







# Review 2023





**423**

**workshops  
in our new home!**

# Foreword

## FROM ISORINE MARC, JAMII'S FOUNDER & ALCHEMIST

In 2023, Jamii found a home—what a milestone! And what a home it is: warm, welcoming, with an innate ability to make you feel comfortable. The energy here is beautiful. If you haven't visited yet, I invite you to check it out.

This dream of a home began over 13 years ago when Jamii was just in its infancy. I remember inviting friends over and sketching on a napkin what this dream could look like. With passion and excitement, I'd say, "What if we had a space right at the heart of the community, on The Esplanade, where we could offer free arts programs for everyone in the neighborhood? We could transform it into a social hub that makes us all feel like we belong—such a relevant feeling for all of us, immigrants, and newcomers always seeking a sense of home."

In 2023, this dream finally came to life. We moved to 264 The Esplanade in January, opened our doors, and, with the amazing Jamii team, spent the year exploring ways to make this a home for all of us. I believe we succeeded, and as 2024 unfolds, I am proud of this tremendous accomplishment.

We are grateful to the Canada Council for the Arts for making this dream possible, to Berkeley Castle for welcoming us, and to our supportive Board of Directors who believes in the same dreams. We are thankful to be part of Staging Change since 2020 and into 2024, a programme run by the Metcal Foundation, which has transformed the way we offer programming and engage with audiences. A big thank you to our partner and neighbor, Canadian Stage, whose support has been crucial in recent years, along with all the funders who have supported our various projects throughout the year.

To all those who have been Jamiified—whether by wearing our t-shirts, donating to our projects, participating in workshops, attending shows, or performing alongside artists—I thank you. You are the reason for our existence, and without you, our home would be desolate.

To the 136 artists we collaborated with this year, thank you—you are the source of Jamii's magic. To the entire team, from the leadership team to the event runners, you are the backbone of Jamii.

As for 2024—may good health embrace everyone, and may our home, The Jamii Hub, thrive as a bustling social and artistic centre of The Esplanade.

TURN THE PAGES  
WITH US: LET'S LOOK  
BACK AT 2023, OUR  
ARTISTIC ADVENTURES  
AND THOSE WHO  
WE WALKED WITH,  
AND, TOGETHER,  
LET'S EMBRACE THE  
PROMISES OF 2024.





WITH THE

# Generous Support OF...



Canada Council  
for the Arts  
Conseil des arts  
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



Ontario  
Trillium  
Foundation



Fondation  
Trillium  
de l'Ontario

J.P. Bickell  
Foundation

**METCALF**  
**FOUNDATION**



**Kiwanis**  
TORONTO



CANADA HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE



Foundation



Emerging  
Artists



TD **READY**  
**COMMITMENT**



**EMBLEM**



**OLD  
TOWN**

CanadianStage



WITH

# Jamii's Values

## Intentions

We are intentional with invitations and programming.

## Care

We care for our relations with empathy.

## Curiosity

We make space for imagination, creativity and magic in our lives.

