



2021

ANNUAL REPORT



BARRIO ALEGRÍA
WHERE CHANGE HAPPENS

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2021 ANNUAL REPORT

This annual document is a comprehensive report on Barrio Alegría's programming and events in 2021. The report was created for the Barrio Board of Directors and stakeholders. This year, we added visuals that speak more on the work being done.

The annual report is created by the Operations Director with input from the Executive Director and staff.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Transforming an empty lot into a thriving community space.

Empowering people to dream of their future in a post-pandemic world.

Remodeling buildings through photography and light.

Now, more than ever, creativity is transforming our community.

2021

FIGURES OF PROGRESS

71
—

Community Programs:

art events, celebrations, informational sessions, and timebank meetings. We continue to provide access to arts and community building.

50
—

Artists Engaged:

Providing paid opportunities and leadership development to artists in our community is one of our main focuses.

\$22,100
—

Loans Distributed:

We provided ten loans to five emerging businesses and five individuals working on credit improvement. We've given out \$23,600 so far.

2500
—

Timebank Hours Exchanged:

People have exchanged timebucks with each other for activities such as volunteering, companionship, and food deliveries.



Photo by
Joel Caraballo-Contrera

STORYTELLING THROUGH DANCE



...But We're Still Here!

2021 brought an end to the last six years of the fairytale theme in Storytelling Through Dance. The final presentation, *...But We're Still Here!*, was presented in front of the Reading Public Library on August 7th, 2021.

2022 brings a new opportunity to Storytelling Through Dance. 2022 will see a restructuring of the program as we build out the next five years of stories. We will be focusing on stage sets, costumes, lighting, and new choreographies. The theme will be superheroes.

Full Presentations:

August 7- Reading Public Library Steps

Partial Presentations:

N/A

Workshops:

Due to Covid, workshops were put on hold.

Other:

The Storytelling Through Dance Awards were held on December 11, 2021 at the Abraham Lincoln and the theme was fairytales. We brought together all the aspects of the previous four plays.

4

Plein Air

ALAS

2021 brought more opportunities for creative placemaking and paid artists opportunities with the expansion of our ALAS (Arts Located Around the Southside) Program. We held four plein airs at the Reading Iron Playground and four flashmobs and four alleyway concerts throughout the South of Penn.

4

Flashmobs

To participate in the program, artists were required to attend an hour-long training where they learned about our engagement policy and networked with fellow artists.

In December, Barrio held its annual Window Concert to bring some holiday cheer on North Fifth Street. This concert was streamed live on Facebook for those who could not attend.

4

Alleyway Concerts

December also marked another successful year of My Mother's Refrigerator (MMR). For this, Barrio partnered with the WCR Center for the Arts to hold this event that welcomes artists and vendors to sell their art free of charge at the WCR ballroom. A second MMR was held in July at the Sterling Mansion as part of a community open mic where local artists held a live painting session.

Next year, the Arts Coordinator will leverage the relationships that have been fostered to not only include neighbors in the creation of the events but in the implementation as well.

2

Ojos Receptions

New in 2021

This year we were able to hold a thank you event for all the artists we partnered with. At the event, we shared a first look at a video created by the ALAS intern as a compilation of all the ALAS events in 2021. We also got feedback from the artists on how to continue to improve Barrio programming.

Thanks to a grant by the Reading Musical Foundation, we were able to expand our alleyway concert series to Salita Concerts. In a similar vein as the NPR Tiny Desk series, we provide an intimate space for young adults to enjoy exceptional musicians. The event is also shared virtually through YouTube.

40

Artists Engaged

In 2022, we will be expanding our ALAS programming into the Oakbrook Homes. We look forward to working with the Oakbrook neighbors to co-create these events.

Photo by Lourdes Monzon



EXPLORATIONS IN THE ART FORMS

As part of our creative placekeeping mission, we continued to hold art events every Friday at the Reading Iron Playground. Events included painting, arts and crafts, coloring, slime making, and karaoke. All projects were adaptable to the age of the attendees. EAFs were brought indoors during the winter due to the weather.

