THE COMMUNITY MAGAZINE FOR KINDER HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS, PUBLISHED BY HSPVA FRIENDS

epiphany

2025–2026: A YEAR IN REVIEW



A New Era for Kinder HSPVA

Curriculum Spotlights: Adjunct Faculty, Global Grooves, and World Premieres

Ryan Delahoussaye ’94 and Justin Furstenfeld ’94 of Blue October honored as 2026 Distinguished Alumni

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ABOUT
As a Texas Partnership campus, Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts is an autonomous, tuition-free charter school in HISD operated by its longtime 501(c)(3) non-profit partner, HSPVA Friends.

Public funding covers full-time faculty and core academics. The conservatory-style arts training that defines Kinder HSPVA depends on the generosity of donors like you to HSPVA Friends. Your gifts provide adjunct faculty, resident teaching artists, specialized instruments and technology, master classes, production support, and access to national competitions, college auditions, and arts conferences.

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ON THE COVER
The Dance Department's Spring Concert (March 2026). Your gifts provided choreography by guest artist Tamisha Guy, Dance Lecturer at Barnard College. Photo by Amitava Sarkar.

A New Era for Kinder HSPVA

HSPVA has always been a pioneer in public arts education. We opened in 1971 as the nation's first public school to bring performing arts, visual arts, and academic instruction together under one roof. Since then, our incredible community of faculty, staff, parents, students, and alumni has pushed us to think bigger and advocate to make the best arts education accessible for young artists across Houston.

This year, we launch a thrilling new era. HISD has given Kinder HSPVA the opportunity to build on its success by governing our own daily operations. HSPVA Friends, the school's partner for nearly 50 years, is now the official Operating Partner of Kinder HSPVA and is responsible for the school's governance, finances, staffing, calendar, and curriculum. **This collaboration gives Kinder HSPVA the freedom its students and teachers need to meet the unique demands of a pre-professional, conservatory-style arts school.**

The cutting-edge governing structure is made possible through Texas Senate Bill 1882, which is grounded in the understanding that students at the state's most innovative public schools benefit when decisions are made as close to the students as possible. This new level of autonomy is an incredible accomplishment, earned through the hard work of our students, teachers, and administrators over the past several decades, who have together created a legacy of innovation and success. When HISD approached Dr. Rivas with this opportunity, HSPVA Friends and school leadership carefully considered it and sought community input. The response was unequivocally enthusiastic. Our team is honored and ready to steward Kinder HSPVA's legacy and future.

What matters most about Kinder HSPVA remains the same. **We are still an HISD public school.** Admission remains based on an equitable audition process that considers only artistic merit and potential. And our extraordinary faculty will continue providing the rigorous academic and arts instruction that has defined HSPVA for generations.

How can you help? **Tax dollars will not cover the arts. We still need your support!** HSPVA Friends will continue to raise and disburse the private funds that provide adjunct faculty, guest artists, arts supplies, equipment, and technology—everything that makes HSPVA the nation's leading arts school. We need your gifts, your volunteer hours, and your voice to share Kinder HSPVA's achievements in your communities. Together, these ensure the school operates at its full potential.

We hope you enjoy looking back on the 2025-2026 school year. **The achievements and success stories you see in this magazine are made possible by donors like you.**

As HSPVA founder Ruth Denney said, "Education is an adventure in trust." Thank you for your continued support and your trust. There are great things in store for the entire Kinder HSPVA community. **We're excited to get started!**

With gratitude,

Alene Haehl Coggin, Executive Director/CEO
Dr. Priscilla Rivas, Principal/Chief School Officer
Janis Jarosz, Chair, HSPVA Friends Board
Angie Eason, Chair, Kinder HSPVA School Board

FAQs

What is this new partnership model?

HISD has contracted HSPVA Friends to operate Kinder HSPVA, including its governance, finances, staffing, and curriculum models. This arrangement is made possible by Texas Senate Bill 1882, which allows school districts to create Innovation Partnerships with non-profit organizations to give individual campuses autonomy under a district-supervised performance contract. Learn more at txpartnerships.org.