## Collaborative Agency

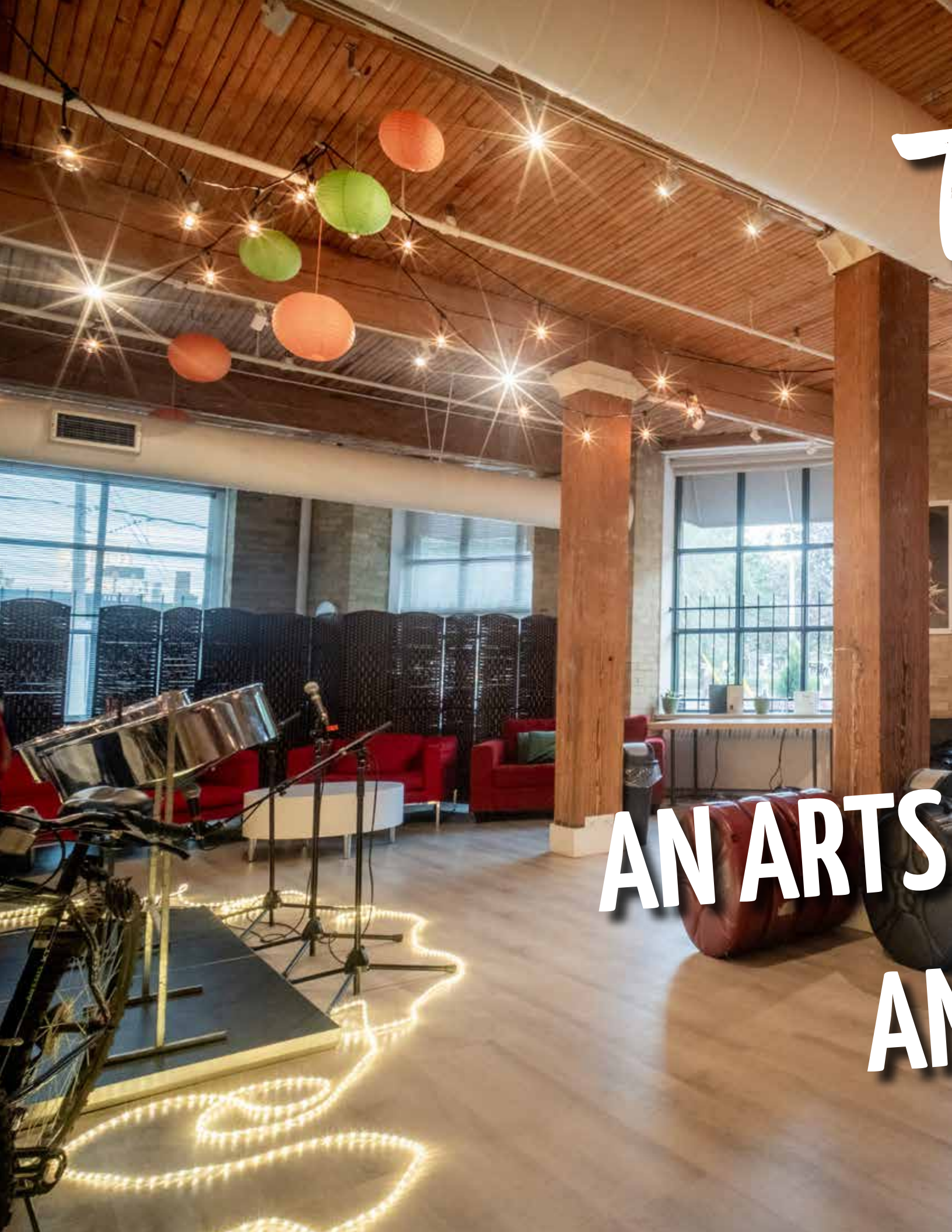
We encourage collaborative agency with, by, and for the people engaged in our ecosystem.

## Responsive

We respond with agility and enthusiasm.







AN ARTS  
AN



# The Jamii Hub

264 THE ESPLANADE

SPACE TO GATHER  
AND CREATE TOGETHER...





182

workshops

144

youths





# ...WITH Youth

In 2023, LAINI entered a new phase. Under the nurturing leadership of Nadifa Daud Mohamed and Maryam Alireza, we engaged 144 youths and young adults (aged 6 to 26 years old!) in creative adventures, while fostering and enhancing their leadership skills. Throughout the year, we conducted a total of 182 workshops, resulting in the creation of 2 murals, a week-long outdoor experience for 15 girls, a fashion show, a hip-hop performance, a theater play, and many other activities.

Through LAINI, we provided volunteer opportunities and work experience to young women in the community, supporting their educational and professional development.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to TD Bank Ready Commitment and the Toronto Kiwanis Foundation for their support of LAINI.





