

June 2025



ART
THERAPY
STUDIO

SINCE 1967

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2027

Ideas and Actions for Today and Tomorrow

WITH THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS



Table of Contents

Introduction	03
Our History	04
Mission & Values	05
Strategies for Success	06
Goals	07
Timeline & Benchmarks	21
Committee	24

About the Planning Process

Like the rest of the world, the pandemic had a profound impact on the mental health of people young and old. As we all adjusted to the “new normal,” we wanted to make sure we were responding to the needs of individuals and communities around greater Cleveland Ohio by creating a new strategic plan.

We began this strategic planning process in the spring of 2024 with two “goal gathering” sessions designed to sift through the many institutional goals ATS outlined for funders and grants and consolidate them into one cohesive document.

Over the summer, we gathered feedback from stakeholders about what ATS is doing well, as well as areas of concern, and opportunities for growth. In August and September, we refined our goals and objectives, focusing on the critical services ATS provides to the most vulnerable members of our community.

After reviewing the final draft with the ATS Board of Trustees, we created a more focused and flexible plan, which sets goals in each of our focus areas over the next three years and outlines strategies for successfully achieving these visionary initiatives.

**Art Therapy Studio Strategic
Planning Team**
2024



Where we've been and where we're going

In 1967 Art Therapy Studio was co-founded by art therapist Mickie McGraw (d. 2023) and psychiatrist George Streeter, MD (d. 2013). The idea for the studio developed out of Dr. Streeter's and Mickie's long-time interest in art as a healing tool, as they both dealt with serious physical illness as children. While working at Highland View Hospital, which is now part of the MetroHealth system, Dr. Streeter met Mickie and soon approached her with his idea to open an art studio in the hospital as part of the rehabilitation department.

Since that point the studio continued to grow and expanded services to patients who were discharged and offered services to members of the community. In the 1990s Art Therapy Studio moved out of the hospital and into our current Fairhill Road location. During our 50+ years of existence we have provided innovative art therapy and therapeutic art programs to more than 50,000 people throughout Cuyahoga and neighboring counties in a variety of settings.



MISSION

Enhancing the quality of life for all people through art therapy.

VISION

To be a leader in establishing art therapy as an acceptable, affordable, and accessible approach to healing, wellness and self-care.

Core Values

What We Do

We develop relationships and facilitate art interventions between credentialed art therapists and our client-artists, employing a strengths-based, trauma-informed approach to activate the clinically proven healing benefits of artmaking. Our aim is to empower those we serve to reach their full potential without the burden of financial barriers to accessing mental health services. Our dedication remains unwavering in ensuring equitable access to the healing powers of artmaking.

How We Do It

We employ Board-Certified/Credentialed Art Therapists to work with individuals, groups, and collaborate with community partners. We respond to the unique needs of our community by providing therapy that promotes mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and social connections in a virtual and in-person setting. We strive to provide equitable and accessible services by offering fee reductions to remove economic barriers to participate in our community art therapy programs. We elevate and increase our client–artist visibility in the community by providing opportunities to engage with new audiences.

Why We Do It

We believe art therapy should be accessible to all because we believe that promoting mental health and wellness builds healthy communities. Art therapy is an effective tool for individuals coping with addictions, trauma, bereavement, mental health diagnosis, serious injuries, acute and chronic illness, continual stress of homelessness and economic insecurities, depression, and even managing life’s day-to-day stresses. By removing the stigma often associated with seeking therapy, we can empower individuals to take ownership of improving their own wellness.

Who We Serve

We operate within Northeast Ohio and our art therapists specialize in providing treatment for individual wellness, addictions and mental health, hospital-based inpatient and residential services, veterans, individuals with physical and developmental disabilities, kinship families, incarcerated youth, seniors, youth group programs, women and children in transitional housing, economically disadvantaged individuals, LGBTQIA+, and employee/ personal wellness.

Strategies for Success

Time-Sensitive Objectives and Measurable Outcomes to Achieve Institutional Goals



- > **Programs & Outreach**
- > **Public Benefits & Outreach/Awareness**
- > **Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy**
- > **Equity & Access**
- > **Organizational Capacity & Sustainability**
- > **Professional Development**
- > **Funding (Development) & Communications**

Programs & Outreach *Overview*

Goal

Standardize Art Therapy Studio's brand of art therapy and therapeutic art programming by focusing on art task design, audience appropriateness, outcomes/impact, replicability, and treatment planning.

Impact/ Outcomes

ATS will consistently meet the expectations of our client-artists and community partners with high-quality, effective, art therapy services.

