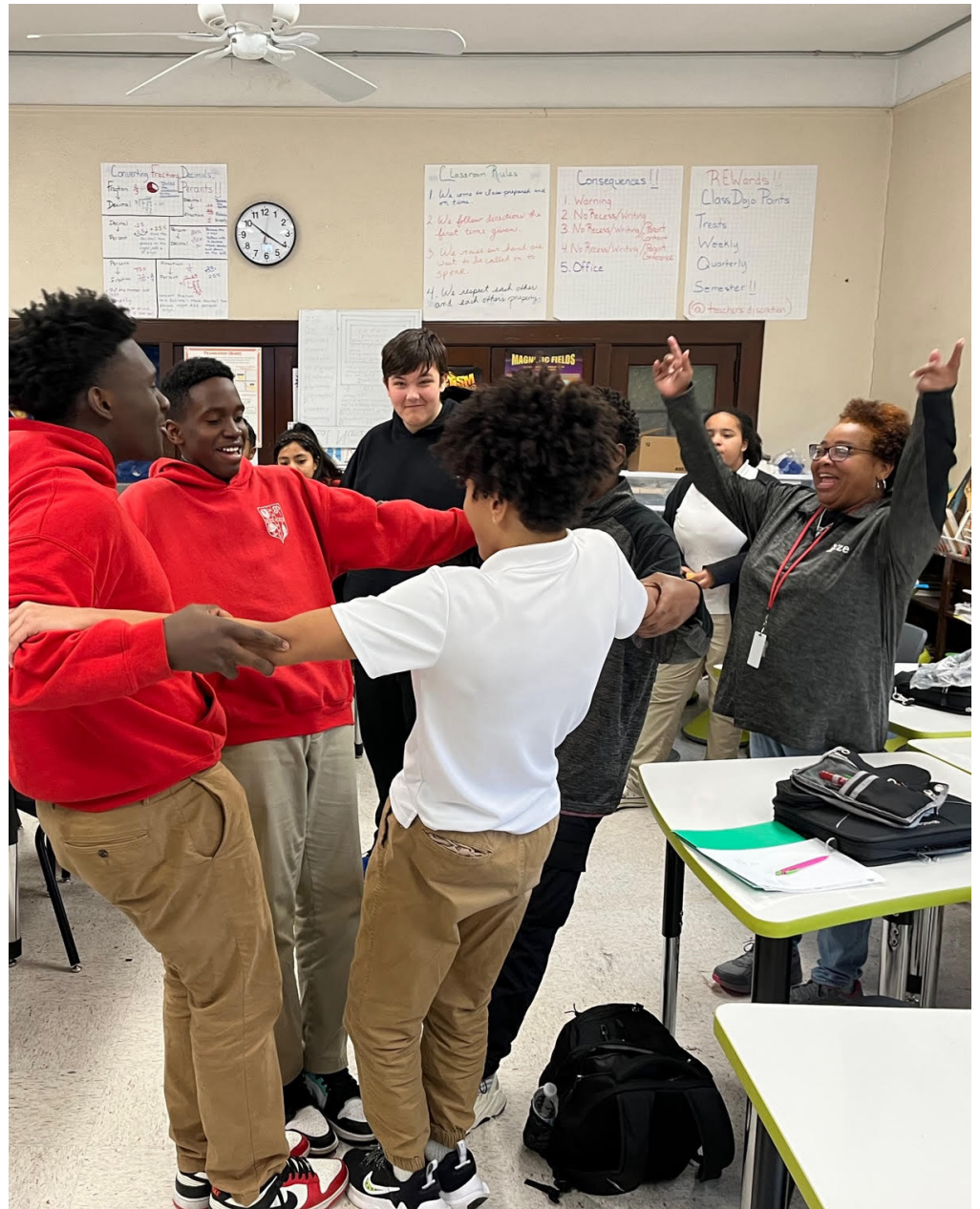


# DESIGN LAB

LEARN + BUILD



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### President

Gregory Hammond  
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Hixson Architecture Engineering Interiors

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Vice President of BD  
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Executive Vice President &  
Chief Operations Officer  
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### Seretary

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Business Development Executive  
Messer Construction

### Trustee Emeritus

*Gary L. Herfel, Esq.*  
*Donald Junker, AIA*  
*H.C. Buck Niehoff, Esq.*

2023 was such an incredible year for Design LAB: Learn + Build, and the first year operating under that name! We were able to officially change from the Architectural Foundation of Cincinnati, welcoming the next generation of the organization and the ability to bring our focus back on our roots. We readopted the mission statement we were founded with: to create appreciation, awareness, and improvement of the built environment through education. This nod to our beginnings has helped direct us into the future with a clear focus on who we are and what we do for the community we serve.

Our school program saw more growth and we were almost able to hit pre-pandemic numbers, serving over 1800 students. It also saw a full return to the normal program after years of pandemic-related disruptions. Our students took full advantage of the return to normalcy with the theme Gathering Spaces, where they once again wowed us with their creative solutions to real and not-so-real life problems they chose to address. The most popular design was one for our furry friends to hang out with their besties at a dog park. Their love and care for the world around them gives me hope for future generations and reminds me why this organization is so important.

