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
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.
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.
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
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


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.
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.
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.

**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.
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.

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

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.
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 lifelong 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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A Far Cry
Boston Symphony Orchestra
BSO Education Department/
Symphony in our City
Boston University
Carriage House Violins of Johnson String Instruments
Johannes Moser
New England Conservatory
Peggy Pearson and Winsor Music
Wendy Putnam and the Concord Chamber Music Society
Rutman’s Violins
Marcus Thompson and the Boston Chamber Music Society
Triple Helix
Owen Young

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$5,000 - $10,000
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Susan Oakie Bush

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and Douglas Fenton
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Christopher Reuning
Graham Robinson
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Jane E. Duffy
Goetz Eaton and Ted Stuart Davis
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Alfred and Gilda Slifka
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Mary Keith
Chris and Leigh Kelter
Liza Ketchum and John H. Straus
Sara Kitaeff
Pat Krol and Stephen Chiumenti
Antoinette E. Loney
Constance A. Lewis
Keith and Emiley Lockhart
Judith Lubershane
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$100 - $250
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Gerald and Corinne Adler
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Donald Allen
Margaret Auchincloss
Anne August
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Andrew Barbeau
Louise Blodget
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Michael and Susan Brown
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Murine Daley
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Brice and Maddy Donoff

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Morton Abromson and Joan Nissman
Kim Noltemy
Amy Pan
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Stephen Saudek and Janice Durham
Rhoda Schneider
Phyllis Selter
Alan Strauss
John L. Thorndike
Elizabeth Valentine
Edith L. Walker
Constance V.R. White
Margaret Williams-DeCelles
John Winslow and Emily Bailey

$100 - $250
Sprague Ackley
Gerald and Corinne Adler
Katherine Ahern
Donald Allen
Margaret Auchincloss
Anne August
Bernice L. Auslander
David and Diane Baehre
Sandy Bakalar
Andrew Barbeau
Louise Blodget
Katherine K. Brobeck
Michael and Susan Brown
Valerie Busby
Lisa Wong and Lynn Chang
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Bruce and Susan Creditor
Joan P. and Ronald C. Curhan
Murine Daley
Belden and Pamela Daniels
Andrea D’Lorio-Kerton
Brice and Maddy Donoff
$100-$250 CONT’D
Kamilah Drummond-Forrester
Ann Elliott
Stephanie Engel
Herbert and Jean Epstein
David and Susan Fedo
Harriet Feinberg
Susan S. Feinstein
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Anita Walker
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Graham Wright

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A Far Cry
Ames Hotel Boston
Betsy Barlow
Robin Barnes
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Elisabeth Case
Richard Cornell
William “Mo” Cowan
Richard Dix
Rachel Fegerburg
Johnson String Instrument
Margaret McCarthy
New England Conservatory
Scholars Bistro and Lounge
Seaport Boston Hotel

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Boston University School of Music
Carloyn Mapes Music
Federal Hobbies
Grantham, Mayo, Van Otterloo & Co, LLC
Horizons for Homeless Children
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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jun 30, 15</th>
<th>Jun 30, 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Checking account</td>
<td>57,936</td>
<td>103,705</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments: Board Designated Reserves</td>
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<td>881,732</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments: Endowment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receivables, net</td>
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<td>Instrument loans receivable</td>
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<td>4,004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
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<td>650</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office equipment, net of depreciation of $10,374 and $9,731 in 2015 and 2014, respectively</td>
<td>7,172</td>
<td>7,816</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musical instruments, net of depreciation of $255,653 and $244,549 in 2015 and 2014 respectively</td>
<td>75,484</td>
<td>60,189</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,675,196</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,643,424</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  |              |              |
| **LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS** |              |              |
| Liabilities      |              |              |
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses | 32,134 | 6,390 |
| **Total liabilities** | **32,134** | **6,390** |

|                  |              |              |
| **Net assets**   |              |              |
| Unrestricted     | 1,080,034    | 1,158,091    |
| Temporarily restricted | 175,928 | 91,843 |
| Permanently restricted | 387,100 | 387,100 |
| **Total net assets** | **1,643,062** | **1,637,034** |

|                  |              |              |
| **Total liabilities and net assets** | **1,675,196** | **1,643,424** |