Measurability / Goal-Attainment

- We will gather regular stakeholder feedback to assess the consistency and impact of our art therapy programs on those we set out to serve.
- Seek continuous improvement in our tracking and reporting of demographic data in the categories most relevant to our funders (Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC), Ohio Arts Council (OAC), DataArts, etc.) and to our understanding of community to best meet and serve their needs.



Programs & Outreach *Objectives*

> **First**

- Establish uniform program standards and expectations for each type of service through clearer program guidelines both in Community Art Therapy/Discover the Artist (CAT/DTA) groups through group descriptions and formats as well as community partner (contract) sites through the implementation of Statements of Work (SOW) for new and existing services.
- Develop and standardize resources for staff therapists and facilitators.

> **Next**

- Require staff to develop treatment plans and group curriculum in advance of sessions to allow for more in-depth planning and opportunity for partner sites to integrate our programming more deeply into their agencies.
- Refine current program evaluation methods to ensure programming is being reviewed accurately and efficiently.

> **Finally**

- Conduct program evaluations to understand the impact of changes and identify areas for improvement or future growth.
- Survey community partners and stakeholders to ensure the consistent high quality and impact of art therapy services.

Public Benefit & Outreach/Awareness *Overview*

Goal

Raise awareness of the approachability of art therapy and accessibility of ATS services as a means of improving the mental health of our Northeast Ohio community. N.B.:

Approachability is the quality of being easy to talk to or deal with or being friendly and accessible. Approachable people are welcoming and make others feel comfortable, and they can gain trust easily.

Impact/ Outcomes

More people in Northeast Ohio will access art therapy services through ATS or our creative arts therapy partners.

Measurability / Goal-Attainment

- Tracking participation demographics, event attendance, marketing efforts, etc.
- Work with community partners/sites to raise awareness of ATS services and Community Art Therapy, recording successes and noting challenges



Public Benefit & Outreach/Awareness Objectives

> First

- Educate ATS staff and board on how to communicate this information clearly both quickly (elevator speech) and in more in-depth formats using non-clinical, accessible language.
- Create educational presentations and materials to educate client-artists, community partners, higher-education institutions, and the community at-large about ATS's brands of art therapy and therapeutic art as well as the new Ohio Licensed Professional Art Therapist (LPAT) license.

> Next

- Make this information publicly available: on ATS website/social media, directly to client-artists and community partners and through educational presentations and community events (Community Engagement Coordinator)

> Finally

- Evaluate opportunities and capacity for growth with ATS' therapeutic art service tier
- Leverage our relationships with partners to increase awareness of ATS programming and community impact that large grants/funders want to see.

Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy *Overview*

Goal

Raise awareness by sharing artwork created by ATS's client-artists and art therapy community, featuring their creativity in our Dr. George Streeter Gallery, and loaning ATS collection artworks to community partners as a means of raising awareness of our art therapy programs and working artists, both therapists and clients.

Impact/ Outcomes

Our greater Cleveland community will gain a better understanding of art therapy and the connection between the creative process, art therapy/therapeutic art, mental health, and wellness, while our client-artists will benefit from displaying their artwork in the community.

Measurability / Goal-Attainment

- ATS will track the number and locations of client/ constituent art shows in our community, attendance at openings and special events featuring our artists, and will ask cultural and health partners hosting exhibits of ATS artwork to track attendance at their location(s).
- ATS will use feedback boxes and QR coded surveys to gather qualitative data from visitors attending or interacting with ATS artwork in our gallery or out in the community.



Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy *Overview*

> **First**

- Ensure licensure compliance for including client work in public exhibits and displays
- Establish internal and external standards for art shows that meet or exceed relevant best practices set by AATA & AAM (American Art Therapy Association & American Alliance of Museums)
- Enact a licensure/best practices compliant process for entering new artworks from our community of artists into the ATS collection and for removing artwork not meeting established standards.

> **Next**

- Secure funding from private and corporate donors to support an exhibition program of the Dr. George Streeter Art Collection for cultural partners and healthcare organizations in CLE, which meets the standards of care for artwork according to AATA and AAM guidelines/best practices
- Update and modernize collection inventory to account for all artwork and easily track movements within and outside of the Studio's storage

> **Finally**

- Produce turn-key exhibit boxes with artwork, labels, and ATS intro/promo text panels, plus appropriate paperwork, for sending art shows out into the community
- Explore opportunities for community art partnerships