Who serves on the Kinder HSPVA School Board?

The School Board is chaired by **Angie Eason** (Director of Internal Communications and Engagement at CenterPoint Energy). She is joined by **Victor Cardenas** (shareholder at Pappas Grubbs Price PC), **Anna Eastman** (former HISD Trustee and former Texas State Representative), **Cristina Esquivel** (Director of Asset Management at Griffin Partners, Inc.), and **Dr. Catherine Horn** (Dean of the University of Houston's College of Education). Learn more about the board members at hspvafriends.org/staff-and-board.

Will Kinder HSPVA still be tuition-free?

Yes. Kinder HSPVA is still a tuition-free public school in HISD. The school will continue to serve a diverse student body from across Houston.

What will actually be different?

Most of the changes will happen administratively, not in the classroom. School leadership will have more direct authority over how the school operates, which means faster decision-making and greater flexibility to support students.

Do you still need my support?

Yes. In the art areas, public funding covers only the salaries of full-time faculty. Donations from individuals like you, and our foundation and corporate partners, provide everything else, every single day. More than ever, we will need your support to ensure that the entire school can function.


Victor Cardenas, Dr. Catherine Horn, Anna Eastman, Dr. Priscilla Rivas, Alene Coggin, Angie Eason, Cristina Esquivel

Did you know?

- Kinder HSPVA consistently ranks as one of the best schools in the city, state, and nation, based on academic performance and college readiness scores.
- Students are accepted to Kinder HSPVA based solely on their talent. The school does not consider academic history or disciplinary records.
- No student is exited from Kinder HSPVA for poor academic performance. The school provides the academic interventions students need to stay on track.
- Kinder HSPVA is a tuition-free public school, but its arts curriculum is privately funded by generous donors like you.
- In the 2025-2026 school year, 16 students were recognized by the national YoungArts program. Nine students were winners with distinction and participated in National Young Arts Week in Miami—more than any other high school in the nation. Two students are semifinalists for U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts.

The 184 members of the Class of 2026 received more than $46 million in college scholarship offers.







Writers Daniel Bernard Roumain and Kenneth B. Morris, Jr., Retired Vocal Music Department Chair Patricia Bonner, Apollo Chamber Players Artistic Director Matthew J. Detrick





Kenneth B. Morris, Jr. and Mali Gatewood '27

Unheard Voices

A BLACK HISTORY COLLABORATION

In February, Kinder HSPVA students brought *Unheard Voices* to life. This Black History Month performance was a student-led collaboration between the Instrumental Music and Creative Writing Departments, with contributions from Vocal Music, Visual Arts, and Theatre students. Cadence and Color, an HSPVA club dedicated to uplifting Black and women composers, helped organize the event.

The program featured bold interpretations of works by artists including Aretha Franklin and Stevie Wonder, whose "Sir Duke" was reimagined for mariachi. It also included the world premiere of *And Still We Cross*, a co-commission between Apollo Chamber Players and HSPVA Friends, performed by the Evergreen Quartet—**Drayden Johnson '27**, **Rashaud Lawrence '27**, **Claire Loggenberg '27**, and **Naoto Osako '27**—and Creative Writing student **Mali Gatewood '27**.

And Still We Cross was written by **Daniel Bernard Roumain**, a Haitian-American composer whose work blends classical, electronic, hip-hop, and African American music traditions. The music was paired with an essay by **Kenneth B. Morris, Jr.**, the great-great-great-grandson of Frederick Douglass and the great-great-grandson of Booker T. Washington. The piece traces themes of migration and resilience across American history, from the Underground Railroad to the present. Both Morris and Roumain were present to speak with students about their work, and Morris performed the piece with the students.

"It was an honor for Kinder HSPVA to help premiere this significant new work," says **Instrumental Music Department Chair Rodolfo Morales '94**. "Working on a new composition is a tremendous opportunity for student musicians. The rehearsal process is quite different when there is no recording to reference or established interpretation to study." The students later performed the piece with Apollo Chamber Players during their annual concert series and at leading music educator El Sistema USA's national conference at Jones Hall.

