depth music-making experiences**. Our **after-school percussion workshop** at Christopher Columbus Charter School (below) teaches basic drumming techniques and helps students learn teamwork, self-confidence and self-expression. Middle school students in our **summer camp** (right) create music alongside professional musicians, writing and recording their own spoken word poems. In 2015-2016, a **year-long residency** at Houston Elementary School will involve the whole school in the creation of a record, featuring a student-centered songwriting process designed to boost the school's writing curriculum.

“In Percussion Club, I learned if I really try, **I can improve** anything I wish to do.”

—Alexa, 7th grade



Josh Robinson, *percussion*



Melissa Dunphy, *viola*

interactive education

LiveConnections



Lela Aisha Jones & students in the "Rhythmic Body" Bridge Session
[Image: Jaci Downs Photography]



Jason Vieaux, *guitar*, & the Al-Bustan Takht Ensemble

collaborative concerts



Ryan Matthews, *electronics*, & Flutronix

“These aren’t your typical collaborations. LiveConnections ... **creates synergy** between Philadelphia-area musicians and other talent that would normally be unlikely bedfellows.”

—Philadelphia Magazine

LiveConnections Presents (formerly ClassicAlive) features six collaborative concerts annually, designed for **adventurous music-lovers**. The performances engage musicians in creating **distinctive, boundary-crossing music**. In our “New Sound of Philadelphia” project, LiveConnections is **commissioning Philadelphia composers** to write new music for local ensembles, deliberately fusing musical styles and cultures. Our partner venue World Cafe Live provides a **relaxed atmosphere** for audiences to experience these cutting-edge compositions. Concert artists frequently participate in Bridge Sessions as well, allowing youth to hear the same music as concert-going adults.



accessibility via video



“The best part was how they got us to participate. **It was really cool to have a chance to play an instrument.** I don’t get a chance to do that anywhere else.”

—Janice, member of CATCH Inc., which serves adults with disabilities

Our **LiveStudio** video initiative expands the reach of both our educational and concert programming, providing **live web streaming to underserved audiences** throughout the region. The studio, housed at our partner venue World Cafe Live in Philadelphia, has connected nearly 900 individuals since its full implementation in 2013. Organizations serving **adults with physical or cognitive disabilities** bring those who are able to travel to experience our programs live, and we provide real-time web streaming back to facilities so **those who cannot attend in person can still participate**. Follow-up workshops at participating facilities provide opportunities for people to **connect up-close with the artists** they saw on the screen.

[Images: Conrad Erb Photography / Brian Young]

schedule 2015–2016

Bridge Sessions

We love having visitors observe sessions! Contact program coordinator Ladonna Edwards at ladonna@liveconnections.org to schedule a visit or inquire about bringing a school.

Philadelphia

October 19, 2015	Philadelphia Orchestra session #1 (NEW!)
October 20, 2015	World of Percussion
October 21, 2015	World of Percussion
October 28, 2015	LCP Session: PROJECT Trio & Jacob Winterstein ★
November 2, 2015	Philadelphia Orchestra session #2
December 2, 2015	Folk Music: The People's Music (NEW!)
December 7, 2015	Philadelphia Orchestra session #3 (NEW!)
December 14, 2015	Philadelphia Orchestra session #4 (NEW!)
January 21, 2016	LCP Session: Joanna Pascale & Curtis 20/21
January 25, 2016	The Building Blocks of Music ★
January 26, 2016	World of Percussion
February 22, 2016	African-American Spirituals: Roots and Reverberations (NEW!)
February 23, 2016	Rhythmic Body
February 24, 2016	Rhythmic Body
February 29, 2016	Music and Technology (NEW!)
May 2, 2016	Dancing Vibrations ★
May 3, 2016	LCP Session: Ensemble39 & Kinan Abou-afach
May 9, 2016	Voices and Bodies in Social Action (NEW!)
May 10, 2016	Language of Rhythm
May 11, 2016	Language of Rhythm

Wilmington

Presented in partnership with the Light Up the Queen Foundation.

November 5, 2015	World of Percussion
February 1, 2016	Rhythmic Body
May 2, 2016	Rhythm Machines
May 12, 2016	Language of Rhythm

★ Streaming LIVE online via our LiveStudio initiative.



LiveConnections Presents

PROJECT Trio & Jacob Winterstein ★

Sunday, November 1, 2015 | 12:00 noon | \$18/\$13
Beatboxing flute meets spoken word poetry in this high-energy collaboration that defies musical labels—fusing original music, storytelling and just plain fun.