**6** indoor exhibits

**1,600** visits







# ...WITH Families

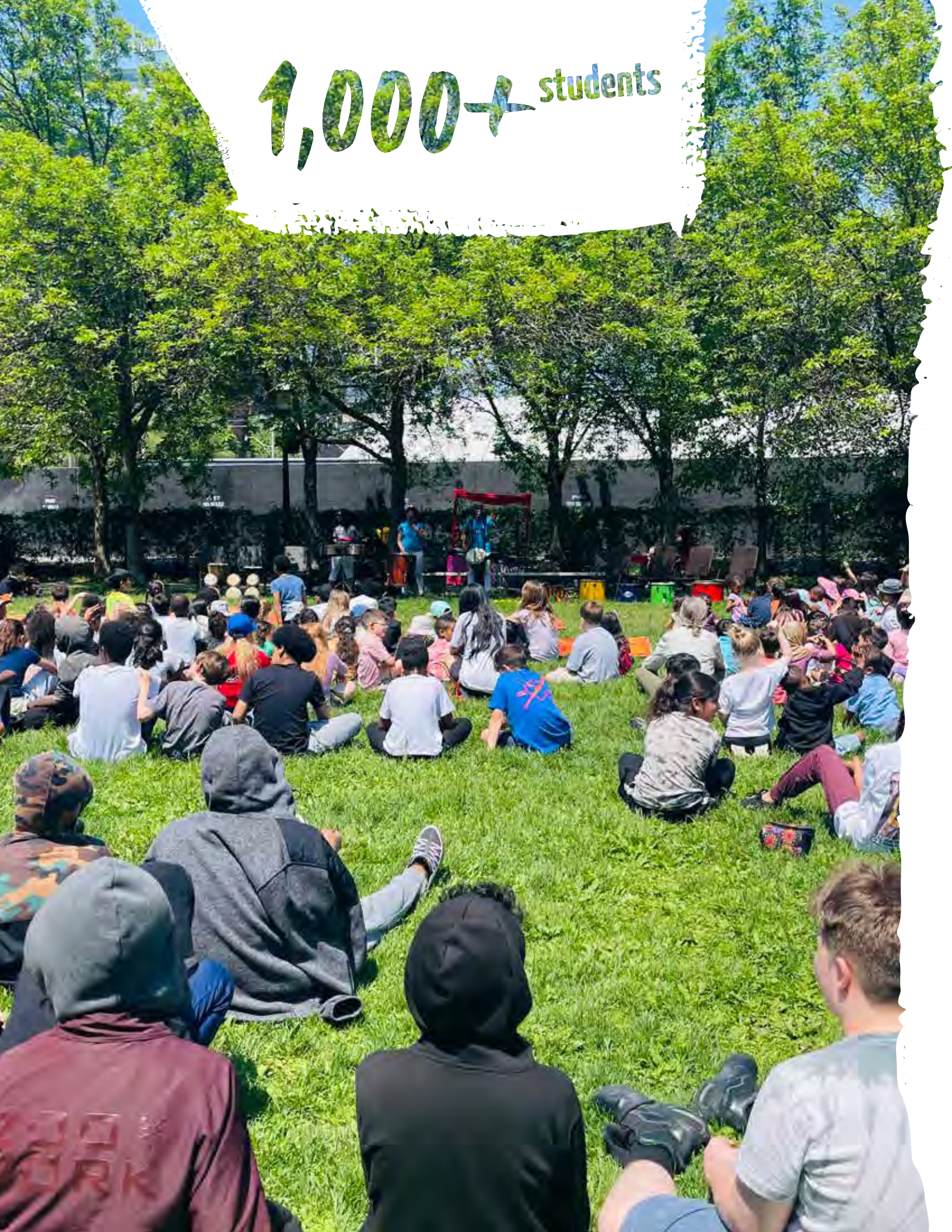
At Jamii, we believe that spending quality time with parents/caregivers and their children is invaluable. Engaging in special activities as a family is something we cherish, creating memories filled with love and care. In 2023, we offered families the opportunity to create these lasting memories through Capoeira workshops, painting classes, miniature making workshops, making bath bombs, and, last but not least, WAYO—Jamii’s flagship festival for children. Ensuring that families in our communities are aware of these offerings falls under Iris’s responsibility. Iris Unlu is Jamii’s passionate and brilliant Amplifier, serving as the creative mind behind Jamii’s promotion, marketing, outreach, and all amplification strategies!

Special thanks are extended to the Canada Council for the Arts for providing the space, and to Canadian Stage, Berkeley Castle, the Government of Canada, and the J.P. Bickell Foundation for their support of WAYO.





1,000+ students







## ...WITH Local Schools

Every year, we discover new ways to partner with our local schools: Market Lane Public School, Downtown Alternative School, and St. Michael's Catholic School.

This year marked fruitful collaborations. In the spring, we presented 'Joaquin and Rumberos' to 500 students. In June, we invited students to create miniature houses for 'Amal.' In October, students attended opera performances by Jonelle Sills, and in December, they participated in making puppets for 'Mudlark!' Additionally, with the help of Downtown Alternative School (DAS) students, we established a community garden based on Indigenous teachings, led by Aidan Crosby.

Maria Paula Trivino, Jamii's 2023 Implementer, was instrumental in organizing these school activations. Maria did an amazing job coordinating all the schools and ensuring the most enjoyable experience for the students.

We extend our gratitude to the Canada Council for the Arts, Rama Gaming House and Charitable Gaming, and the Metcalf Foundation for their support.







51 older adults

96 workshops



# ...WITH Older Adults

In 2023, after several years of conducting one-off workshops for older adults, we were finally able to offer regular, structured programming featuring movement and arts-based workshops led by professional artists.