Unheard Voices reflects Kinder HSPVA's curricular commitment to centering artists from diverse backgrounds year-round, ensuring that students encounter and study perspectives that have been historically overlooked.

Watch the full performance at **hspvafriends.org/unheardvoices**.

Familiar Faces

LONGTIME CONSULTANTS SHAPE GENERATIONS OF STUDENTS

HSPVA Friends funds more than 150 adjunct faculty and guest artists each year. These professionals deliver the conservatory-style training that defines a Kinder HSPVA education. Many have been part of the HSPVA community for years, even decades. Meet a few of them below. We are grateful to all of our adjunct faculty for their dedication and years of service!



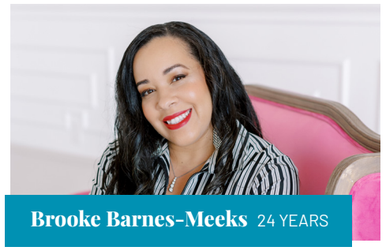
Art Fristoe 17 YEARS

Art Fristoe has worked in the Instrumental Music Department since 2009. Today, he teaches jazz piano and coaches jazz rhythm section, where students learn to improvise and perform as part of an ensemble. Fristoe believes jazz equips musicians with skills they can apply in virtually any musical setting. "If you're going to sing at church, join a rock band, or end up in Chris Stapleton's country band, having a foundation in jazz is a cheat code," he said.



Stephanie Blue 44 YEARS

Collaborative pianist **Stephanie Blue (Instrumental '81)** has worked with HSPVA students since 1982 and serves as the band director for All-School and Theatre Department musicals. Over four decades, she has watched generations of young artists develop from nervous freshmen into confident performers. "Seeing a kid struggle in the ninth grade, encouraging them not to give up, and then seeing them flourish by the time they're seniors—that's really cool."



Brooke Barnes-Meeks 24 YEARS

Brooke Barnes (Dance '97) has been teaching at HSPVA since 2002. From pop show choreography for the Vocal Music Department, dance classes in the Theatre Department, and directing fifteen All-School Black History Productions, Brooke is an integral part of the school and describes HSPVA as her "second home."

"There's a certain energy at PVA that's unlike any other school I've taught at," she said. "Being surrounded by artists who are constantly creating and growing is why this place has always felt like home."



Jeanne Doornbos 21 YEARS

Dance consultant **Jeanne Doornbos** joined HSPVA in 2005 after a distinguished ballet career and years of teaching at the University of Houston. She teaches ballet classes and choreographs original works for the Dance Department's concerts. According to **Dance Department Chair Courtney Jones '99**, "Ms. Doornbos cares deeply about her students and works tirelessly to help them recognize their potential as artists."

That potential is one reason Doornbos has continued teaching at HSPVA for more than 20 years. "The students are really thrilled about just being alive, getting to move, and learning new things," she said. "They have their whole lives ahead of them. It's very rejuvenating."



Michael Mertz 27 YEARS

Music director and pianist **Michael Mertz** has worked with the Theatre, Dance, and Vocal Music Departments since 1999, though his connection to HSPVA dates back even further. He played his first senior recital for the Vocal Music Department in 1975.

Stefan Herrera (Theatre '26) says Mertz's high standards have made him a trusted mentor. "Mr. Mertz always keeps it real with us," Herrera said. "He's always honest when the work we're doing simply doesn't cut it. When Mr. Mertz approves, we know we're making truly great theatre."



Fernell Hogan

Yours, Truly

AN ORIGINAL MUSICAL

In the fall, Theatre students collaborated with Broadway performer and HSPVA alumnus **Fernell Hogan (Theatre '15)** to create *Yours, Truly*, an original devised musical built from student-written work.

