

# the lewis prize for music

community | collaboration | leadership

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**Contact:** Nicholas Turton, Fenton  
[nturton@fenton.com](mailto:nturton@fenton.com)  
(213) 343-5264

## **ST. LOUIS-BASED ORGANIZATION SAINT LOUIS STORY STITCHERS ARTISTS COLLECTIVE RECEIVES NEW COVID-19 FUNDING FROM THE LEWIS PRIZE FOR MUSIC**

*New funding for Saint Louis Story Stitchers will support holistic music education programs during COVID-19.*

The Lewis Prize for Music — a creative arts philanthropy — announced today the recipients of its COVID-19 Community Response Fund. A total of \$1.25 million will be awarded to 32 Creative Youth Development (CYD) organizations across the U.S. that have adapted and responded to the pressing needs of the young people they serve amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Saint Louis Story Stitchers received funding of \$25,000 for its youth music education programs.

At the Stitchers Storefront Studio in the historic St. Louis Loop District, professional artists work with African American youth age 16 to 24 to create new works in art and music generated through an ongoing series of learning experiences, dialogue, and community events to create responses to racial inequities that impact gun violence and other health issues. Youth come from high crime neighborhoods in St. Louis City and County. Year-round after school and Saturday Studio Sessions compliment neighborhood-based activities that focus on the communities in which youth live.

Story Stitchers was founded by eight artists in 2014 to combat gun violence through creative youth development for low-income black youth, ages 16-24.

Saint Louis Story Stitchers programs are also supported locally by the City of St. Louis' Youth at Risk Crime Prevention Grant of 2020, Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund, Steward Family Foundation, Missouri Foundation for Health, Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund, Kranzberg Arts Foundation, Incarnate Word Foundation, Missouri Humanities Council, Missouri Arts Council, Regional Arts Commission, and supportive individuals.

Saint Louis Story Stitchers differs from other programs in the region in that it is youth-led, directly addressing the difficult issues that impact their daily lives. Youth have the opportunity to define topics of their work, listen and ask questions of other local youth, as well as invite and discuss difficult topics through their *StitchCast Studio* podcast (such as COVID-19, suicide, trauma, gun violence, homelessness, bullying, domestic violence, and poverty) with local experts. Three new episodes are published each month to [storystitchers.org](http://storystitchers.org), [Spotify](#) and [apple podcast](#).

Each episode of *StitchCast Studio* includes *Pick the City UP* art interludes which are original works of art and music by Saint Louis Story Stitchers. In addition, youth share the never before heard *Back Stories* to works of art produced by members of the Artists Collective each week on Thursdays at 7:30 PM, streaming on [facebook](#), [Youtube](#), [Vimeo](#) and [storystitchers.org](http://storystitchers.org).

*From all the youth at Saint Louis Story Stitchers— We are very honored to receive The Lewis Prize for Music’s COVID-19 Community Response Fund grant. This grant has reassured us that our hard work hasn’t gone unnoticed. This has empowered us to find new innovative ways to use our talents and gifts to continue to uplift our communities here in the St. Louis region.*

— *Emeara Burns, Steward Family Foundation Program Director at Saint Louis Story Stitchers*

The Lewis Prize for Music invests in youth music organizations and their leaders to facilitate positive change through access to music education. Each of the COVID-19 Community Response Fund recipients, including Saint Louis Story Stitchers provides young people with opportunities to learn, perform and create music while also serving their immediate and unique needs around food, transportation, mental health, and academics.

From Flint, Michigan to Montgomery, Alabama, to Oakland, California, recipients cultivate leadership opportunities and safe spaces for the young people they support. Many of the recipients have budgets of less than \$100,000 per year, and two-thirds are led by people of color. Through community-driven and youth-focused approaches, recipient organizations have become safe havens for the young people they serve during COVID-19.

“Access to music enriches the social fabric of our lives,” said Daniel Lewis, Founder and Chairman of the Lewis Prize for Music. “The organizations and leaders we have chosen to support in these times play a critical role in the lives and communities of the young people they support. In the face of unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 and racial injustice across the country, Creative Youth Development organizations are devoting all of their resources to uplift both the creative and material well-being of young people and their families. We are thrilled to support these organizations -- including *Saint Louis Story Stitchers* -- and advocate for the entire Creative Youth Development field.”

