



**projectSTEP**

**30 YEARS.  
NO LIMITS.**

***FISCAL YEAR 2015 ANNUAL REPORT***

# DEAR FRIENDS,

We rejoiced many times during our 2014-2015 year with the 44 musically gifted children who have dedicated themselves to a life-enriching journey at Project STEP. Our collective pride grew out of their determination and hard work, extraordinary family support, and generous contributions of staff, teachers, partners, and donors. This truly has been a momentous year for Project STEP. From our selection as one of twelve programs across the country to receive a 2014 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award (NAHYP), to our participation in Governor Charlie Baker's private inauguration dinner, it has been a year of firsts. Most recently, we were featured on the national PBS news show *The NewsHour*, which connected us with people from all across the world.

These experiences represent a historic highpoint for our organization. We have completed the 3rd year of our 5-year strategic plan and reached financial milestones that enable us to expand the number of students we are serving. Receiving new and multi-year foundation support allowed us to build the infrastructure and governance practices necessary to remain a vibrant, financially secure, and well-managed organization. Exposure to world-class musicians through masterclasses, music camps, performances, and shared space with the Boston Symphony Orchestra provides our students with first-hand examples of who and what they can aspire to be. In 2014-15 we were grateful to receive special attention from valued friends such as cellist Johannes Moser and Project STEP alumni including Tony Rymer, Lev Mamuya, Isabel Espinosa, and Monique Smith. The Triple Helix residency deepened our chamber music program.

We present this year's annual report to highlight just how important your interest and support is to us. Our community has brought Project STEP so very far in the past 33 years, and we are proud to share our accomplishments with you. We hope you will be able to join us at events throughout the next year, where you will witness the ways in which music changes our students' lives — and they, in turn, change ours.

Sincerely,



**Mary S. Jaffee**  
Executive Director



**Dianne Luby**  
President, Board of Directors





A young girl with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a white headband with a plaid pattern and pink-rimmed glasses, is focused on playing a violin. She is wearing a red, textured top with a lace-like collar. The violin is a light brown color, and the bow is dark wood. The background is a plain, light color.

## OUR MISSION

Project STEP recognizes that certain racial and ethnic minorities are vastly underrepresented in classical music. Our mission is to address this imbalance by identifying musically talented children from underrepresented Boston communities and providing these children with comprehensive music and string instrument instruction. We set the highest standards for our students, provide mentoring and performance opportunities, and create a network of support for our students, their families, and their communities.

### Core Values

- (1) We believe that the classical music profession should reflect racial and ethnic diversity.
- (2) We believe that children, if identified at an early age and immersed in long-term, rigorous music instruction, can flourish as professional classical musicians and as individuals, regardless of their ultimate career choice.
- (3) We believe that our students can reach their full potential when held to high standards and provided with the support and active engagement of teachers, mentors, family members, and alumni.
- (4) We believe that music can change lives and that the disciplined study of classical music enhances educational opportunities and opens doors for our students and their communities.



A photograph of a young man with dark hair and a grey sweater leaning over a young boy with curly hair who is playing a violin. The boy is wearing a white shirt with small stars and a grey vest. They are in a room with blue chairs and a black case in the background.

## PROGRAMS

***Above** - Project STEP alum and current student in the Harvard /New England Conservatory joint degree program, Lev returns to STEP to help mentor current students. **Mentoring is built into the Project STEP curriculum** as a means to achieve success through positive role models.*

Project STEP provides a continuum of music instruction that begins when we enroll 50-100 five-year-olds from the Boston Public School system in our **FOCUS Program**, and continues through Grade 12. FOCUS introduces kindergartners from underrepresented ethnicities to the study of music at an early age, generating enthusiasm and providing a bridge to further study at Boston-area music schools. It is also a gateway to the next level of Project STEP.