Bird's Eye Trio: Jen Curtis, Ayane Kozasa & Paul Wiancko ★

Friday, December 11, 2015 | 7:30 p.m. | \$18/\$13
Rising star alert! LiveConnections has put together three of the brightest young string talents in a program spanning Beethoven, Wiancko's "Sanguine Clockwork" and a world premiere by Curtis.

Joanna Pascale & Curtis 20/21 ★

Friday, January 22, 2016 | 8:00 p.m. | \$15/\$11
Who can resist jazz and cocktails? Acclaimed jazz vocalist Pascale joins students from the Curtis Institute of Music for works by Legrand, Gershwin, Milhaud and Varese and a world premiere by Gabriella Smith.

Sandbox Percussion & Gabriel Cabezas ★

Friday, February 12, 2016 | 7:30 p.m. | \$18/\$13
Time for fresh new music! This daring cello & percussion collaboration features a world premiere by Alyssa Weinberg, commissioned by LiveConnections, as well as works by Steve Reich, Caroline Shaw and Andy Akiho.

Ensemble39 ★

Friday, April 8, 2016 | 7:30 p.m. | \$18/\$13
New sounds coming out of Philadelphia: the dynamic Ensemble39 will perform the world premiere of new work by Syrian-born Kinan Abou-afach, commissioned by LiveConnections, combining Western classical and traditional Arab music along with pre-recorded sounds.

eighth blackbird ★

Wednesday, June 8, 2016 | 7:30 p.m. | \$25/\$18
Three-time Grammy-winners take the stage for an inventive, action-packed performance. These "super-musicians" (*LA Times*) combine the finesse of a string quartet, the energy of a rock band and the audacity of a storefront theater company.

TICKETS & DETAILS at liveconnections.org



strategic plan FY16–FY19

Founded in 2008, at the onset of the recession, LiveConnections has always been a resilient organization and has benefited from exceptional leadership. In 2015, Valerie M. Jones, CFRE, used the “Real-Time Strategic Planning” process to facilitate our board and staff in creating our first strategic plan. The plan balances our joyful music-making with pragmatic strategies for growth.

We conducted three surveys to encourage both broad and deep participation in our planning process, and we are deeply grateful to the 130+ people who participated in the creation of these plans, including 100% of our board and staff.

For a copy of the complete strategic and development plans, please contact Executive Director Melinda Steffy at melinda@liveconnections.org.

Big Question

Through the strategic planning process, we developed a clear understanding of our business model, market position, trends impacting us and our competitive advantages. We then asked what was the most urgent, important and significant question we had to answer? What question, if successfully addressed, would place us in a much stronger position by 2019?

Our plan seeks to answer the following question:

“How do we increase awareness of our dynamic approach to live music engagement in ways that build our tribe and diversify our funding?”

Identity Statement

An early step of our strategic planning process was to develop an identity statement: a succinct statement that captures the essence of what our nonprofit is. The statement contributes to more effective teamwork, improves external communications by providing a basis for consistent messaging and develops our capacity for strategic thinking and acting.

LiveConnections advances our mission of inspiring learning and building community through collaborative music-making.

We seek to unite diverse people across boundaries by serving underserved populations—especially youth in urban schools and people with disabilities—as well as musically adventurous audiences in the Greater Philadelphia region.

We do this through Bridge Sessions, LiveConnections Presents, LiveStudio, residencies and workshops, and by commissioning new music.

We emphasize our competitive advantages of:

- Active engagement of all participants, regardless of age or experience, as we introduce them to boundary-crossing music;
- Access to one of the region’s most welcoming, intimate and acoustically excellent venues, due to our partnership with World Cafe Live;
- Ability to capture and distribute music experiences in distinctive ways, i.e., LiveStudio’s high-quality streaming video;
- Making access for people with disabilities a priority from the start, rather than an afterthought;
- Artist-centered, collaborative and fun approach that makes leading artists and organizations want to work with us.

We are primarily sustained by contributed income (88%), secondarily from earned (12%).

Five-Pronged Strategic Plan

We have developed five broad strategies to address our Big Question. They respond to broader trends, play to our strengths and have passed our decision-making strategy screen. This plan documents the beginning, not the end, of our ongoing strategy development and implementation. The five strategies are described in more detail in the Strategic Action Workplan (available upon request), which includes activities, deadlines and leaders assigned to each task.

STRATEGY I: Artist Engagement

Deepen relationships with current, and involve new, artists in ways that benefit the musicians and engage them in our creative work.