In devised theatre, rather than beginning rehearsals with a finished script, the performers and creative team write and develop material collaboratively. The Theatre Department's process for *Yours, Truly* reflected a professional devising environment, offering students a glimpse into a different mode of theatre-making. "It was the ultimate test of creativity for both the students and myself," Hogan said. "They submitted an incredible collection of original work including poems, scenes, dances, and songs."

Lila Johnson (Theatre '27) submitted her original song, "Yours, Truly," which inspired the title and vision for the show. **Nia Lewis's (Theatre '27)** poem, "Inside Voices," provided the building blocks for a story exploring self-worth, anxiety, and the pressures many young artists place on themselves.

Over the course of his residency, Hogan guided students through revising their scenes and songs and weaving in existing works by artists like David Ives, Lady Gaga, and Kenny Loggins to tell a cohesive story. "We didn't really know what it would become," said **Kamila Galindo (Theatre '27)**. "Then we did the first full run-through and realized, 'Wow, we created something special.'"

"It was incredible watching students realize that the work they had created in classrooms, notebooks, and on their own could become a full-scale production," said **Theatre Department Chair Rozie Curtis**. "Fernell helped them see that their ideas were worth developing and sharing."

The Theatre Department curriculum includes courses in playwriting, acting, directing, design, and movement. *Yours, Truly* brought these skills and experiences together, reflecting the Department's philosophy that students learn every part of the creative process. As Curtis often says, "In Theatre, we do it all!"





Global Grooves

MUSIC BEYOND THE WESTERN CANON

Instrumental Music students in Kinder HSPVA's Global Grooves elective are exploring musical traditions from around the world and developing skills that extend beyond a traditional music classroom. Taught by Houston-area percussionists and educators **Bensen Kwan** and **Arthur Gilligan**, the course introduces students to non-Western musical traditions through hands-on performance, improvisation, and cultural study.

Throughout the year, students studied concepts such as Indian ornamentation and ragas, learned steel pan performance techniques rooted in Trinidadian musical traditions, and examined musical styles from South Africa. Rather than relying on sheet music, students learned music by ear, experimented with improvisation, studied unfamiliar rhythmic systems, and performed on instruments completely new to them.

For many students, the class provided their first experience learning music by repetition, without a written piece of music in front of them. "At the beginning of the semester, students wanted sheet music for everything," said Gilligan. "Now they're much more comfortable learning by ear. I definitely feel they're more fearless now."

Global Grooves challenges students to approach music differently than many are used to. "My musical training has been very traditional and linear," **Jose Gutiérrez (Instrumental '26)** said. "Learning how other cultures think about music has allowed me to think outside the box and approach music more freely."

The skills students develop in Global Grooves extend beyond any single musical style. Learning to perform by ear, navigate different cultural rhythms, and lead within new ensemble structures makes students more adaptable and culturally informed musicians. Global Grooves helps enhance students' artistry and build skills for viable careers in music.

Check out these short films!

In the Creative Writing Department, your gifts provide adjunct faculty who teach screenwriting and filmmaking, as well as cameras, audio equipment, and editing software. **Scan the QR code below or visit hspvafriends.org/shorts** to watch three short films by **Ana Alonso '26**, **Christine Novelero '26**, and **Valeria Orozco '26**.















Third Coast Week

ANNUAL EVENT BRINGS ART COLLEGES TO CAMPUS

In the 1970s, HSPVA was one of the first schools in the country to bring art colleges to meet directly with students on their home turf. The idea caught on nationally, eventually giving rise to the National Portfolio Day Association (NPDA), which organizes visual arts portfolio review tours with the nation's best visual arts colleges. Today, Kinder HSPVA continues this decades-long tradition: Third Coast Week, a three-day portfolio review that brings nearly 50 art college representatives directly to campus each fall.