Under Afnan Yakot's passionate leadership, we engaged 51 older adults in creative adventures while fostering social connections. With a total of 96 workshops throughout the year, this program is making a significant impact on the daily lives of our local older adults, who discover not just arts but also friendship at The Jamii Hub.

A special thanks goes to the Government of Canada - New Horizons for Seniors Grant and the Canada Council for the Arts for supporting our programs for older adults.





# TRANSFORMING THE A PLAYGROUND FOR WH



*Jami*



# THE PLAN MADE INTO PHYSICAL EXPERIENCES!







**42**  
performances

**4,000**  
audience members



# ...WITH Outdoor Lovers

Jamii's 2023 Kisanii Hub Series presented a panel of outdoor performances for Esplanadians, Torontonians, and visitors to enjoy. One of our goals with the Kisanii Hub Series is to offer culturally diverse programs that provide audiences with opportunities to appreciate other cultures and different ways of life.

In 2023, through the Kisanii Hub Series, we hosted 42 performances over 20 days for an audience of over 4,000! We showcased several incredible performances, including "Svaha" by Nova Dance; "Walk With Amal Toronto" in partnership with Luminato Festival and KasheDance; "To My Past, Present, Future" by Nickeshia Garrick; "Flamenco on The Esplanade" by FabCollab, and "Mudlark," a Jamii-produced event featuring community creative contributions and participation alongside an amazing team of artists. For our annual National Indigenous Peoples Day celebration, we unveiled a mural by Darwin Peters, a photo exhibition by Morningstar Quill, and performances by Sagatay Kwandibens, teachings by EJ Kwandibens, and Circle of Cedar Singers.

Bringing these projects to life requires a dedicated team – a heartfelt thank you to our Connector, Jonelle Sills, for her outstanding organization of these beautiful gatherings. Her position was supported by the Metcalf Foundation.

We extend a big thank you to the Canada Council for the Arts, our primary funder for our outdoor events, as well as Rama Gaming House and Charitable Gaming, City of Toronto Main Street Innovation Fund, and the Ontario Arts Council. Our outdoor performances are presented in partnership with Canadian Stage.





**SINCE 2011, ON**

**MAKING PUP  
BELONG TO TH**



**ONE EVENT AT A TIME,**

**PUBLIC SPACES  
FOR THE COMMUNITY.**







**16** indoor  
events

**770**  
visits





# ...WITH Adults

In 2023, we aimed to transform The Jamii Hub into a vibrant space for learning, socializing, and fostering creativity and expansion of our minds. We offered adults a diverse range of activities, including artist talks, Indigenous teachings, sewing and miniature making workshops, book clubs, and Sabrine Hakam's Culture Cloths rendezvous. Evenings were dedicated to exploring and reflecting on the world through discussions on works like 'Stolen' by Jonelle Sills or 'The African Culture' by Waleed Abdulhamid.

One of the visionaries behind these initiatives is Sarah N. Ahmad, Jamii's inaugural Activator! Sarah, upon joining Jamii, infused her passion for creating urban spaces through the arts.

We extend our gratitude to the Metcalf Foundation for their support with the Garden of Influence and Healing Gardens, which have had a significant and positive impact on our adult community.

A special thanks goes to the Canada Council for the Arts, the Toronto Arts Council, and Canadian Stage for their collaboration on the book clubs!





**3** outdoor  
photo exhibits

**6,000+**  
views





# ...WITH Women



We collaborated with two remarkable photographers, Gillian Mapp and Sabrine S. Hakam, to create two photo exhibitions directly inspired by their distinct works. These exhibitions aimed to share stories of the women of The Esplanade, each portraying their narratives uniquely.

“Calyx” is the title of Sabrine S. Hakam’s exhibition: “Much like the protective green layer around a flower bud, our exhibit, Calyx, is a testament to the power of flourishing creativity and blossoming ideas.”

“Journey From...” is Gillian Mapp’s exhibition, narrating the journeys of seven women from their home countries to our community.

In our efforts to support women, we launched the Moms’ Care Circle, driven by the enthusiasm of Kami, a local mom. During the spring, we organized self-care discussions, and in the fall, we orchestrated a toy swap—an initiative set to continue into 2024.

Our Connector Yusra Yacout, was one of the leads of the Moms’ Care Circle and, devoted to supporting young mothers, spearheaded the production of these series. Yusra is deeply involved in various facets of Jamii, particularly in administrative support and coordination.