Each year, about four students from FOCUS are selected to continue their musical studies in **Project STEP's core program** (grades 1-12). Each student receives weekly private lessons, theory and/or solfège classes, chamber music, orchestra, summer music camp support, and instruments. In addition, they receive enrichment opportunities including masterclasses and residencies with renowned chamber ensembles, and tickets to dozens of concerts each year. Project STEP is a model for creative youth development. In the course of studying music, young people develop social, creative, problem solving, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. These skills are widely transferrable and enable youth to reach their full potential as musicians, students, and productive members of society.



# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

By building extensive student and family support systems into the program itself, Project STEP is able to hold students to - and help them reach - high standards of achievement. Incoming families are paired with “buddy” families, which allows older children to mentor incoming children and experienced parents to provide guidance for new parents. Families spend hours together each Saturday in a lounge at Symphony Hall while their children are in class, and all parents are part of the Parents’ Council which meets monthly for ‘parent pulse checks’ and workshops on practical issues related to their children’s music education. That Council elects two representatives to the Board of Directors who serve as full voting members and help shape organizational policies. These parent representatives facilitate communication between parents and staff. At the end of each year, Project STEP hosts a Spring Recital with a fundraising component planned and executed by the Parents’ Council. STEP’s depth of support for parents and families creates an atmosphere of encouragement, ownership, and responsibility. Parents are crucial to our students’ success, and their active involvement is one of STEP’s greatest strengths.

*“Project STEP gave us something important and rewarding to do. We stuck with it and now my family is part of the lives of other families. Project STEP anchors our lives at home...(and) has been one of the MOST educative experiences in my children’s lives and mine.” - STEP Parent*







## 2015 SNAPSHOT

**The 2014/2015 year was filled with events, concerts, and collaborations:**

- Three masterclasses with world-class performers
- Nine workshops with the Triple Helix Piano Trio
- National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award
- December 8th NAHYP Celebration
- Boston Chamber Music Society Workshop
- Opus Affair March Charity Winner
- FOCUS Recital
- Annual Spring Recital & Parents' Benefit
- Senior Recital
- Over 80 hours of community service performed by our students

**PERFORMANCES AT:** Massachusetts General Hospital Diversity in Neurology luncheon, Classical Cartoon Festival, Horizons for Homeless Children Benefit, Concord Chamber Music Society, Newbury Court, Boston Children's Museum, Violence Transformed Fundraiser, Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble concert

### HIGHLIGHTS:

**TRIPLE HELIX BENEFIT CONCERT-** Project STEP and the Triple Helix Piano Trio presented their first joint benefit concert to celebrate the life and legacy of Judith Sandler, a long-time friend of the Piano Trio.

**GOVERNOR BAKER INAUGURATION** - A group of Project STEP students performed for Governor and Mrs. Baker at the private dinner held inauguration night.

**MLK DAY** – The Project STEP community celebrated the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. This event included musical performances and a panel discussion about the role of race in classical music.

**FRIENDRAISER**– This fundraising event was an exciting opportunity for us to spend an evening with new friends, welcome back long-time supporters, and share a short performance from STEP students.

**TUFTS UNIVERSITY COMPOSITION COLLABORATION**– Tufts music composition students worked with STEP students for months, culminating in musical Haikus being composed and performed.

**SONATION/APPLE EVENT** – STEP student Njioma Grevious demonstrated new Sonation's music app, Cadenza, which revolutionizes the practicing experience.



A photograph of three people standing in front of a yellow patterned curtain and an American flag. On the left is Michelle Obama, smiling, wearing a black sleeveless top. In the center is a young boy, Ajani Boyd, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red and white plaid tie. On the right is Mary Jaffee, smiling, wearing a black blazer and a colorful patterned scarf. The background features a yellow curtain with a subtle pattern and a portion of the American flag.

## *GUESS WHO WENT TO THE WHITE HOUSE?*

On June 28, 2014, Project STEP was notified that it had won a National Arts and Humanities Youth Program award. First Lady Michelle Obama presented that award to Project STEP student Ajani Boyd and Executive Director Mary Jaffee at the White House on November 10, 2014. As the signature program of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, this is the nation's highest honor for out-of-school arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of America's young people.