Third Coast Week is exclusively for Kinder HSPVA visual artists, scheduled each year to coincide with the NPDA's tour through Texas. Junior and senior Visual Arts students spend weeks preparing, assembling portfolios of 15-20 artworks, practicing interviews, and researching the arts conservatories and universities attending. In the days leading up to the event, the entire department is transformed into a gallery. Every inch of classroom and hallway space is covered with art! Over the course of the three days, each student meets with at least 15 college reps in focused sessions of 15 to 30 minutes. Because every junior and senior participates, reps can follow students' progress across two years, seeing their work develop.

"It's a testament to our students and our program that college reps want to come to HSPVA year after year," said **Visual Arts Department Chair David Waddell '99**. "They consistently tell us that our students stand out for their conceptual skills and because they can talk about their inspiration and process. That's not something every artist can do well, and we have a track record of successfully preparing students for that."

Kinder HSPVA students regularly walk away from Third Coast Week with acceptances and scholarship offers from schools like Rhode Island School of Design, Pratt Art Institute, Parsons School of Design, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

THE PVA SHOW
Bar • Gallery Show • Auction • Dancing
01.30.26 | THE MAJESTIC METRO

On January 30, 2026, 300 HSPVA supporters gathered at the historic Majestic Metro for The PVA Show. This annual gallery show and auction party benefiting the Creative Writing, Dance, Theatre, and Visual Arts Departments is your only opportunity each year to collect work by Kinder HSPVA artists. The sold-out crowd raised **more than $88,000—a new record**.

Guests browsed and bid on more than 100 pieces of student art, alongside auction packages that included jewelry, theatre tickets, vacation homes, and exclusive experiences. The evening also featured yummy food and drinks from Churrascos, short films by Creative Writing students, and cabaret and dance performances.

SAVE THE DATE!

The PVA Show is Friday, February 5, at Ironworks in the East End. Learn more at hspvafriends.org/pvashow.



1. Sina Tazehzad & Dr. Priscilla Rivas, Serena Paquette & Bob Boblitt **2.** Phuong Nguyen, Tina Swangphol, Mina Masaeli **3.** Mack Hutchison '27, Elizabeth Hutchison, Elizabeth Klett & Adam Hodges **4.** Matthew Johnson, Meredith '95 & Rob Wise, Catherine Johnson **5.** Hien & Mark Reynoso **6.** Jamie Levit '04, Liz Wogan

Know Your Prints

Ever been curious about the techniques behind the student prints you see in The PVA Show? We've got you covered!

LINOCUT/RELIEF: A design carved out of a linoleum block, inked, and printed like a stamp. Artists have to think in reverse and carve away areas they do not want to print.

1. ***Phyllophaga*** by Nina Matin '26
2. ***Seek*** by Cara Baker '26

MONOTYPE: A single impression of a design that does not use a repeatable matrix. Every print is completely unique.

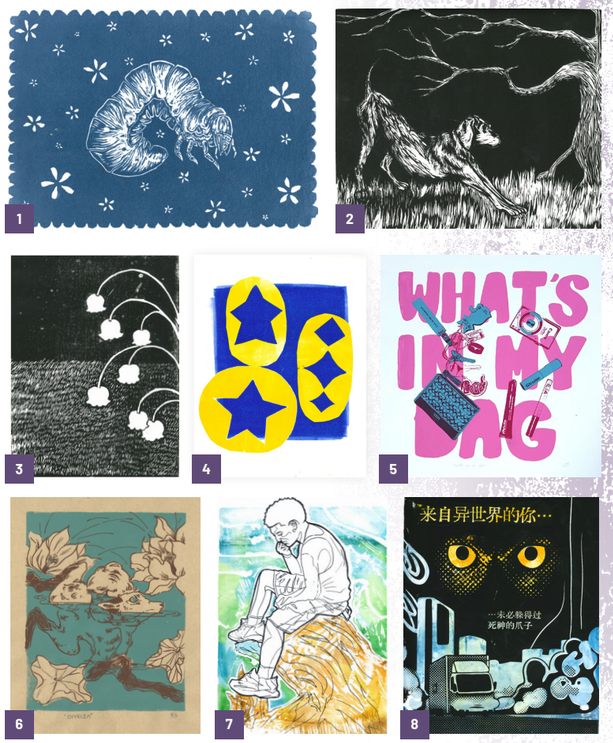
3. ***Valley Aftermath*** by Mia Flores '28
4. ***Untitled*** by Carolina Hernandez '28

SILKSCREEN/SCREENPRINT: A design made using a stencil on a mesh screen, with ink pushed through the screen to make a print.