We partnered with the South of Penn Taskforce to hold EAFs right before or during the SOP movie nights when they were held at the Reading Iron Playground. This partnership was very successful.

We also collaborated for the Summer Sizzle event. Held at the Iron Playground, it was a way to celebrate the end of the playground season and thank the neighbors for all their hard work throughout the year.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COHORT

Due to the uncertainty of the times, the Leadership Development Cohort has had to put several projects on hold. Regardless of the changes, the Cohort continued to meet (whether in-person or virtually) every other Saturday.

The 2021 cultural exchange trip, known as BAILE, was postponed. If possible, the cohort is looking to schedule a the 2022 trip in the Spring of 2022. The BAILE trips offer inspiration and networking opportunities that are two of the goals of the Cohort, so we hope to continue them into the new year.

FARO Grants

While the LDC didn't have as many projects to focus on this year, one project that took priority was the FARO community grants. In partnership with the Wyomissing Foundation, members of the LDC have been meeting to create the process for community groups and individuals doing community work to get grants. The applications opened in December and we look forward to a great pilot year.

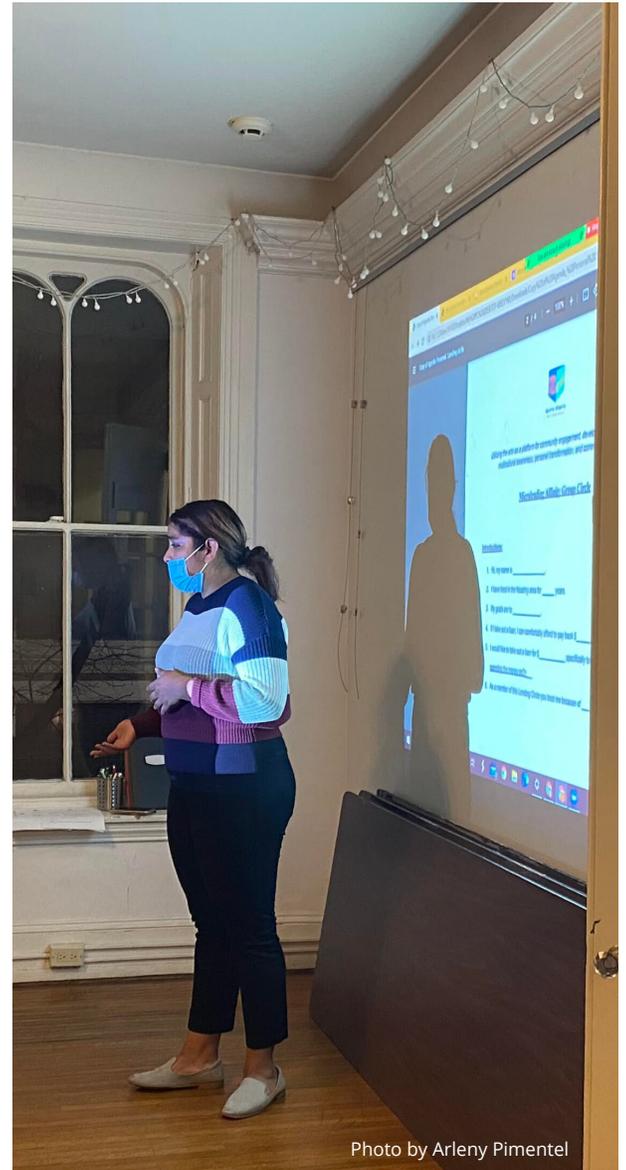


Photo by Arleny Pimentel

La Ronda del Barrio

Thanks to a grant from the Berks County Community Foundation, the Leadership Development Cohort was able to start working on the second season of the Barrio podcast.

We used all the knowledge from the pilot season and purchased new equipment that has allowed the recording of the podcast to be a much better experience. We continue to focus on local issues affecting the residents of the City of Reading.