- Develop a communications toolkit for artists
- Create new artist activities and development opportunities

STRATEGY II: Building Educational Bridges

Forge relationships with select educational leaders and partner schools to increase awareness, advocacy and new/right opportunities for LiveConnections and the youth we serve.

- Develop a partner school plan
- Develop an educational leader engagement plan

STRATEGY III: 10th Anniversary Creative Convening

Convene exciting civic and cultural thinkers, sparking new ideas to deepen audience/ participant engagement.

- Plan a high-profile conference for 2018

STRATEGY IV: Getting the Word Out

Engage more followers with a compelling, key message-based campaign.

- Update key messages
- Develop a LiveStudio expansion plan
- Create a comprehensive 3-year marketing plan

STRATEGY V: Prioritizing Accessibility

Expand opportunities for people with disabilities to participate fully in all of our programs, thereby providing music experiences for populations that frequently face barriers to participation in the arts.

- Conduct an accessibility audit
- Develop a disabilities leader engagement plan

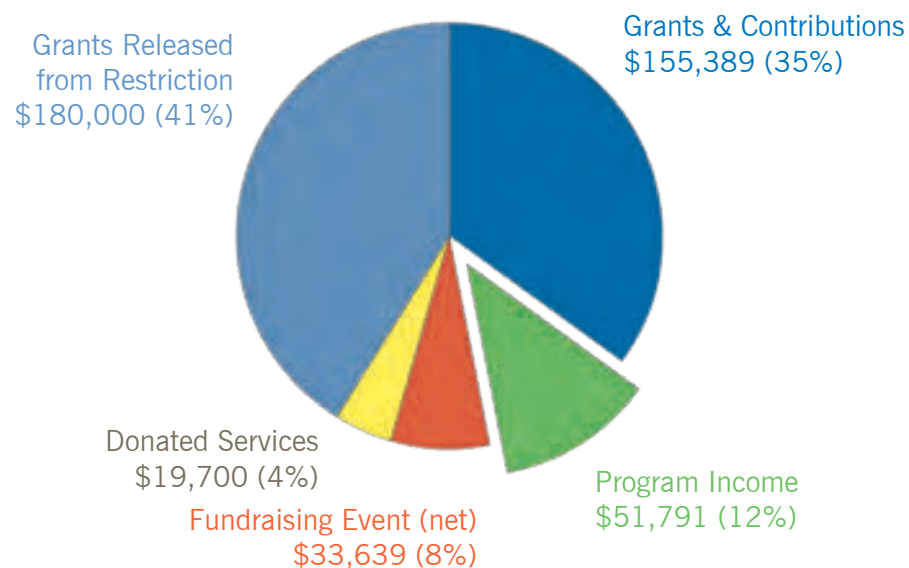


Gabriel Cabezas, cello, & Chloe Felesina, dancer
[Image: Conrad Erb Photography]