Twelve organizations were selected from a pool of 361. It changed the life of this program, and we took several steps to leverage the prestige of this award in order to best support Project STEP in the future. Most notably, we invested in hiring a public relations firm which resulted in a surge of media placements featuring STEP and our students. To date, these media placements number in the 80s. We are proud that every STEP student was featured in an article in his/her local neighborhood newspaper highlighting the award and that student's participation in Project STEP.

*Visit our website to see our media publications for this prestigious award.*





## IMPACT

A 2014 study by the Center for Collaborative Education and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform documented the persistent achievement gap facing Boston's Black and Latino students that inhibits their opportunities for learning and growth. The 4-year graduation rates for the Boston Public Schools' Black and Latino students in 2015 were 70% and 64%, respectively. In contrast, 100% of Project STEP's graduates go on to college or conservatory after graduating from high school, and excel in music studies, competitions, and academics along the way. Within the context of racially-charged conflicts coming to wider attention, it is clear that minority youth continue to face challenges that can severely limit their potential. Project STEP offers a different path for our Black and Latino students by cultivating their talents, maintaining high expectations, and providing them with the support they need to succeed.

*"Project STEP helps you in school.  
It improves how you think."* —STEP Student

**Above** - Tayja is an accomplished and dedicated cellist. As a student composer Tayja's works have been performed at the Apple Hill Music Center, among other places.



# MEET OUR STUDENTS





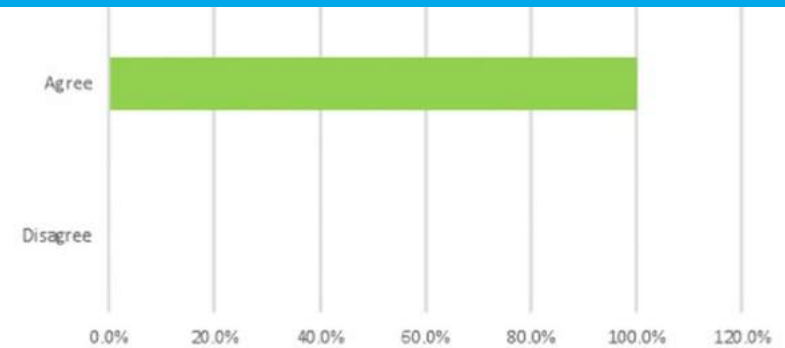
# EVALUATION

This year, Project STEP hired independent consultant Keuna Cho to develop and implement a thorough evaluation system of the STEP program. Ms. Cho is a uniquely qualified bilingual professional in the field. She has masters degrees in violin performance and education, with a concentration in evaluating the impact of the arts on education.

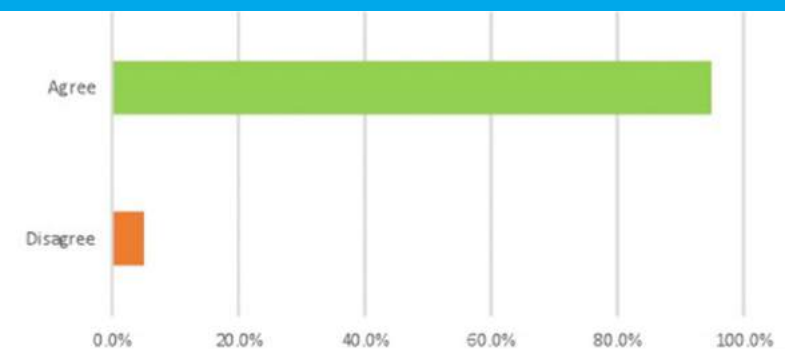
Ms. Cho interviewed program faculty, staff, students, and parents to understand our collective vision of success, then designed and implemented an evaluation system which assesses our progress toward this vision. Using three tools, 1) a rubric for formal observation of lessons and classes; 2) a student survey; and 3) a parent survey, she examined many indicators of the quality of learning, the level of student engagement, the level of parent/family engagement, and community/program culture.