Equity & Access Overview

Goal

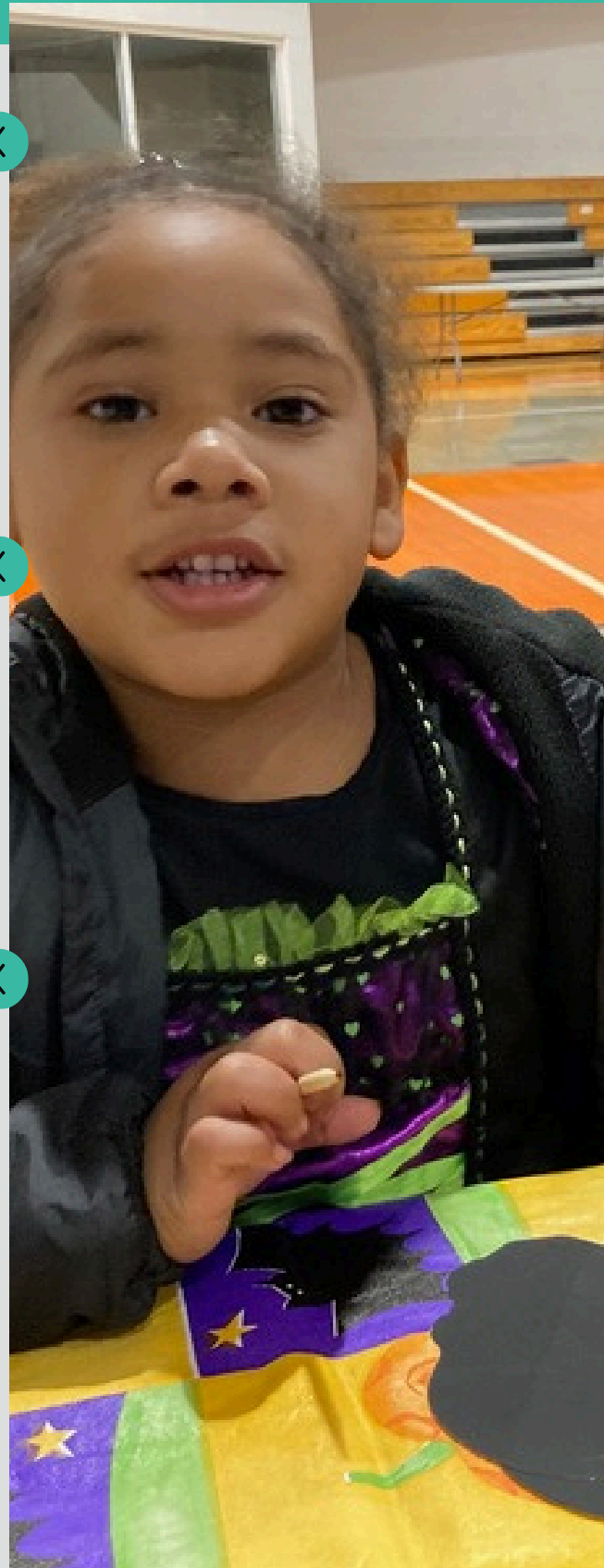
Increase staff capability and competency to support Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), disabled, LGBTQ+, low-income, and clients from other marginalized constituencies and make all our programs and services accessible for people with disabilities.

Impact/ Outcomes

Provide services that are more inclusive of marginalized communities and be better able to respond to the emotional impact of racism, homophobia/transphobia, ableism, discrimination, poverty, and generational trauma.

Measurability / Goal-Attainment

- Tracking participant demographics, evaluating trends, and strategically offering programs within communities or partner agencies to maintain access to care.
- Track ATS staff and Board participation in Annual DEI training and ensure intern training to meet Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities (CCBDD) All Means All criteria.



Equity & Access Objectives

> First

- Implement regular dialogue and staff training as part of weekly supervision.
- Develop an annual training schedule for staff, interns, and board members.
- Identify resources for ongoing self-study/ “offline” learning opportunities that can be made available to interns, staff, and board during onboarding as well as annually to maintain focus and understanding of the needs of clients from marginalized groups.
- Clarify internal review process for client grievances and determine if an independent party should be involved to review issues.
- Evaluate the impact of the existing Racial, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) Advisory Committee and identify changes needed.

> Next

- Evaluate how current programming meets the needs of all clients and identify any changes that need to be made.
- Identify specific goals for each CAT program and establish appropriate guidelines for making accommodations for clients to improve equity while not interfering with the experience of other group members.

> Finally

- ATS leadership will work one on one with ATS staff to incorporate equity and access goals into staff annual goals.
- Evaluate impact of training and identify further growth areas.