We extend our gratitude to the Canada Council for the Arts, and Rama Gaming House and Charitable Gaming. A special acknowledgment goes to Canada Healthy Communities and the Toronto Foundation for the photo exhibitions, done in partnership with CONTACT Photography Festival.





**PIKANGIKUM**  
**FIRST NATION**



*As long as the grass grows, and the rivers flow,  
and the sun shines.*



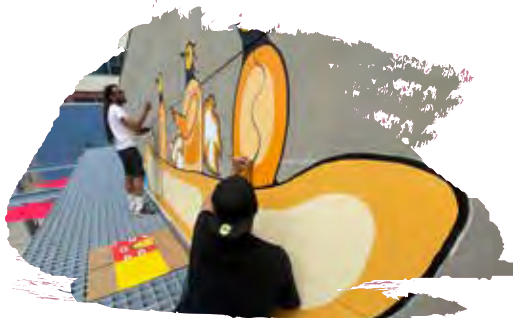
*5th visit*  
to Pikangikum



# ...WITH Pikangikum

Once again, Jamii traveled to Pikangikum. This time, with the support of Eenchokay Birchstick School, Pikangikum Education Authority, and local teacher Vanessa Hazel, we created a series of short docu-films featuring talented and inspiring individuals from Pikangikum, including Chief Shirley Keeper. Subsequently, we invited Darwin Peters and Morningstar to Toronto. Darwin crafted a breathtaking mural on the wall of the St. Lawrence Community Recreation Centre, while Morningstar presented her inaugural solo photo exhibit in David Crombie Park.

We extend our gratitude to the Ontario Arts Council for their support in our travels to Pikangikum, which will continue in 2024. Additionally, we are thankful to our numerous partners for Mashkiki's mural, particularly the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association.





**24** artist  
connections  
in Kenya





# ...WITH Kenya

“Baraza” is a Swahili term that signifies “a gathering of people convened with intent and purpose to share ideas.”

In November 2023, our Baraza facilitated a deliberate exchange among artists from our community at The Esplanade, as well as Nairobi and Naivasha in Kenya. The objective was to explore the establishment of connections between our two communities, centered around people and their stories.

Isorine Marc embarked on this journey alongside artists Takako Segawa (dancer and choreographer), Aline Morales (singer and musician), and Yasmine Omar (emerging photographer) for a two-week expedition to Nairobi and Naivasha.

During the initial week in Nairobi, we engaged with remarkable personalities including the talented singer Liboi, dancer Maulid Owino, photographer Edwin Maina, theatre director Fedari Oyagi, and numerous others. Our time in Nairobi culminated in a spontaneous evening of collaborative performances that were truly uplifting. In Naivasha, we collaborated with Edwin Wekesa at Rubiri Elementary School for a series of workshops that culminated in a performance for families—a deeply moving and impactful experience for all involved. In 2024, Jamii is extending an invitation to three artists from Kenya to visit our community, fostering a reciprocal relationship and purposefully intertwining our diverse narratives.

The concept of Baraza was devised by Isorine Marc in collaboration with Sharon Adhiembo and is in partnership with Sekoya East Africa. We extend our gratitude to the wonderful Chelsea Guya and Nancy Muttai for being our hosts and partners. We are thankful for the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, whose assistance has turned the Baraza into a reality. Special appreciation goes to the RBC Foundation, which has supported 6 Jamii Emerging Artists in 2023, including funding Yasmine Omar’s trip to Kenya.







...WITH

a dedicated team of

The Jamified  
An arts space for The Esplanade community





*community enhancers!*

Hub  
to gather and create together!





# A journey to

## Jamii's 2023 Leadership Team:

Isorine Marc - Alchemist  
Iris Unlu - Amplifier  
Yusra Yacout - Enabler  
Jonelle Sills - Connector  
Afnan Yakot - Connector  
Nadifa Daud Mohamed - Nurturer  
Maryam Alireza - Nurturer  
Sarah N Ahmad - Activator  
Maria Paula Trivino - Implementer  
Tameem Rahal - Arborist  
Yasmin Evering-Kerr - Summer Coordinator  
Osman Mahmud - Summer Coordinator

## 2023 Jamii Board:

Sharon McMillan - Co-President  
Jim Adams - Co-President  
Linda Leistner  
Amanda Maragos  
Zoie Edwards  
Aziza Virani  
Walter Azzalini