The results are extremely positive. Students are highly engaged and intrinsically motivated, feel passionate about music, treasure their relationships with teachers and peers, appreciate the abundance of excellent role models, and credit Project STEP for the tremendous confidence they have gained over the years. Parents care deeply about their children's development as musicians and beyond, and spend a considerable amount of time directly involved in their musical and other activities. The distinguished faculty utilize an extensive pedagogical toolkit to engage students and promote learning, providing them the necessary tools to build on their current skills. Parents and students feel a strong sense of community and a positive culture of excellence and high expectations. Not only are these results encouraging in themselves, but they help to explain why our young musicians play as beautifully as they do.

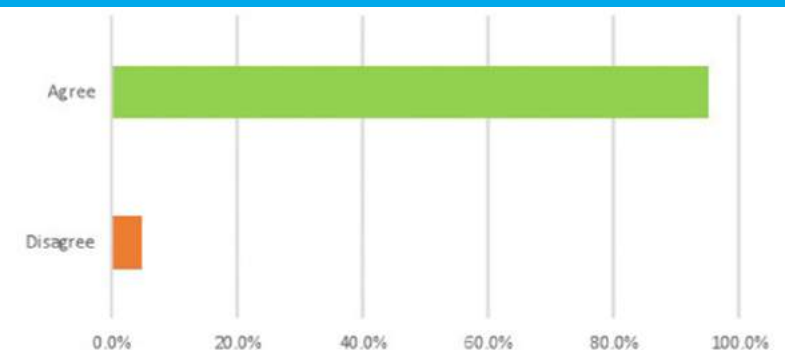
*"After all of my hard work, I feel proud of my accomplishments"*  
- Student evaluation survey question



*"I have gotten emotional or moral support from other families in Project STEP"* - Parent evaluation survey question



*"I feel like my teachers have high expectations for me"* - Student evaluation survey question







Project STEP is pleased to bestow the 2016 **Eleanor L. Campbell Scholarship** to Tristan (above) and the **Arthur Kravitz Scholarship** to Taylor (below).

## SCHOLARS



In 2007, Barbara N. Kravitz established a scholarship for one advanced STEP student to be selected each year in memory of her husband, Dr. Arthur Kravitz. As Past President of the Board, he loved classical music and believed strongly in the mission of Project STEP.

In the same year, Judge Levin H. Campbell established a scholarship fund in honor of his wife, Eleanor L. Campbell, a long-time Project STEP supporter.

Scholars are chosen on the basis of merit, dedication, and community involvement.



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Violinist Mariana Hill, class of '97, was the first graduate of Project STEP to be appointed to a leadership position in the program. Currently the Artistic at STEP, Mrs. Hill teaches, coaches, and advises students and parents.

Mrs. Hill has been a featured guest soloist with the New Jersey, Memphis, Detroit, and Boston Symphony Orchestras and The Boston Pops. She has also performed with Yo-Yo Ma, Pamela Frank, Lynn Chang, and Marcus Thompson. Mrs. Hill is one of the concertmasters of Soulful Symphony, and their performance of "Song in a Strange Land" earned an Emmy. Mrs. Hill performed at a benefit concert for President Barack Obama as one of the violinists of the MarNi Duo. She has recorded with gospel artists Donnie McClurkin and Richard Smallwood and also performed with the "Gorillaz," Joss Stone, and Alicia Keys. In addition to Project STEP, she currently teaches at the Boston Arts Academy, the New England Conservatory Prep Division, and privately.



A young girl with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a white lace-trimmed dress, is playing the violin. She is looking intently at her instrument. In the background, other students are visible, also playing violins, and there are music stands with sheet music. The setting appears to be a rehearsal space or a concert hall with wood-paneled walls.