5. ***What's In My Bag*** by Leslie Soper '26
6. ***Ophelia*** by Scarlenn Silva '27

SILKSCREEN MONOPRINT: Same process as screenprints using repeatable imagery but different ink applications. A hybrid technique that allows for more painterly prints and experimentation.

7. ***Solitude*** by Wolfgang Schindler '27
8. ***Eyes of Life*** by Yuechee Zhang '26





HSPVA FRIENDS PRESENTS

THE 20TH ANNUAL ENCORE LUNCHEON

LIVE AND UNPLUGGED

BENEFITING KINDER HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS

HSPVA Friends hosted the 20th Annual Encore Luncheon, *Live and Unplugged*, on March 26, 2026. **Luncheon Chairs Janis and Paul Jarosz** welcomed 270 guests on to the Denney Theatre stage to celebrate 2026 Distinguished Alumni **Ryan Delahoussaye (Instrumental Music '94)** and **Justin Furstenfeld (Theatre '94)** of the band Blue October. The 2026 Encore Luncheon raised a **record-breaking $391,000** for Kinder HSPVA programs.

Guests enjoyed a performance by Kinder HSPVA's Jazz Brass Band, as well as short films by Creative Writing students and original artwork. In their keynote address, Delahoussaye and Furstenfeld shared stories about their time at HSPVA and the high standard the school set for how they work and collaborate with others. They capped the event off with acoustic performances of their songs "All That We Are" and "Fear."

Over the past three decades, Blue October has accumulated more than a billion streams and eighteen Top 40 singles, including "Into the Ocean" and "Hate Me," and built a fiercely loyal global fanbase.

Read more and see more photos at **hspvafriends.org/encore2026**.


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1. Ryan Delahoussaye '94, Encore Chairs Janis & Paul Jarosz, Justin Furstenfeld '94 **2.** Kaye DeWalt, Rusty Hardin **3.** Victoria Lazar, Grant Dorfman, Alene Coggin, Bob Boblitt **4.** Dr. Priscilla Rivas, HISD Superintendent Mike Miles, Alene Coggin **5.** Patricia & Brian Wycliff, Fan & Peter Morris **6.** Chris Goins & Josh Pazda **7.** Mark Folkes, George Lancaster, Sally Edmundson **8.** Devon Anderson, Deborah Keyser **9.** Jarrod Martin, Jennifer Hardy, Nick Lawson, Avi Moshenberg **10.** Marita Fairbanks, Rodrigo & Ellie Herrera '89, Marci Dallas **11.** David Mincberg

RECORD-BREAKING EVENT



KINDER HSPVA'S MUSIC FEST

On September 14, 2025, Kinder HSPVA welcomed more than 1,800 guests to MusicFest. HSPVA families, alumni, prospective students, and community members took in more than 30 concerts, recitals, and jam sessions from HSPVA's 350 Instrumental and Vocal Music students.

This year's MusicFest raised a **record-breaking $108,000** to support music curriculum essentials, from instrument repair and sheet music to adjunct faculty for every ensemble and partnerships with professional arts organizations like AFA and Houston Symphony. Thank you to everyone who came out and celebrated with us!

SAVE THE DATE!

MusicFest 2026 is Sunday, September 27.
Get your tickets at **hspvafriends.org/musicfest**.