We also tested our program outside of a traditional classroom for the first time and partnered with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Cincinnati to bring the program to the students they work with in their clubs. This collaboration ended up being an incredible success and we are so excited to see where it will take us in the future!

We hosted the final exhibit at the Newport on the Levee, taking over a good portion of their Gallery Building's second floor. This was an incredible space to display the work for our students, their friends and families, and our community. The Exhibit Receptions and Awards Ceremony was a huge success, with a vibrant turnout that more than warranted the vast space we utilized. The energy was high as our students proudly presented their models to their peers and their community. As always, this was my absolute favorite day of the year. It gives me the energy necessary to make it to the next year's exhibit.

In September we held the third edition of Dine with Design, partnering with the Contemporary Art Center to coincide our event with the opening of their Zaha Hadid exhibit: A Permanent Nostalgia for Departure. We once again raised a record amount of funds for the organization and everyone seemed to enjoy their time their time at the event.

Were able to grow our other programming as well, hosting a plethora of Construction Tours and introducing a new series! Drinks with Design is a mini version of Dine with Design, giving participants a chance to try a significant drinkery in the area. We've gone to places that put Cincinnati on the map nationally, that were historic landmarks, that were incredibly sustainably managed, or just had some funky and innovative distilling techniques. They've all been a lot of fun and we look forward to continuing this program into 2024 and beyond.

My favorite program this year was a construction tour of Playhouse in the Park. The project itself was a little bit behind and they only had a week to finish - it reminded me so much of our students during the last couple of weeks of the program and it reminded me that we are creating such a realistic stressor with the finalization of the models. We encourage all of our volunteers to embrace this part of the project and relate it to the work they do and how they feel in those moments.

Our staff also grew by a full-time employee which has been a wonderful moment of growth for the organization, once again going back to pre-pandemic normalcy and giving us the time and space to explore some new ideas and ventures for the organization to better serve our community. 2023 really felt the year that we corrected course after getting a few bananas thrown in the road.

We are so appreciative of the support, passion, and dedication of our members, corporate sponsors, program sponsors, and donors. They are the reason we will be able to continue to expand on our mission to create appreciation, awareness, and education of the built environment.

Sincerely,



Christen Lubbers

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Michael Collins  
Senior Vice President  
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Jason East, AIA, NCARB  
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Chief Strategy Officer  
KZF Design

James Stapleton  
Principal/Chief Operating Officer  
Pivot Studio

Charlie Thomas  
Vuce President  
Eagle Realty Group

# FINANCIAL SUPPORT

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for year ending December 31, 2023

### ACTIVITIES

#### SUPPORT AND REVENUES

Events/programs	\$ 6,580
Memberships	\$ 3,324
Corporate Partnerships	\$ 67,000
Dine with Design	\$ 65,576
Grants	\$ 26,527

TOTAL S&R \$169,007

#### EXPENSES

Events/programs	\$ 6,580
Education	\$ 11,246
Administration	\$131,317
Legal & Accounting	\$ 5,404
Office Expense	\$ 11,807

TOTAL EXPENSES \$166,356

#### FINANCIAL POSITION

Current assets	\$ 125,157
Current liabilities	\$ 22,354
Net Income	\$ 6,170

Compiled from statements prepared by  
EKA Financial Consulting

## GRANTS

Design LAB was the recipient of financial support for one or more of its programs from the following foundations:

- Al Neyer provided a \$10,000 grant
- Spirit of Construction provided a \$5,000 grant
- Pelican Studio Architect provided a \$2,000 grant
- The Northern Cincinnati Foundation provided a \$2,500 grant

## 2023 DINE WITH DESIGN

Our 2023 Dine with Design event (formerly the Apple Gala) returned for its third year, this time with the Contemporary Art Center hosting our 'home-base' for the event. Attendees had the opportunity to network before the Awards Ceremony kicked off and honoring our Educator and Volunteer of the Year. Everyone set off on their three-restaurant adventure, getting the opportunity to try new places and new dishes. Best of all, the event netted \$65,576 in profits, the highest money-making fundraiser for the organization to-date.

## CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

The following organizations were Corporate Partners of Design LAB in 2023:

#### Platinum Level (\$5,000)

- Eagle Realty Group (Western & Southern)
- GBBN Architects
- Hixson Architecture Engineering Interiors
- J.S. Held
- Megen Construction
- Oswald
- SHP Leading Design

#### Gold Level (\$2,500)

- Champlin
- CMTA Consulting Engineers
- First Financial Bank
- Huseman Group
- Kleingers Group
- Messer Construction
- Skanska
- Taft, Stettinius, and Hollister LLP
- Turner Construction

#### Silver Level (\$1,500)

- Graydon
- K4 Architecture
- KZF Design
- Nelson Stark Co.
- Pioneer Cladding & Glazing Systems

## CORPORATE SUPPORTER

The following organizations provided financial support to Design LAB at the \$1,000 level:

- Enriching Spaces
- North American Properties

## RED BULL'S FLUGTAG

Red Bull's 2023 Flugtag took place in Cincinnati on August 12 at Sawyer Point Park & Yeatman's Cove. The Cincy Super Friends fearlessly flew Wonder Woman's Invisible Jet into the Ohio River to heroically raise funds for their favorite non-profit: Design LAB: Learn + Build. The Super Friends raised a super \$7,000 for their friends at Design LAB in that legendary leap.