## SUMMER CAMPS

Music camps are often some of the most productive and influential experiences for our students. In gorgeous country settings, students have many hours each day to play chamber and orchestra music with students from all over the world. Away from academic and other obligations that compete with music, they enjoy relaxed but determined goal-oriented music making in combination with fun and healthy outdoor experiences. Their identities as music students are heightened by being surrounded with campers who share and celebrate their passion. The combination of intensity, beauty, structure, physical freedom, and bonds formed among campers and members of the faculty contribute to life-long memories. Our students attend camps that include Boston University Tanglewood Institute (“BUTI”), Sphinx Performance Academy (at Oberlin Conservatory and in Chicago), Apple Hill, Encore/Coda, Point CounterPoint, Four Strings Academy, Music on the Hill, Rivers, and Festival Youth Orchestra (at NEC).

This incredible opportunity is given to every Project STEP student for two to six weeks each summer. To do it we combine special support from Susan Rothenberg and the Janey Fund, Winsor Music, scholarships from the camps themselves, and additional funds from Project STEP.



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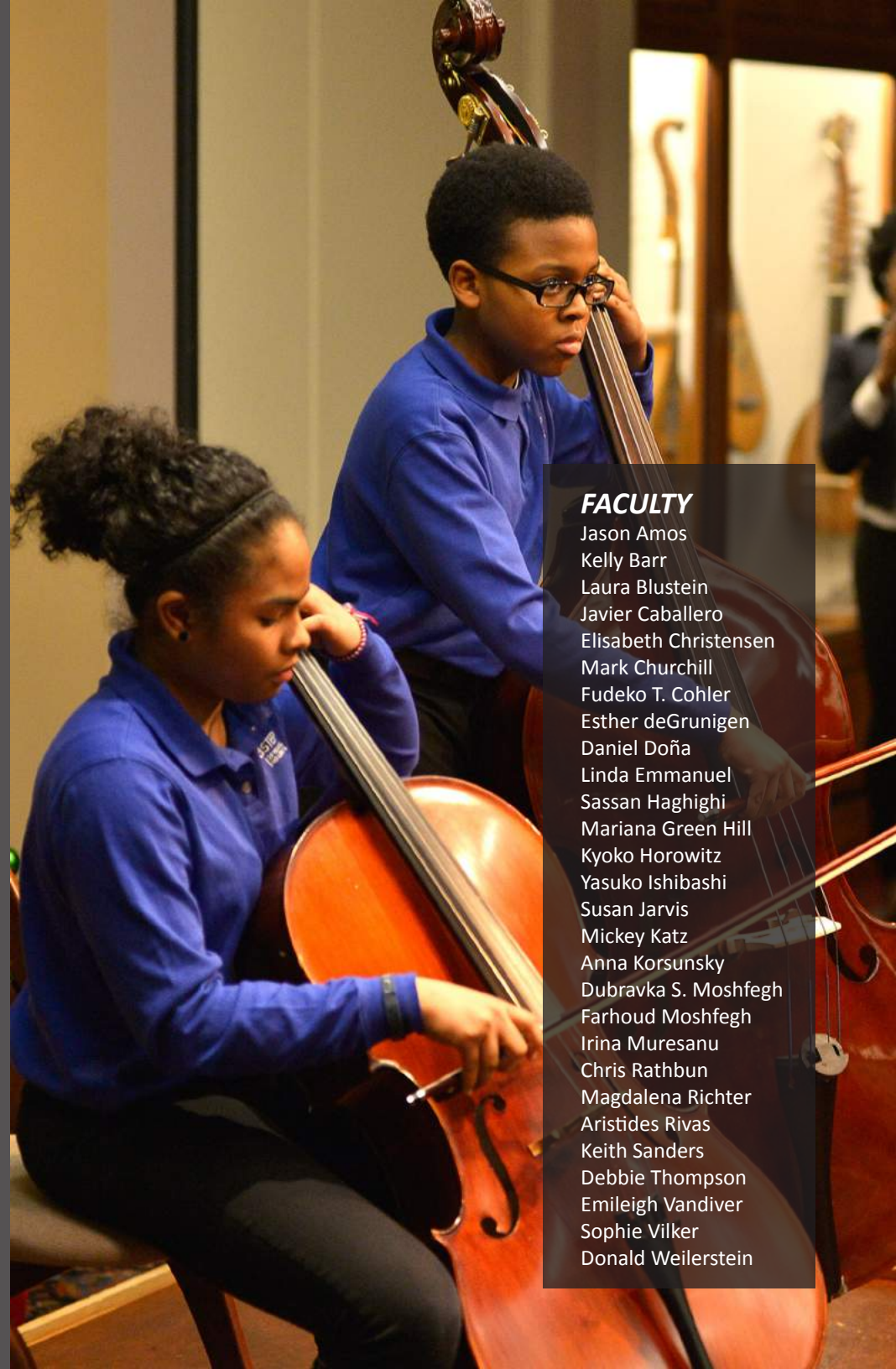
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William "Mo" Cowan  
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New England Conservatory  
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Inly School  
Johnson String Instrument  
Liberty Mutual Foundation  
New England Conservatory of Music  
Partners Health Care  
Schneider Electric North America Fnd.  
South End Community Health Center  
Teak Media + Communications  
Triple Helix Piano Trio  
Winsor Music