*The Lewis Prize for Music’s COVID-19 Community Response Fund will support Story Stitchers youth, helping them to create and celebrate music that furthers the goal of Saint Louis Story Stitchers — to promote a better educated, more peaceful and caring region through storytelling. Music and the arts have been unifying forces for all youth, providing a way to understand and meet the unique challenges of each generation. Music and the arts strengthen our humanity, move our hearts, and bring us together. We thank the Lewis Prize for Music for this wonderful opportunity.*

— *Susan Colangelo, President and Executive Director at Saint Louis Story Stitchers*

“The Lewis Prize for Music is committed to supporting young people and the adults in their lives who give them love, safety, and a musical voice,” said Dalouge Smith, CEO of The Lewis Prize for Music. “These 32 grantees work to break down barriers of inequality every day. They also do more than offer programs and services to young people, they include them in decision-making, which is needed now more than ever.”

The grants announced today range from \$25,000 to \$50,000. In addition to *Saint Louis Story Stitchers*, they will support the following Creative Youth Development organizations:

- **317 Main Community Music Center** (Yarmouth, ME)
- **A Place Called Home** (Los Angeles, CA)
- **Beyond the Bars** (Philadelphia, PA)
- **Beyond the Natural** (Baltimore, MD)

- **Cambridge Community Center** (Cambridge, MA)
- **Center of Life** (Pittsburgh, PA)
- **Crescendo Detroit** (Detroit, MI)
- **Enriching Lives Through Music** (San Rafael, CA)
- **Hyde Square Task Force** (Jamaica Plain, MA)
- **FAME Foundation for the Advancement of Music & Education** (Bowie, MD)
- **Memphis Music Initiative** (Memphis, TN)
- **MEOW Cares, Inc.** (Montgomery, AL)
- **Music Beyond Measure** (Montclair, NJ)
- **Neutral Zone** (Ann Arbor, MI)
- **New City Kids** (Jersey City, NJ)
- **Pico Youth & Family Center** (Santa Monica, CA)
- **Play on Philly** (Philadelphia, PA)
- **ROCA Music Program** (Brownsville, TX)
- **RYSE Youth Center** (Richmond, CA)
- **Saint Louis Story Stitchers Artists Collective** (St. Louis, MO)
- **Stax Music Academy** (Memphis, TN)
- **Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village** (Flint, MI)
- **The Choir School of Delaware** (Wilmington, DE)
- **The Heartbeat Music Project** (Crownpoint, NM)
- **The HUBB** (Newark, NJ)
- **The Jessye Norman School of the Arts, Inc.** (Augusta, GA)
- **The TETRA** (Detroit, MI)
- **White Hall Arts Academy** (Los Angeles, CA)
- **Youth Empowerment Project** (New Orleans, LA)
- **Youth on Record** (Denver, CO)
- **Youth Radio** (Oakland, CA)
- **ZUMIX** (East Boston, MA)

More information about the COVID-19 Community Response Fund recipients can be found at: <https://www.thelewisprize.org>. The Lewis Prize for Music will open its second annual Accelerator Award process in the summer.

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### **About The Lewis Prize for Music**

*The Lewis Prize for Music believes that music in the lives of young people is a catalytic force to drive positive change in our society. It partners with leaders in diverse and vibrant communities who invest in young people by providing access to safe, inclusive spaces where they can build powerful relationships through music.*

*The organization is the brainchild of philanthropist Daniel R. Lewis, who has spent the last 19 years focusing on philanthropic efforts in the social and musical arts field, including founding the Miami Music Access Fellowship, serving as the founding chairman of The Cleveland Orchestra Miami Residency/Miami Music Association, chairman of the Spring For Music Festival and chairman of The Management Center. Learn more at [www.thelewisprize.org](http://www.thelewisprize.org).*

## **About Saint Louis Story Stitchers Artists Collective**

*Saint Louis Story Stitchers Artists Collective is a non-profit organization engaged in urban storytelling. The mission of Saint Louis Story Stitchers is to document St. Louis through art and word to promote understanding, civic pride, intergenerational relationships and literacy.*

*Collective artists work alongside twenty 16-24-year-old urban youth to collect stories, reframe and retell them using the arts to promote a better educated, more peaceful and caring society. Saint Louis Story Stitchers are a resident organization at Kranzberg Arts Foundation where members rehearse, present and perform in the Foundation's first-class spaces. The Collective also maintains the Stitchers Storefront Studio in the historic Loop District for recording, editing and publishing. Current projects focus on public health issues including gun violence. Learn more at [storystitchers.org/](http://storystitchers.org/)*

*Contact: Susan Colangelo, President & Executive Director*

*[susanc@storystitchers.org](mailto:susanc@storystitchers.org) / 314-899-9001 Studio / 706-255-5835 Mobile*