Organizational Capacity & Sustainability Overview

Goal

Strengthen organizational infrastructure and leadership to ensure long-term capacity for and sustainability of facility, technology, and staffing to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Impact/Outcomes

Implement a comprehensive succession planning strategy to ensure leadership continuity and organizational stability. As a result of the capital project & fund project, ATS will increase capacity to serve people in the greater Cleveland area with high-quality art therapy in a welcoming and accessible facility, while also improving the working environment for art therapists.

Measurability / Goal-Attainment

- ATS will implement methods for board oversight and governance that are time-effective and foster collaboration. This will include cultivating diversity, offering new forms of leadership engagement such as mentorship programs, and nurturing early-career leaders, particularly board committee chairs.
- The organization will also increase its capacity to serve the greater Cleveland area with high-quality art therapy through the capital project and fund project, focusing on creating a welcoming and accessible facility and improving the working environment for art therapists. Additionally, ATS will continue to examine and revise board service tracks for committee chairs and officers, ensuring effective governance and leadership succession.
- ATS will host, organize, or collaborate with existing partners to provide creative arts therapies and industries career events in accessible locations, introducing young people to potential opportunities they may not have previously considered.



Organizational Capacity & Sustainability Overview

> First

- Outline expectations/goals for capital project and campaign
- ATS staff will develop and foster talent pipeline for Art Therapists and Art Therapy Residents

> Next

- Board Governance Committee will formalize service tracks for committee chairs and officers.
- Offer new forms of ATS leadership engagement among board members, including mentorship and cultivation of early-career leaders, especially committee chairs.

> Finally

- Host, organize, or collaborate with existing partners to provide a creative arts therapies/industries career event in an accessible location to introduce young people to potential opportunities they don't know exist or have not considered
- Publicize job description for a Capital Campaign Manager for the Capital Project and Fund

Staff Professional Development Overview

Goal

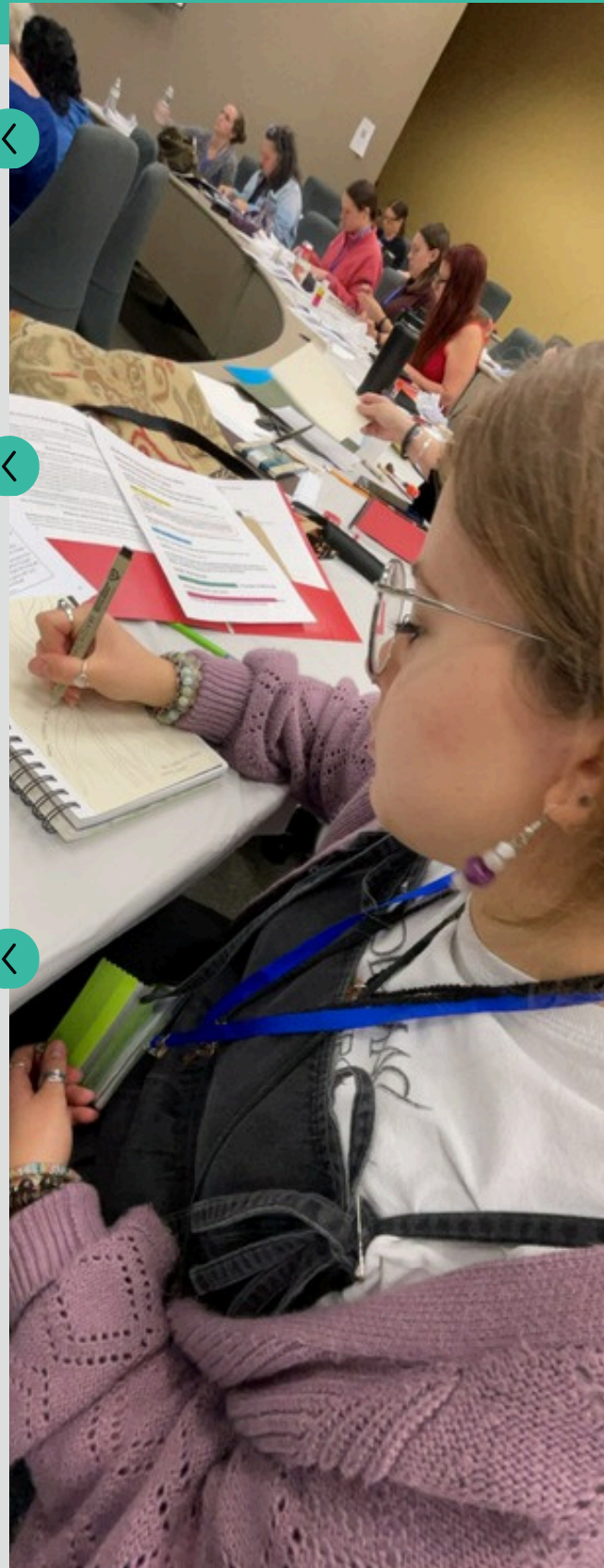
Art Therapy Studio will support its staff in maintaining a level of training that exceeds industry standards for their fields

Impact/Outcomes

Prioritizing education and professional growth will help ATS staff maintain engagement and enthusiasm. Clients, partners, and students will receive high-quality services that exceed the current standard of care.

