

2020-21



# Annual Report

CENTER FOR INSPIRED TEACHING

*Intellect  
Inquiry  
Imagination  
Integrity*

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# Letter from the President and Founder, Aleta Margolis

Since 1995 Center for Inspired Teaching has worked alongside teachers to make school a place where everyone can thrive. For decades we did this in person, and year after year we witnessed teachers stretching and growing in incredible ways that translated into tremendous learning experiences for their students.

While we continually adapted our own work over these many years to meet the ever-evolving needs of learners in an ever-evolving world, we, like the teachers we serve, witnessed a sea change in 2020-2021. In the face of daily uncertainty, we had to transform the way we ran our professional learning and at the same time hold ourselves to high expectations to maintain the key facets of our work that make it effective. Guided by Intellect, Inquiry, Imagination, and Integrity we reinvented our work in new and exciting ways. In the following pages, you will see evidence of these changes and of the learning journey we continue to navigate across a landscape forever changed by COVID.

Our goal, over these many months, has been to remain a constant and affirming presence for teachers so they know they are not traveling the unknown alone. Inspired Teaching has been so fortunate to receive this same message from our supporters. You make this work possible, and for this we are grateful.



Aleta Margolis



Teachers gathered at the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens in June of 2021 for one of our COVID-safe outdoor professional learning events.

# Inspired Teaching Institutes

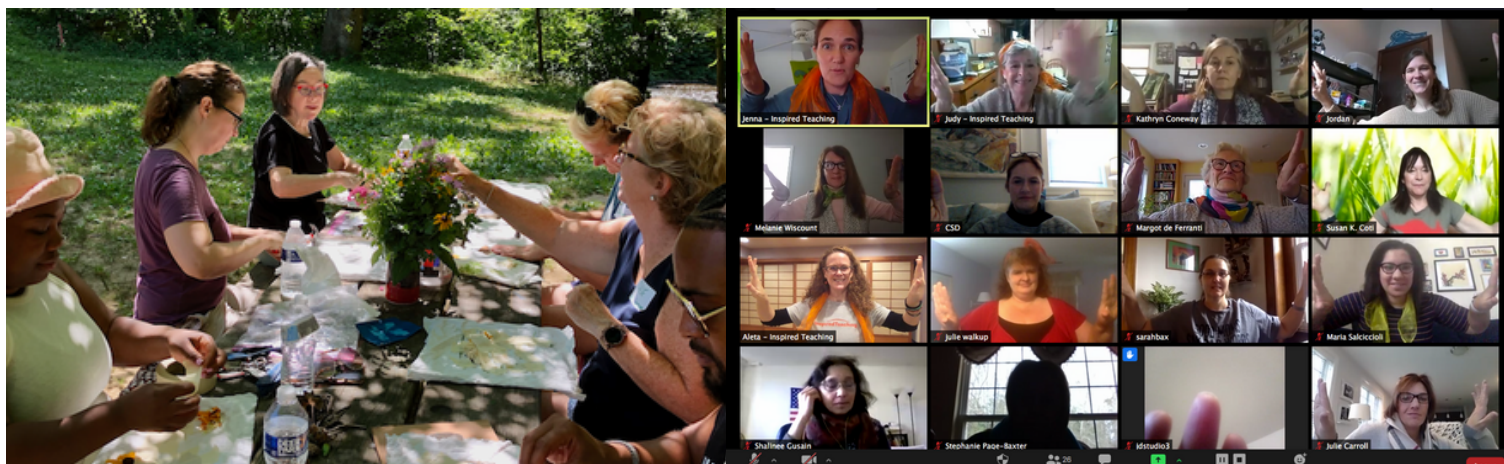
## 11 Institutes

### More than 40 tools and resources shared

In the 2020-21 school year, Inspired Teaching convened monthly virtual Institutes, offering professional development for teachers that also provided an opportunity to connect with peers in the Washington, DC area, across the US and even around the globe. These Institutes provided teachers with concrete activities and tools to use in the classroom, energizing opportunities to be creative and use their imaginations, and venues for collaborative problem-solving.