2025-2026 PROGRAM EXPENSES

TEACHERS
Adjunct Faculty
Artists-in-Residence
Master Classes

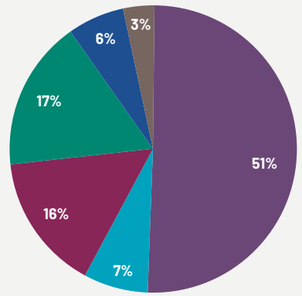
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Accompanists
Box Office Management
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MATERIALS
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Instruments, Technology, Equipment
Scripts and Sheet Music
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CAPITAL NEEDS
Studios
Theatres
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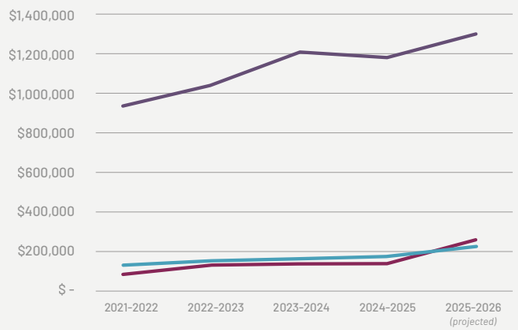
CONNECTIONS
Field Trips
Professional Development
Partnerships with Arts Organizations
Middle School Outreach

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SUPPORT
Summer Programs
Private Lessons
College Audition Access



FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES OVER FIVE YEARS

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026 (projected)
PROGRAMS	$931,860	$1,037,443	$1,203,572	$1,180,271	$1,300,000
ADMINISTRATION	$121,234	$150,823	$161,938	$175,539	$215,000
FUNDRAISING	$85,601	$132,013	$138,459	$139,193	$245,000





DONOR LIST

Thank you to our generous 2025-2026 donors!
You make Kinder HSPVA the best tuition-free, public arts high school in the nation.

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Neil Gross
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HSPVA Friends and the Visual Arts faculty extend a huge thanks to the Class of 2026 Visual Arts Parents. They have been a constant, dependable presence throughout their students' four years at HSPVA: providing hospitality to college reps during Third Coast Week, hanging and framing artwork and collecting silent auction items for The PVA Show, running their Middle School Workshops, hanging the annual summer juried exhibition, and so much more.

"The Class of 2026 Parents care deeply about the department and are always willing to jump in wherever help is needed," said **Visual Arts Department Chair David Waddell '99**. "Their support has allowed the faculty to focus on teaching and the student experience. Thank you for everything you have done for us!"



Sarah Elmusrati, **Kristen Burke**, **Meredith Wise**, **Linda Barcot**, **Jasmine Lynch**, and **Katrina White**, pictured here, are just some of the active volunteers from this incredible class!

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DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Karen Ostrum George

Karen has supported Kinder HSPVA for more than 25 years. A former HSPVA Friends Board Chair and Treasurer, she also co-chaired Encore 50, celebrating HSPVA's 50th anniversary. In 1999, with support from Ralph S. O'Connor and the Martel Foundation, Karen established the Bob Ostrum Endowment for Jazz Studies at HSPVA Friends in honor of her father, a lifelong jazz fan. If you attend any HSPVA jazz concert, you will likely see Karen in the audience.

Karen is a Rice University Trustee Emeritus and Past President of the Association of Rice Alumni, and she continues to serve Rice in many capacities. She is a former Board Chair of Planned Parenthood of Gulf Coast and serves on the board of The Women's Home.



Bob Ostrum and Karen at HSPVA's Spring Jazz Festival in 1999



Karen and retired HSPVA Jazz Director Warren Sneed '78

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Julia Robinson
(VOCAL MUSIC '07)

Julia is an HSPVA alumna and a jazz singer who performs around Houston with her band, Julia & The Standards. She has supported HSPVA Friends for more than a decade. She chaired the 2017 Encore Luncheon and, for the past two years, has sponsored a stage at MusicFest.

"HSPVA was my saving grace," Julia said. "It gave me a family that never really graduates, a community of artists who continue to inspire, encourage, and celebrate one another through every season of life. That spirit of generosity is something I have carried with me throughout my life and career."

Julia serves on the board of DocFest and is active with Houston Shakespeare Festival. She and her husband, Will, are also supporters of the Orange Show Center for Visionary Art.



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