TIMEBANK

We continue to use the Good Neighbors Timebank in the work that we are doing through out the community. The partnership is made possible by a grant from the United Way of Berks County.

This year, we have focused on increasing the hours exchanged and increasing the number of timebank members.

As a result of our increased social media engagement, neighbors created a Facebook group to share stories and spread the word about opportunities for volunteerism. In a small community like ours where trust is built people-to-people, empowered neighbors have been vital to building the timebank community.

Through a grant from the Berks County Community Foundation, Barrio was able to host events that use time bucks. We organized a visit to the planetarium, where individuals paid with earned time bucks. Members were also able to roller skate at the 3rd and Spruce Recreation Center. Community members requested these events to come back and we are scheduling them for next year!

COMING UP

We are currently looking at ways to partner up with other local organizations to bring more opportunities to the Timebank such as meals with Café Esperanza, museum passes with the Reading Museum and the Reading Science Center, and more. We look forward to providing more opportunities for members to be recognized for the community work that they are doing.



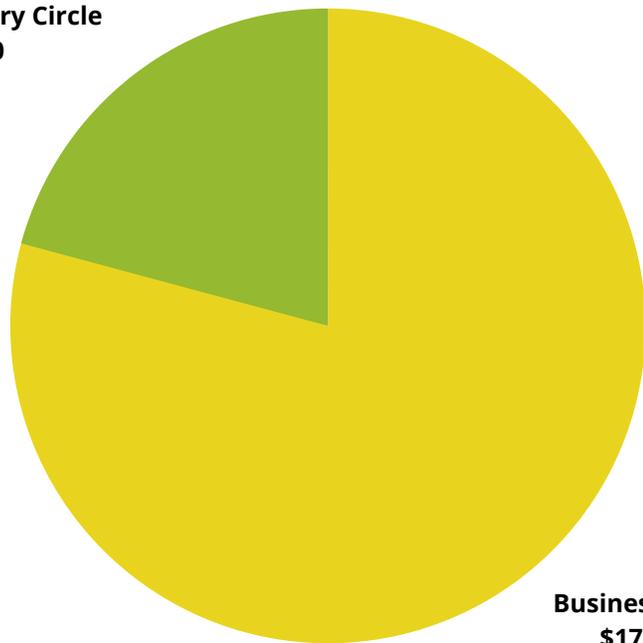
Photo by Community Member

Microlending

The Microlending program is designed to leverage the power of social capital to increase access to financial services. During Phase I of this program, Barrio conducted an exploratory study to outline entrepreneurial challenges for micro-entrepreneurs and assess the feasibility of launching a lending circle program in Reading. Based on the results, we launched two pilot lending circles in partnership with the Riverfront Federal Credit Union capitalized by \$25,000 in seed funding. One circle is for micro-entrepreneurs, while the other assists participants with personal credit repair.

Total Borrowed

Credit Recovery Circle
\$4,600



Business Circle
\$17,500

2022

During 2022, we are looking forward to integrating our creative place-keeping strategies into the program, providing additional business support services, and developing additional lending circles.





