

FY2023 Buncombe County Tipping Point Grant Report

Organization Name:	Colaborativa La Milpa
Project Name:	Raices Youth

Activities Accomplished	Annual Goal	Amount
Number of parent/community leaders hired	2	2
Number of youth served	25	37
Expenses (please list <u>all</u> grant related expenses)	Amount Spent	
2 New Parent leaders/community artists	\$	2,500.00
2 New Parent leaders/community artists	\$	2,500.00
TOTAL:		\$ 5,000

Narrative summary of grant related activities (first half)

With two parent/community leaders to coordinate the youth afterschool program specifically, the scope and possibilities have increased. This fall, we reorganized our youth program to give our participants a choice of music or dance or both (we will add visual arts in the winter and spring) by meeting two afternoons each week. We also added a more intensive youth dance component to our roster, El Diplomado. This is for youth ages 14-20 who like to dance and perform traditional folklorico and will also receive a certificate at the end of the program, which enables them to become youth assistant instructors for Raíces. We have engaged 37 Latinx youth in these various offerings.

The music program was robust, with guest visits from Indigenous drummers, by UNCA Professor Juan Martinez, who worked with participants on poetry and connection to nature, and guest student musicians from UNCA. In addition, the NC Arboretum, as part of their outreach program, provided a Latinx musician and song writer to work with the youth for 10 weeks. Our participants began learning how to play guitar and drums and also engaged with contemporary Latinx music. With the instructor provided by the arboretum, they explored the components of song writing and wrote one song together. They performed this at UNCA. The afterschool dance program was led by two youth assistant instructors who have been involved with Raíces dance for years. This will culminate in a performance at our annual December Posada. In addition, another, Enhancing a sense of community, strengthening social networks, opportunities to learn and apply leadership skills, building confidence and a sense of strong cultural identity were present for all our participants, guests, and instructors.

Narrative summary of grant related activities spring/summer

The spring was very busy for our youth afterschool program. Our middle school age participants met at La Esperanza twice a week. They learned new folklorico dances from our two youth assistant instructors, Danny and Daniela. These teens modeled important leadership skills: good communication, compassionate listening, and problem solving.

The youth enjoyed a second ten week music program through our collaboration with the NC Arboretum, which took the place of working with a visual artist, whose availability and offerings didn't align with our needs. Participants did create art which related to our performance events : Spring/Easter, The Day of the Child, Mother's Day and Father's Day. The events were well attended by families, friends and other members of the Latine community, strengthening social networks and emphasizing that Emma is a place where we can embrace our authentic identities.

We also had performances in the amphitheater at the Arboretum and at the Hola Carolina Festival in Pack Square, where audience members included tourists and Asheville locals who are not Latine. The confidence and pride in their cultural identity was as much on display with our participants as the dance steps.

Our afterschool program for older youth, 14-19, El Diplomado, has evolved. It is now Ballet Folklorico Raíces, reflecting the commitment and drive of the participants who are being mentored by Daniel Vega Vasquez, who founded Ballet Folklorico Asheville. We have 20 participants with an almost equal number of young women and men. They are very aware of their roles as mentors to younger dancers and as culture bearers. 8 of these dancers worked with our summer camp as youth instructors.

Briana, new to folklorico dance as of October 2022 reflected, "I joined because my mom used to dance this whenever she was in her high school. I wanted to have a piece of that, and to learn. You see how dances have changed throughout the times. The classes keep the culture alive."