In summer 2021, Inspired Teaching expanded its offerings to include in-person Institutes. These sessions were held outdoors in inspiring locations throughout the DC metropolitan area.

### 100% of participants rated our Institutes as useful and engaging.



#### Teacher comments on Institute surveys included:

*“I was reminded to look for ways to take something ordinary and make it extraordinary.”*

*“Your approach and attitude always reminds me of the kind of teacher  
I am trying to be for my students.”*

*“This inspires me to work from a focus on creating joy.”*

*“You practice what you preach. By giving the participants choice, you empower us. This is a shining example of what we could be doing if we keep practicing”*

In 2022 Hooray for Monday received a Webby/Anthem award for the work that was started in the 2020-2021 school year.

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# HOORAY FOR MONDAY

InspiredTeaching

Starting in the 2020-2021 school year, Inspired Teaching launched **Hooray For Monday**, a collection of resources we share at the start of every week. These resources feature questions, ideas, reflections, and actions we can all take to remodel the school experience for students. Hooray for Monday challenges teachers to hone their skills as Instigators of Thought®, includes classroom activities from our #Inspired2Learn collection, and provides links to research, tools, and opportunities.

- From August 2020 to June 2021 (the full academic school year), 45 issues of Hooray for Monday were published.
- We reached 1,300 school leaders and teachers each week.
- Every issue included tools from the Inspired Teaching library—more than 100 unique resources were shared during this school year.

## Popular posts from 2020-21 included:

**Trust Teachers 11/9/20:** "How can we expect kids to take school seriously when we're in the midst of one of the most important events in our lifetimes and we fail to address it in school?"

**Recommendations to the Biden/Harris Administration 1/25/21:** "We know that most changes in education must happen at the local level, but it has been a long time since we've seen the work we do as educators championed and recognized at the federal level."

**"I look to you for mentorship and inspiration always. Your work inspires me and our whole team."**

- DCPS principal in response to an issue of Hooray for Monday

# Speak Truth

**Speak Truth**, a series of student-facilitated discussions on timely topics, is one of Inspired Teaching's flagship programs. It provides a model for schools of what is possible when student voices are at the core of learning. We transitioned the sessions to a fully virtual format for the duration of the 2020-21 school year, and increased the number of sessions so that students met bimonthly instead of monthly.

Students and Inspired Teaching staff focused on the positive aspect of this transition - namely, the fact that the virtual format and more frequent meetings allowed Inspired Teaching to bring the Speak Truth experience to more students than in prior years.

In 2020-21, students led their peers in discussions on such important topics as mental health, cancel culture, cultural appropriation, and consent.

Between September 3, 2020, and June 17, 2021, Speak Truth sessions reached 263 students. Students were asked to complete surveys after each session, and through these surveys, we learned that:

- 87% of participants said Speak Truth exposed them to new ideas and perspectives;
- **81% of participants said that Speak Truth was more meaningful than their experience at school that week;** and
- 91% of participants rated the session they participated in as excellent or very good.



**“Speak Truth discussions are all about becoming a better person. You learn how to collect and analyze a variety of opinions from a variety of backgrounds and sources. And these skills can teach you how to be a better community member.”**

- Adena, 12th Grade Speak Truth Student Participant

# Real World History

**Real World History** is Inspired Teaching's credit-bearing history course that is open to all public, charter, and independent school students in Washington DC. The course spans a full year; in the first semester, students learn the skills required of historians, and in the second semester, they apply those skills in an 80 to 100-hour internship at a historic site or museum in Washington, DC. The course and internships were entirely virtual in 2020-21. Students interned at the Library of Congress, the DC History Center, the National Museum of the American Indian, and other DC historical societies and museums.

Despite the challenges of virtual instruction, Real World History students overwhelmingly reported that they felt their teacher wanted them to share their thoughts, they felt their teacher cared about them, and they felt their ideas and opinions were respected.

Each student in the class participated in DC History Day, and the students performed exceptionally well. Several students earned awards for their submissions:

- Lakecia Richardson: 3rd place individual documentary
- Aimee Crozat: 3rd place research paper
- Ally Bleimehl: 2nd place individual exhibit
- Mikalei Miller: 1st place individual exhibit
- Juliette Warga/Vivian Claire: 1st place group website
- Luca Camponovo: 1st place individual documentary

All first and second place winners moved on to the National History Day contest.