finances 2014-2015

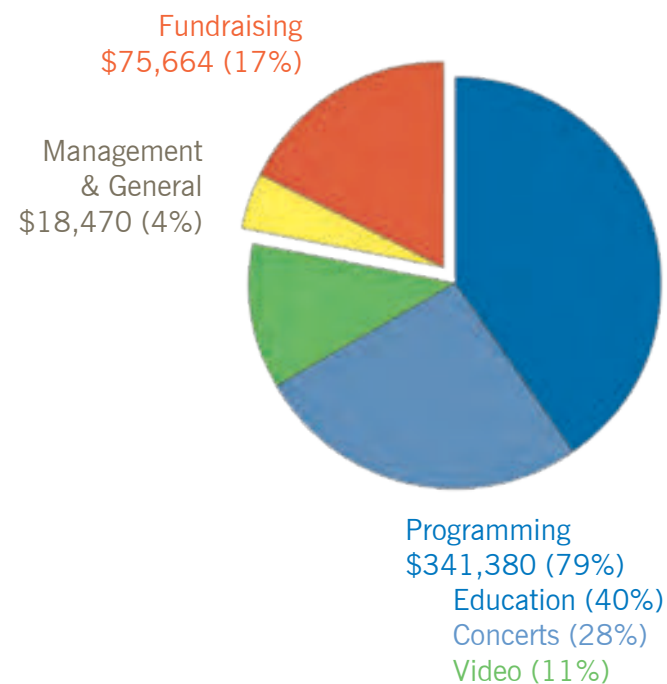
Revenue FY2015

Unrestricted Total: \$440,519
88% contributed / 12% earned



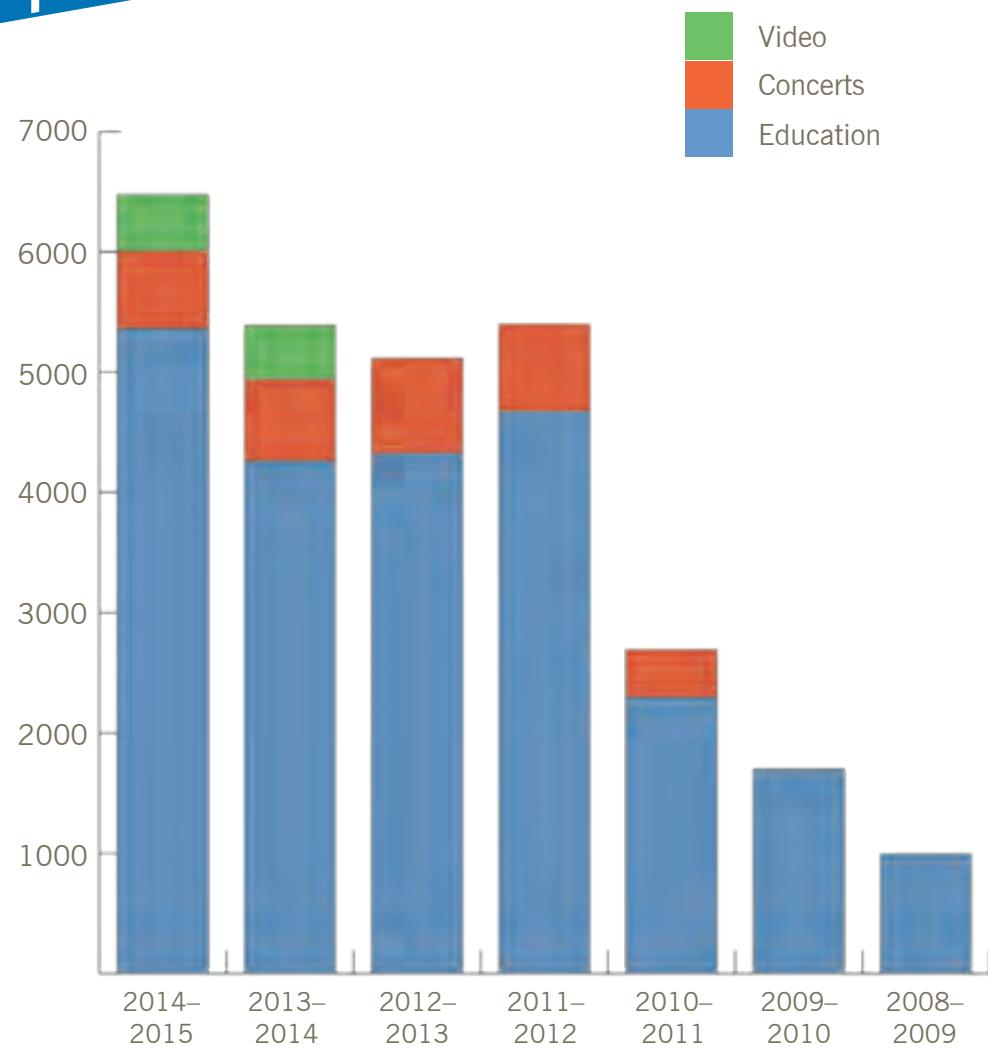
Expenses FY2015

Total: \$435,514



For a copy of LiveConnections' FY2015 audit report or IRS 990, please contact Executive Director Melinda Steffy at melinda@liveconnections.org.

participation 2008–2015



thank you to our donors!

big hurrah 2015



Andrew Lipke & the Aizuri Quartet
[Image: Conrad Erb Photography]

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thank you to our donors!

July 1, 2014–October 31, 2015

Big Hurrah 2015

(as of 10/31/2015)

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Big Hurrah 2014

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Kids Count Campaign 2015

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July 1, 2014 – October 31, 2015

Including LiveConnections Presents Producers, Giving Tuesday, year-end gifts & more.

\$10000+

Anonymous

\$5000+

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Anthony & Deette Brown

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Jeff Donnon

NRG Residential Solutions

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Jacob Winterstein, Xavier Foley & Yumi Kendall at the Big Hurrah 2015
 [Image: Jaci Downs Photography]

LiveConnections

Inspiring learning & building community
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