

Dear Friends,

We deeply appreciate your support and investment in OMA Center for Mind, Body and Spirit's youth and family program Art in the Garden. You are advancing the mission and work as we strive to address the impacts of adversity and trauma on health and learning through anti-racist, joy-centered programming in arts and ecology. Because of you, we raised \$13,012. Please check out [A Day at Art in the Garden](#), a reflective document through the words of the campers! And, please check out the [Newsletter](#) made by AITG Teen Leaders.

Highlights

- Summer 2021 Trauma-Informed Care Training, a program emphasizing anti-racism and restorative justice training.
- Art in the Garden served over 900 meals this spring and summer. Almost all of the meals we served were vegan, and all food scraps were composted.
- Enrollment for the 2021/2022 programming year has already more than doubled. This summer we were at-capacity with a waiting list.
- Over 64% of participating families identify as BIPOC.
- Over 63% of campers are living beneath the federal poverty level. Crowd sourcing made it possible for these campers to participate in AITG's joy-centered, anti-racist, LGBTQA+ welcoming programming which features some of the city's most talented teaching artists and ecologists, small student-teacher ratios, and free breakfast and lunch.
- AITG has over eight lasting partnerships with groups including Borland Garden, The Clay Project, Earthen Vessels, Pittsburgh Forest Garden, Reading is Fundamental, Sankofa Village for the Arts, SOAR Coaching Academy, and Youth Enrichment Services.
- AITG formed over six new partnerships with organizations including Allegheny County Conservation District, Casa San Jose: Latino Immigrant Resource Center, Grounded Strategies, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, and Rivers of Steel and The Mural Art Project, Eastminster Presbyterian Church, and The Kingsley Association.



"Art in the Garden helped me to feel much more confident in my approaches to conflict resolution/classroom management. I teach in a public school where the norm is to demand respect from students and yell/embarrass them for their actions. That form of discipline has never resonated with me, and seeing everyone at camp practice restorative and trauma informed care is validating to me that it works, and is the best way to care for our youth. I am part of a Positive Behavior Incentive Team at my school, and I hope to introduce the approach to more of my staff. Seeing a program run entirely on this method will serve as evidence for those who doubt the approach."

Art in the Garden Teacher and Trauma-Informed Training Attendee 2021

"Thank you for providing a much-needed, encouraging, positive, and creative space for our youth. After a year of quarantine and technology, this camp provided exactly what campers (and I) needed!"

AITG Parent

"AITG is one of the most inclusive, understanding, and woke groups I have ever had the opportunity to work with. They consider everyone in every situation and stride towards inclusivity and fairness."

AITG Teacher

- Campers created two graffiti style murals, five ceramic murals, and planted four trees.
- Four high school students participated in our Counselor Training Program. These students learned holistic skills that help support the healthy development of mind, body, and spirit; supported younger campers in identifying and expressing their emotions; reached out to community leaders to learn more about local regenerative practices that help mitigate, climate change, with special focus on stormwater mitigation, food desserts, and food waste; learned sound tree-planting techniques while planting spruce trees; harvested berries and made popsicles for young campers as a special treat; created a newsletter with a focus on addressing food waste; and were—by all accounts—phenomenal leaders and mentors for younger campers.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together toward a world in which all people can hold themselves and others in compassion.

**In gratitude,
Emily Carlson and the Art in the Garden Team**

“Both my kids warmed up and connected with the group amazingly fast, and I am 100% sure it is because of the trauma-informed, sensitive, respectful approach that all the adults at the program apply. The kids who had already been at camp before we arrived were all very friendly and kind, and I heard the campers benefit from gentle coaching about how to be welcoming and inclusive of new kids. Both kids came home shocked and happy to have been asked about their pronouns. As a family that doesn’t look like most of the children’s literature they are offered at school, I am so grateful that they could be themselves among people who honor their experiences, feelings, and family world.”

AITG Parent

“Hosting OMA’s Art in The Garden program at Kingsley was inspirational. During their stay at Kingsley Association we were able to witness amazing teacher student relationships speaking volumes to the training and care they put into their staff. This along with engaging programming that had many of our guests and members peeking in to view the day activities. We are looking forward to future partnerships with the OMA Center for Mind Body & Spirit in the fields of youth programming, community engagement, staff training, and local beautification projects.”

Alexander Payton of The Kingsley Association