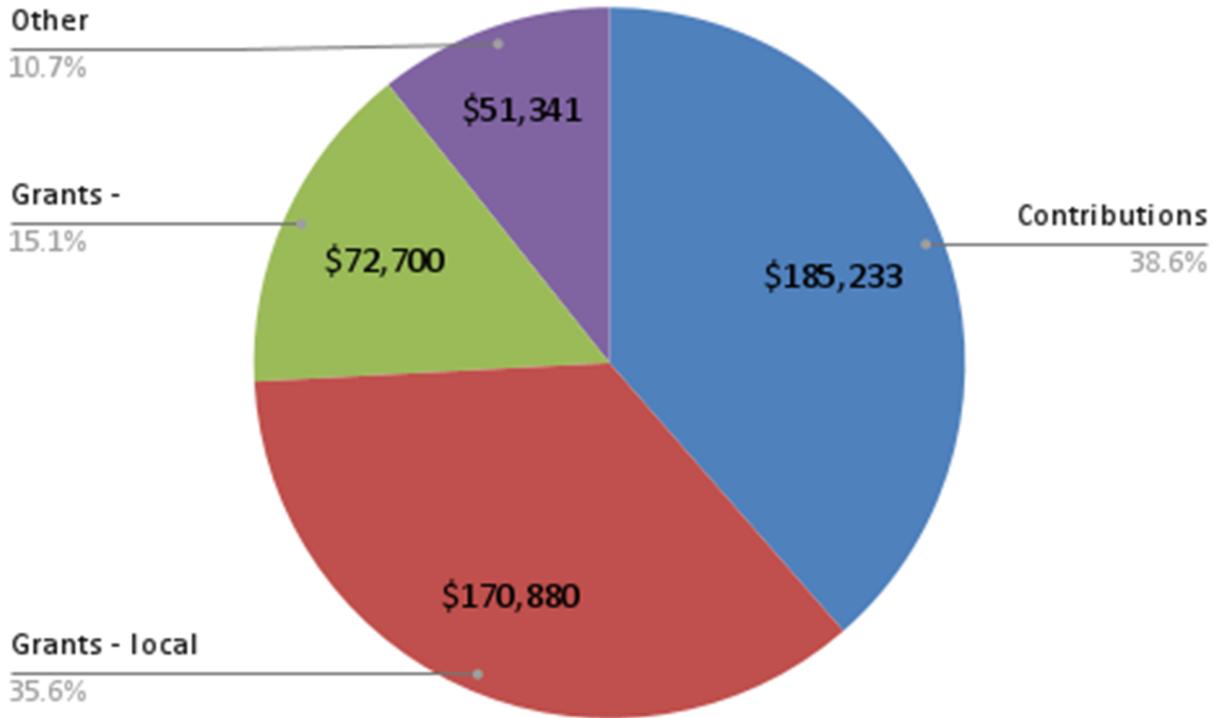
Photo by Joel Caraballo-Contrera

BARRIO ALEGRÍA DANCE COMPANY

Due to Covid, the Barrio Alegría Dance Company was on hold for another year. Group Uarhani, the children's folkloric dance troupe, continued to meet. Unfortunately, due to Covid and our lack of space, Grupo Uarhani had started practicing outdoors in parks. This brought its own problems with the weather. We need to start looking at how we can get a space for the group to practice in a controlled environment.

Development

2021 REVENUE



FUNDRAISING

Our annual fundraiser, Barrio Lights, was held October 13 at the rooftop of the Abraham Lincoln. Due to Covid concerns, the event was held outdoors and with a limited quantity of tickets sold. Grupo Uarhani performed for those in attendance.

Barrio Candles was canceled for the 2021 year but we look forward to bringing it back for 2022.

PARTNERSHIPS

We know we can't do this work alone, and because of that, we want to thank the following organizations and groups for working with us this year:

- Albright College
- Alvernia University
- BTI
- Family Dollar
- Oakbrook Collective Impact Council
- Penn Street Market
- Reading Area Community College
- Reading Public Library
- Reading Recreation Commission
- Riverfront Federal Credit Union
- South of Penn Taskforce
- The Wyomissing Foundation

MEASURING PROGRESS

The concept of Barrio Alegría is inspired by the poem "Calle Melancolia" by Joaquin Sabina, who muses over the ever-elusive 'neighborhood of happiness', the gap between what is and what can be. At Barrio we believe that creative, collective experimentation helps society break through the malaise of the status quo by changing the energetic flow in a community, and opening up portals into new possibility frontiers. Barrio dances on this ever-expanding frontier, inviting more people to it, in order to create a new one.

But how can we tangibly measure our impact and effectively communicate the efficacy of our programming? We began the comprehensive deployment of the Most Significant Change (MSC) process, an approach designed for situations when outcomes are uncertain, may vary widely across beneficiaries, and where programmatic interventions are highly participatory. A storytelling evaluation process for a storytelling organization!