## IN-KIND DONATIONS

The following organizations provided in-kind donations to support our programming:

- Curbell Plastics
- First Financial Bank
- Huseman Group
- GBBN Architects
- Plaza Artist Materials
- Newport on the Levee
- Hixson
- SHP Leading Design
- Skanska
- Messer
- Pivot

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Additional support for Design LAB was provided by the following individuals:

- MEMBER (\$75)
  - Amie Anderl
- Denis and Julie Back
  - Bahira Brooks
  - Chris Buckreus
  - Jennifer Karbula
  - Zachary Kenney
- Catrina Kolshorn
  - Patrick Lance
  - Kathleen Norris
  - Amanda Thom

#### SUPPORTER (\$100+)

- Zoe Gizara
- Stephen Goldstein
  - Rachel Hock
  - Michael Koch
  - Peggy Loftus
- Tony Ravagnani
- Linnea Woodward

#### PATRON (\$500+)

- John Gavigan
- Mark McKillip
- Anthony Pitassi



# PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

## DESIGN LAB: SCHOOL PROGRAM

Design LAB: Learn And Build had another amazing year, growing back to near pre-pandemic numbers of students reached. We were able to reach over 1800 students in 2023! This gets us so close to 2000 students, which we hope to reach in 2024.

Our students were tasked with creating Gathering Spaces. We had noted that some of our students were struggling with the idea of gathering, some of our young students meeting other students in a classroom for the first time ever. As adults who had only recently been limited in our gatherings, we took for granted that students would easily reconvene when they were able to, when a large percentage of their social lives had just been disrupted. This theme came at the perfect time and it seemed to ignite real creativity across our student population and they were able to push the limits of what we think of when we think of 'Gathering Spaces'.

Some of our students wanted to travel far, building their ideas in space or underwater. They created music venues that replicated Boom Boxes from the outside. We even had skyscrapers connected at the top by a giant play space for adults, who could travel from building to building on giant slides. The most popular idea of the year, though, was dog parks. Our students found a lot of joy in creating spaces where their furry friends could gather with one another. Even Rihanna got an amazing new house to host parties for all of her fabulous friends. No matter where they went with the program, it was awesome to see them work through the theme this year and push their own creative limits.

We were also able to form an exciting partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Cincinnati, bringing the school program into their clubs for the first formal version of the program outside of a traditional classroom. These are the students we have been trying to reach and the clubs are so excited about the partnership, so we were elated to see this new venture turn out so successful.

The Design LAB Exhibit was in-person again and able to grow exponentially at the Newport on the Levee! We brought one side of their Gallery Building's Mezzanine Level to life with all of our students' hard work and creative problem-solving. The crowd was impressive and we were certainly grateful to have all of the extra space that the Levee allowed. Our students enjoyed celebrating their success at the Exhibit Reception & Awards Ceremony, and it was an extra treat that they were able to see themselves working through the project on the giant LED screen displayed prominently on the Levee.

We are so excited to dive into the 2024 Design LAB program. We are revisiting Food Spaces to see what tasty areas the students will create!



Attendees at the Awards Ceremony

## PROGRAMS & TOURS

Design LAB offered 16 programs, events, and tours in 2023

- January 18 | Factory 52 Construction Tour
- February 15 | Playhouse in the Park Construction Tour
- February 20 | We hosted Design LAB's material drive for the Design LAB, to ensure all participating students have equal access to building materials, while diverting those materials from the landfill.
- February 21 | First Edition of Drinks with Design at Northern Row
- March 21 | Clifton Court Construction Tour
- April 20 | Drinks with Design at Rhinegeist
- April 20-22 | Seek Cincy
- May 13-20 | Design LAB Exhibit at Newport on the Levee
- June 21 | Heritage of Architecture Tour at University of Cincinnati
- July 10 | Educational Cremation Center at Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science Construction Tour
- July 12 | Design LAB Volunteer & Educator Appreciation Event
- July 20 | Drinks with Design at Fibonacci Brewing Company
- September 26 | We hosted Dine with Design, our annual fundraiser, at the CAC
- October 26 | Drinks with Design at Second Sight Spirits
- November 2 | Clifton Cultural Arts Center Construction Tour
- November 20 & 21 | We invited our Design LAB Educators & Volunteers to an orientation for the 2024 program year
- December 23 | Gingerbread House Building Challenge



# DESIGN LAB

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