## Jamii's 2023 Consultants:

Tameem Rahal  
Georgia Reynolds

## Jamii's 2023 Event Runners:

Shaimaa Yacout  
Karen Lam  
Nada Yakot  
Raechael Goddard  
Zenzi (Yasmin) Harris  
Rahma Aliam  
Mumina Aden Hussein  
MJ Osman  
Amir Kemal  
Mira Ghabiel  
Mohamud Mohamed  
Zahra Omar  
Ghader Bamar  
Lalo Nixon-Pasten

## Jamii's 2023 Capture Team:

Jae Yang (Main Photographer)  
Laura Dittman (Photographer)  
Eray Guler (Main Videographer)  
Helton Dos Santos (Videographer)

## Jamii's 2023 Charitable Gaming

## Program Volunteers:

Omer Osman  
Sousan MUSAAD

## Taijahn Gumbs

Pushpa Saha  
Hadeal Karrar  
Osman Mahmud  
Collean Chau  
Larissa Peters  
Hafsa Ismail

## Jamii's 2023 Artists:

Adiyah Wilson  
Aline Morales  
Alyssa K  
Amani Woods  
Amelia Brown  
Ana Arias Garrido  
Andrew Patterson  
Anita Boey  
Anthony Wilson  
Ayelen Liberona  
Brescia N Reid  
Caitlin Morris-Cornfield  
Caleb Georges  
Candace Kumar  
Carol Anderson  
Carolina Rojas  
Chelsea Guya  
Miss Coco Murray  
Daniel Hamin Go

Daniel  
Darwin  
Diséiy  
Dixon  
Durae  
Dyalis  
Edwin  
Edwin  
Edz Gy  
Elijah  
Erin A  
Fadum  
Gaviac  
Georgi  
Gillian  
Habiba  
Hajera  
Heidi C  
Inas N  
Irma V  
Jaime  
Janice  
Jerusa  
Joann  
Joaqu  
Jonat  
Jonell  
Judy L  
Julian



# joy awaits!

## Join us in 2024!

le Migwans  
n Peters  
e Thompson

McFarlane  
Machado  
Maina

amfi

Stevens  
demoglu

no Hassan  
o Cleveland  
ia Reynolds

Mapp  
a Aktar Lipi  
Mohammed

Chan  
oosa Zein  
Willafuerte

Kearns  
e Garel  
a Leao

e Yesol Choi  
in Hidalgo  
han Rothman

e Sills  
uo  
Periquet

Kaela Willey  
Kaia Moreno  
Kami Shabahang

Karen Lam  
Katherine Perla  
Kimalee Phillip

Kristi Heath  
Kseniya Tsoy

Lauren Barnett  
Lennette Randall

Linda Epp  
Lucie Ticho

Mahlikah Awe:ri  
Marcos Martins  
Maria-Helena Carvalho

Mariam Ahmad  
Marija Bonaparte

Marley Lawrence  
Marta Elena Perez  
Mary Bernadette

Mathew Krist  
Maulid Owino

Maya Hall  
Maybella King-Reynolds

Mel Hart  
Midori Marsh

Mika Lior  
Miriya Wilson  
Monica Forrester

Morningstar Quill  
Muhia Keivin  
Nancy Muttai

Natalya Androsova  
Nathan Dyck

Neena Jayarajan  
Nickeshia Garrick

Nicola Pantin  
Nicolás Hernández

Nikitha James  
Noa Sarid

Nova Bhattacharya  
Paulina Perez

Patrick Parson  
Prince Massey

Purawai Vyas  
Rachana Joshi

Raiya Taha  
Rajvi Dedhia

Rebecca Leonard  
Regis Cardosa Da Silva

Rocio Conde  
Rosendo Leon

Roula Said  
Roxanne Brathwaite

Sabrina S. Hakam  
Sadiqqa Wilson

Sagatay Kwandibens  
Salah Wilson

Sam Ehsaei  
Samantha Thornton  
Sarah N. Ahmad

Sarah Lounsbury  
Sarah Ahmad  
Shadrack

Sharon Liboi  
Shirley Pincay

Sue CrowEagle  
Sukruti Tirupattur

Suzanne Maziarz  
Suzette Vidale

Svetlana Bassauer  
Takako Segawa

Tamar Ilana  
Timothy Cheung

Tobias Elser  
Troy Feldman

Tugce Alemdar  
Uche Ama

Vanessa Kearns  
Vinnie

Waleed Abdulhamid  
Yasmine Omar

Yvonne Ng  
Zarita Adhiambo

Zaynab Wilson