We joined forces with Collective Justice to add a level of methodological rigor and be guided through the multi-year process. Our initial training for Board and staff went well and have begun to weave the qualitative impact assessment into our operations. We look forward to taking our mission of storytelling to another level by using this technique, with an eye towards being able to more effectively substantiate our impact, whether we are talking about our embedded leadership development, timebanking, microfinance, or community art programming.



VALUES IN ACTION

Barrio is constantly reimagining itself and its programs, seeking ways to put our values into action. As our 2022 strategic planning process ramps up, we will continue to assess our alignment with our guiding values.

GUIDING VALUES

1. COMMUNITY

What happens to one of us, happens to all of us. Nobody is disposable. At Barrio we are co-weaving a dynamic community tapestry where all of us get to show up as our full selves. When one of our neighbors was threatened following a community event, instead of bringing in the police or being intimidated, the community appealed to Barrio to help resolve the conflict. The result was a series of workshops that brought together neighbors on both sides of the conflict. Art has a magical way to transform!

2. EQUITY AND JUSTICE

We believe that people need to take care of our community and that starts with our staff. During 2021 we lost several wonderful team members because their part-time compensation did not sufficiently support their families. As part of our continued work towards social justice, Barrio now pays a minimum of \$15 per hour for all staff. We encourage other organizations to consider the same.

3. TRUST

At Barrio, we do our best to speak openly and honestly, make reasonable commitments, and make good on what we say. When several of our "committed" funding streams were postponed due to funder uncertainty around the pandemic, we refused to leave our community high and dry. The Barrio Board insisted that we move forward with the programming anyway, even though we didn't receive funding, because the community was already expecting the services. At Barrio, we keep our promises.

Staff & Team Members



DANIEL
Egusquiza



ARLENY
Pimentel



KYLIE
Johnston



VALOIS
Joubert



JOSE
Garcia



FABIOLA
Flores-Queriapa



YURIZKIRI
Sixtos Medina



YURILEIDY
Lopez-Gonzalez



LOURDES
Monzon



ADIANNE
Sebastian Bueno



TONY
Veloz

Acknowledgements

Barrio also wants to acknowledge the contributions of the people who worked tirelessly on the many projects mentioned:

The residents and neighbors of Reading, PA.

The local artists who work with us every year.

Our wonderful 2021 Board:

- Anthony Orozco
- Antolina Novas
- Arleny Pimentel
- Brian Kelly
- Daniel Egusquiza
- Donald Smith
- Isamar Bueno
- Nora Elmarzouky
- Twila Fisher



Photo by Ashley Dejesus

We thank you for your continued support in our programs.

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Reading, PA 19601
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www.barrioalegria.com
info@barrioalegria.org

Development

GRANTS

Due to the tireless work of our Executive Director and Board Treasurer, we received a record number of grants. See a list of all the grants Barrio received in 2021 below.

Wyomissing Foundation- \$18,000 (ALAS)
 Wyomissing Foundation- \$60,480 (Capacity)
 Reading Musical Foundation - \$3,000 (alleyway concerts)
 Reading Musical Foundation- \$800 (SOP Taskforce concerts)
 Wyomissing Foundation- \$5,800 (SOP Taskforce Cleanups)
 United Way Live United (Timebank) - \$20,000
 BCCF: We Are Here (TB Activities) - \$8,800
 BCCF: Youth and Philanthropy Fund (Podcast) - \$2,500
 Walton Family Foundation- \$47,000 (Storytelling)
 PCA: Intermediate Level- \$12,500 (STTD)

CONTRACTS

2021 saw our partnership with Alvernia University and the Reading School District continue into the Summer.

Our Executive Director was also contracted to research and write profiles of organizations throughout the nation doing creative placemaking. You can find the profiles on the Center for Community Progress's website under Creative Placemaking Projects.

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