## **FOUNDATION & GOVERNMENT SUPPORT**

Barr-Klarman Arts Capacity Building Initiative  
Bloomberg Philanthropies  
Boston Cultural Council  
Cabot Family Charitable Trust  
Charles and Sara Goldberg Charitable Trust  
Charles H. Bond Trust  
Corkin Charitable Foundation  
Kanter Kallman Foundation, Inc.

Klarman Family Foundation  
Lincoln and Therese Filene Foundation, Inc.  
Linde Family Foundation  
Massachusetts Cultural Council  
Mu Phi Epsilon Foundation  
National Endowment for the Arts  
Savage Family Foundation  
Shames Family Foundation  
The Janey Fund  
Yawkey Foundation



# FINANCIALS

## Sources of Income

Support from Individuals	\$ 216,608
Support from Foundation & Government grants	\$ 345,916
Investment income	\$ 61,511
Donated space, instruments, services	\$ 45,090
Fees & honoraria	\$ 14,807
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 683,932</b>

## Use of Funds

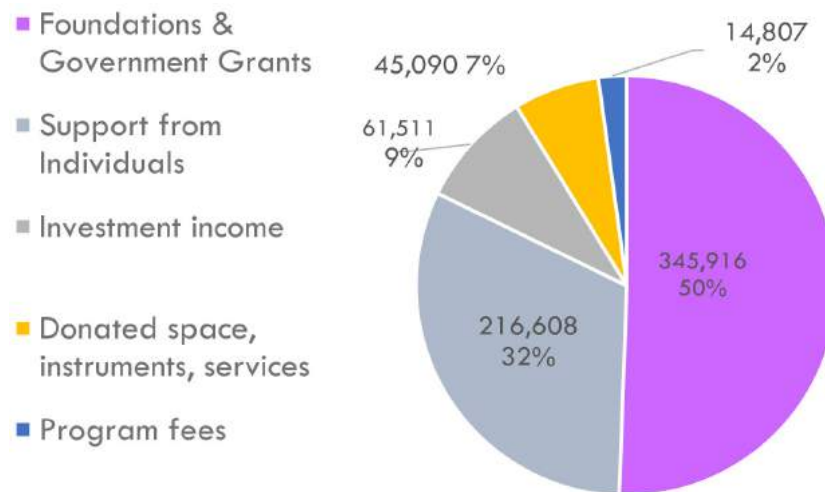
Program	\$ 406,253
Administrative	\$ 172,110
Fundraising	\$ 84,227
<b>All expenses</b>	<b>\$ 662,590</b>
Surplus before investment losses	\$ 21,342
Gains / Losses on investments	\$ (15,314)
Surplus	\$6,028

Project STEP experienced another year of balanced financial operations, stretching our budget to offer our students the best possible experiences.