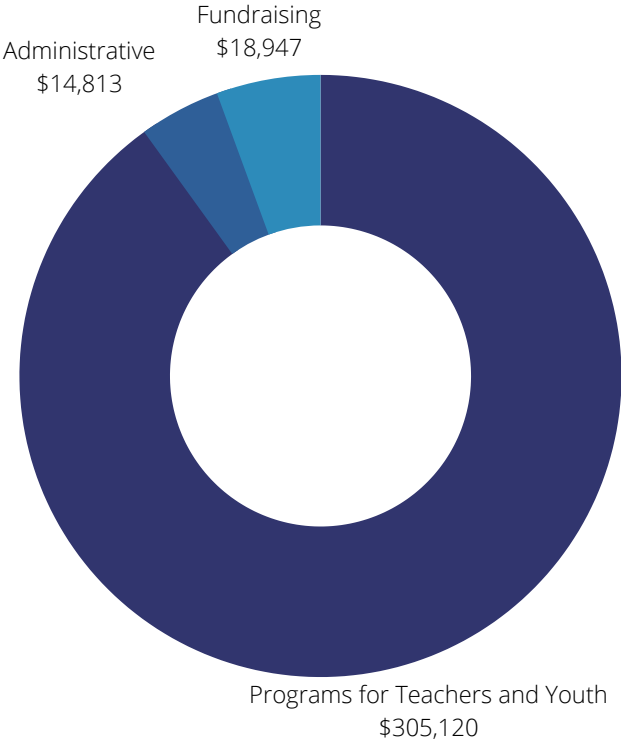
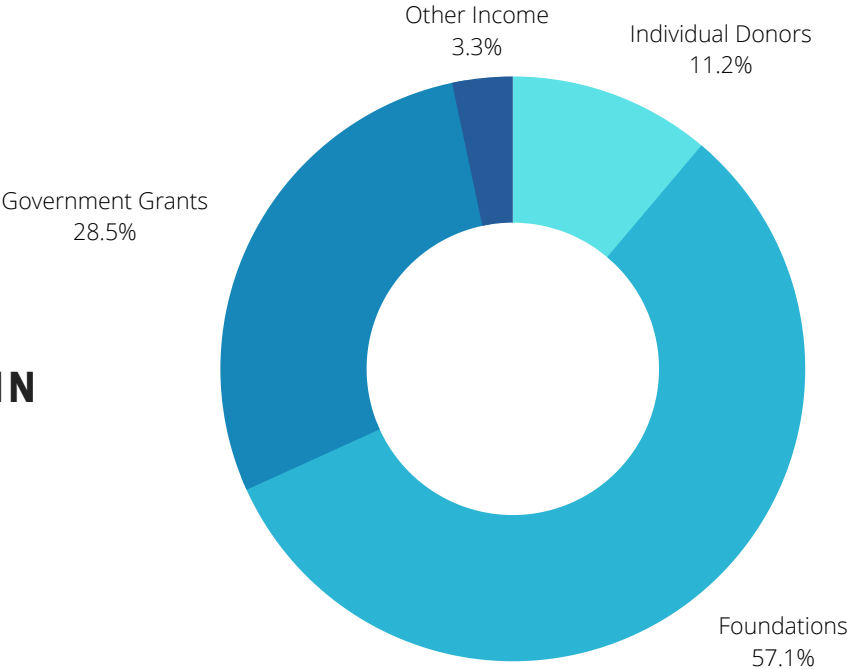
*Pictured right, Mikalei Miller poses next to a label she created for one of Jacob Lawrence's paintings on display at a special Philips Collection exhibit. She and her peers also recorded interviews with local citizens who were part of the Great Migration. Those recordings were added to a growing collection housed on the DC Public Library website called [Center for Inspired Teaching 'Real World History' Oral History Project](#).*



# Finances

## \$341,011

SUPPORT AND REVENUE IN THE 20-21 FISCAL YEAR



## \$338,880

EXPENDITURES IN FY 2020-21

# Donors

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