Measurability / Goal-Attainment

- ATS will identify credentials, certifications, and professional development opportunities for non-art therapy clinical staff (i.e. Expressive Arts Specialists) and administrative staff that benefit the organization.
- ATS will support staff in attaining these credentials as appropriate. When required, ATS will offer special staff training to meet the needs of our clients and partners.



Staff Professional Development Objectives

> First

- All ATS art therapists will possess & maintain or be actively working towards the Registered Art Therapist - Board Certified (ATR-BC) credential and Ohio Licensed Professional Art Therapist (LPAT)
- Establish protocols and training to assist art therapists in meeting the legal and ethical requirements of their license/credential and ensure ATS compliance.
- Evaluate/revamp existing annual performance review process to a new system that prioritizes personal goal setting for growth and periodic check-ins to keep staff on track. Outline expectations/goals for capital project and campaign
- ATS staff will develop and foster talent pipeline for Art Therapists and Art Therapy Residents
- ATS will formalize expected training and credentials for Expressive Arts Specialists to establish an organizational standard for the position and encourage other organizations to adopt similar standards.

> Next

- Provide opportunities for ATS administrative staff to grow their skills and experience within their roles, helping them to perform at their highest potential, and possibly take on new responsibilities within the organization.
- Identify credentials and training expectations for Expressive Arts Specialists and determine if any credentials are available to qualify their services for insurance reimbursement.
- Identify training needed for administrative staff and directors.
- Roll out new staff review process.

> Finally

- Explore opportunities to provide training to staff at low or no cost to the organization.
- Evaluate and adjust new review process.

Fundraising/Development & Communications *Overview*

Goal

ATS will work to diversify funding and move to a more balanced revenue stream of earned income, fundraising, and donor cultivation.

Impact/Outcomes

By diversifying funding sources and achieving a more balanced revenue stream from earned income, fundraising efforts, and donor cultivation, ATS will enhance financial stability and sustainability. This will enable the organization to reduce dependency on any single funding source, thereby mitigating financial risks and ensuring long-term operational continuity.

Measurability / Goal-Attainment

- ATS will measure the success of its diversification strategy by tracking key financial metrics such as the percentage of revenue from earned income, fundraising campaigns, and donor contributions.
- Specific goals may include increasing earned income by a certain percentage annually, growing donor contributions through targeted cultivation efforts, and achieving a balanced revenue mix within a specified timeframe.
- Regular financial audits and reviews will provide clear indicators of progress towards these goals, ensuring accountability and strategic adjustments as needed.



Fundraising/Development & Communications Objectives

> First

- Consider the potential and sustainability of the “Development Specialist” position and ROI of part-time vs. full-time position.
- Develop a strategy and toolkit for board members to use in leveraging their relationships and network to support fundraising initiatives.

> Next

- Evaluate the potential for client health insurance reimbursements as a viable income stream.
- Leverage board relationships with new potential donors and foundations to access more diverse funders and secure new grants from family foundations in greater Cleveland.

> Finally

- Secure support from funding community and foundations for ATS capital campaign.
- Establish a structured monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the diversified funding strategy and its impact on organizational stability and growth. This framework will include key performance indicators (KPIs) related to revenue diversification, such as the percentage increase in earned income, growth in donor contributions, and the success rate of grant applications from new funding sources.
- Regular reviews and adjustments based on these metrics will ensure ATS remains agile in responding to changes in the funding landscape while maintaining a balanced revenue stream conducive to achieving long-term financial sustainability and mission impact.
- Board members will begin cultivating donors for the Capital Project and Fund.

Strategic Planning Committee

ATS Staff & Board Members



DIANE WEIDRICK
PRESIDENT



MICHELLE EPPS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



JENNIFER SOUERS CHEVRAUX
DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST



CHERYL PETE
CLINICAL DIRECTOR



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WITH
THANKS TO



Ohio Arts
COUNCIL