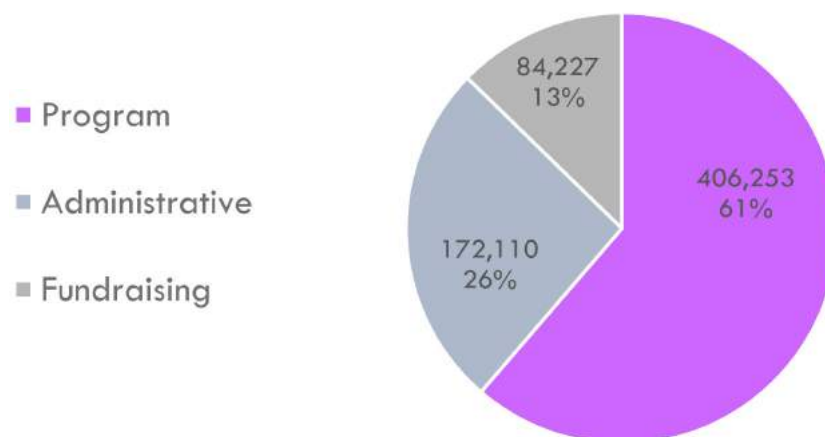
In addition to the ordinary costs covering all components of Project STEP's program, there were some non-recurring costs we absorbed related to leveraging the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, which amounted to approximately \$47,000. These out-of-budget expenses were made up for by a spike in donations emanating from the extensive local and national publicity Project STEP received. Overall, a surplus of approximately \$21,000 was recorded for the year, before investment gains and losses.

Donors made designated gifts to support our tradition of sending every student to summer music camp, for specific instrument purchases, and to help with college visits, application costs, and auditions.

## SOURCES OF INCOME \$683,932



## USES OF FUNDS \$662,590







# FINANCIALS

## Project STEP, Inc. Statement of Financial Position June 30, 2015 and 2014

		Jun 30, 15	Jun 30, 14
<b>ASSETS</b>			
	Checking account	57,936	103,705
	Investments: Board Designated Reserves	883,748	881,732
	Investments: Endowment	405,028	399,173
	Receivables, net	241,824	186,155
	Instrument loans receivable	4,004	4,004
	Prepaid expenses	-	650
	Office equipment, net of depreciation of \$10,374 and \$9,731 in 2015 and 2014, respectively	7,172	7,816
	Musical instruments, net of depreciation of \$255,653 and \$244,549 in 2015 and 2014 respectively	75,484	60,189
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>1,675,196</b>	<b>1,643,424</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>			
<b>Liabilities</b>			
	Accounts payable and accrued expenses	32,134	6,390
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>32,134</b>	<b>6,390</b>
<b>Net assets</b>			
	Unrestricted	1,080,034	1,158,091
	Temporarily restricted	175,928	91,843
	Permanently restricted	387,100	387,100
<b>Total net assets</b>		<b>1,643,062</b>	<b>1,637,034</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>		<b>1,675,196</b>	<b>1,643,424</b>



SKILL MUSIC STUDENTS BALANCE 10,000 HOURS OF PRACTICE  
DEVELOPMENT I AM DETERMINED

COMPREHENSIVE BUTI CITY CONFIDENCE  
MUSIC EDUCATION B SMART FUTURE ACCESS MUSIC

1982 50.  DEDICATED SYMPHONY PROJECT STEP

M SOLFÈGE S LESSONS BRIGHT  
E PERFECT T 1ST RATE VISION  
N PITCH O FACULTY

T & PERFECT N TEAM COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY FOR 30 YEARS  
O SUPPORT

PROJECTS 44 STUDENTS CREATIVE  
R S

THEORY CHANGE T S INSPIRING BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
VIOLA ENGAGEMENT

WE ARE A POTENTIAL E *Classical* Cello  
COMMUNITY P VIOLIN FAMILY

\$100,000 EDUCATION P MOTIVATION







# projectSTEP

30 YEARS.  
NO LIMITS.



#ProjectSTEP

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Boston, MA 02115  
617-267-5777

[ProjectSTEP.org](http://ProjectSTEP.org)



@ProjectSTEP

*Photos by Michael J. Lutch*