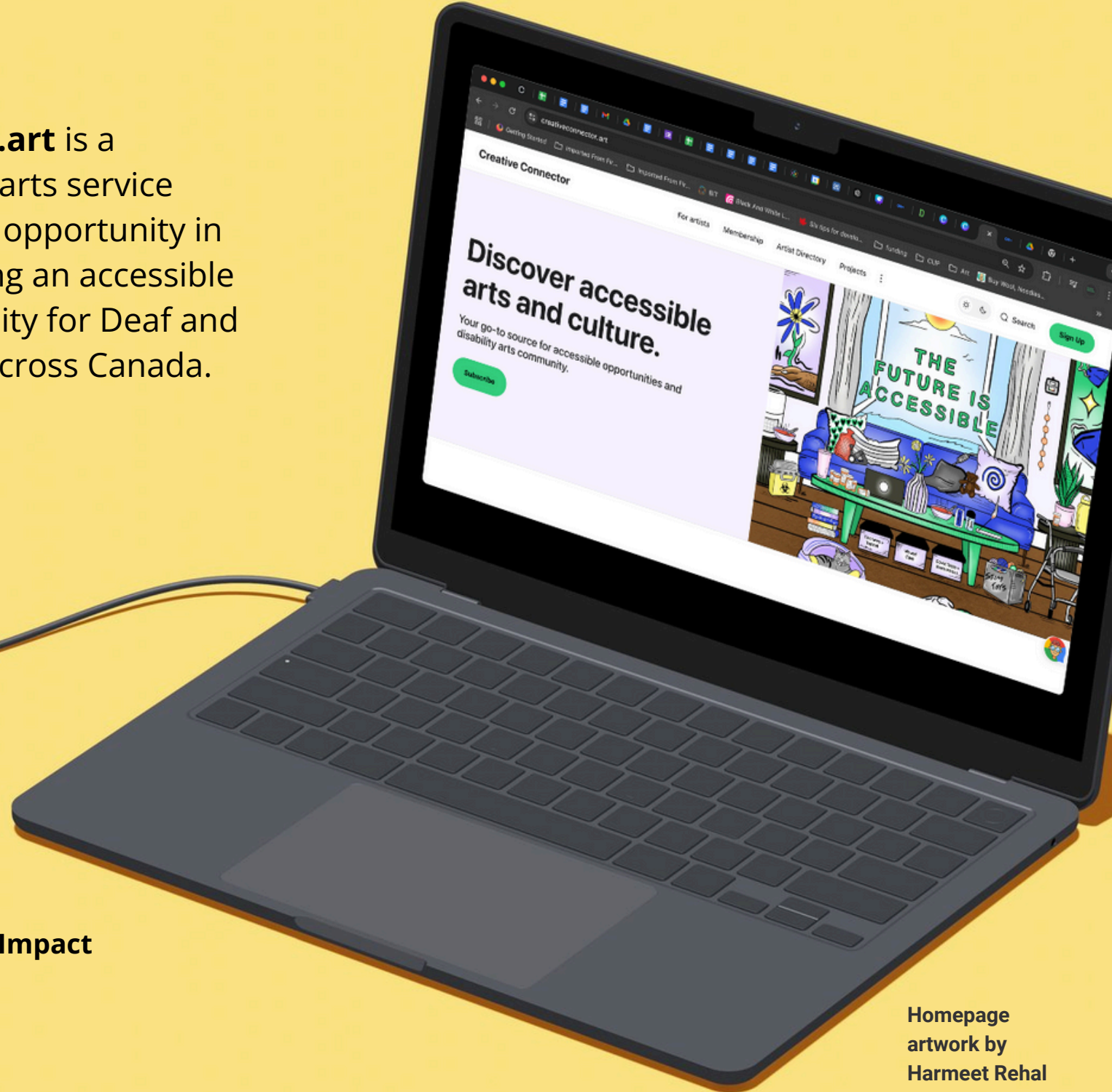


THE FUTURE IS ACCESSIBLE

Creative Connector: Bridging Access and Opportunity in the Arts

2024 Annual Impact Report

Creativeconnector.art is a disability-led online arts service bridging access and opportunity in the arts and fostering an accessible online arts community for Deaf and Disabled creatives across Canada.



INSIDE

- Letter from Founder
- Highlights
- Service and Program Impact
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Homepage artwork by Harmeet Rehal

LETTER FROM LINDSAY

In 2004, a letter from the Canada Council for the Arts changed my life. Receiving my first emerging artist grant affirmed my identity as an artist and sparked a drive that has sustained me for the past two decades. That event proved I could be taken seriously in the arts.

Since then, I've drawn inspiration from trailblazing artists within the community—artists like Christine Sun Kim, Jerome Ellis, Jess Thom, Erin Ball, Syrus Marcus Ware, Tina Friml, and Liz Carr, to name just a few. These artists and many more have transformed cultural spaces, proving that accessibility is not just a checklist but a creative, innovative aesthetic. This shift inspired the founding of Creative Connector.

Today, people with disabilities represent 22% of the population, a number that continues to grow due to COVID-19, climate-related illnesses, reduced social services, and an aging population. In this context, arts and culture are vital—not only for understanding the world around us, but for imagining and activating a better future that embraces disability.

The vision of Creative Connector is to build a world where Deaf and Disabled artists thrive creatively and lead sustainable, fulfilling lives. This report outlines how we are making that vision a reality, guided by the following three pillars:

1. **Community and Representation** – Building supportive networks and amplifying the representation of Deaf and Disabled artists nurtures creativity, resilience, and collaboration.
2. **Resources and Opportunity** – Access to resources and opportunities is essential for sustaining livelihoods and creative ambition. Much like my first grant, these moments foster belief in our ability to thrive.
3. **Collaboration and Partnerships** – Equity and access require collaboration. Creative Connector thrives thanks to arts workers, and leaders dismantling outdated models and creating accessible spaces.

This report highlights our progress, the impact of our work, and the power of this community to drive change.

We are profoundly grateful to the Canada Council for the Arts, our biggest partner, and the Ontario Arts Council for their financial support. We also thank our collaborators and friends, including Luminato, ReDefine Arts, Propeller Dance, ReVision: The Center for Art and Social Justice, VocalEye, VibraFusion Lab, CARFAC, and Theatre Passe Muraille.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this vision. Together, we are reimagining what's possible for Deaf and Disabled artists—and creating a more equitable future for the arts.

With gratitude, Lindsay Fisher
Founder & CEO, Creative Connector

OUR MANDATE AND MISSION

We are empowering Deaf and Disabled artists by providing accessible resources, networking opportunities, and professional development programs to amplify their visibility and representation in the arts.

Our work focuses on:

- Cultivating Online Disability Community and Amplifying Representation
- Connecting Artists and Arts Workers to Resources and Opportunities in the Arts.
- Collaborating with organizations to foster equity and inclusion in the arts.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



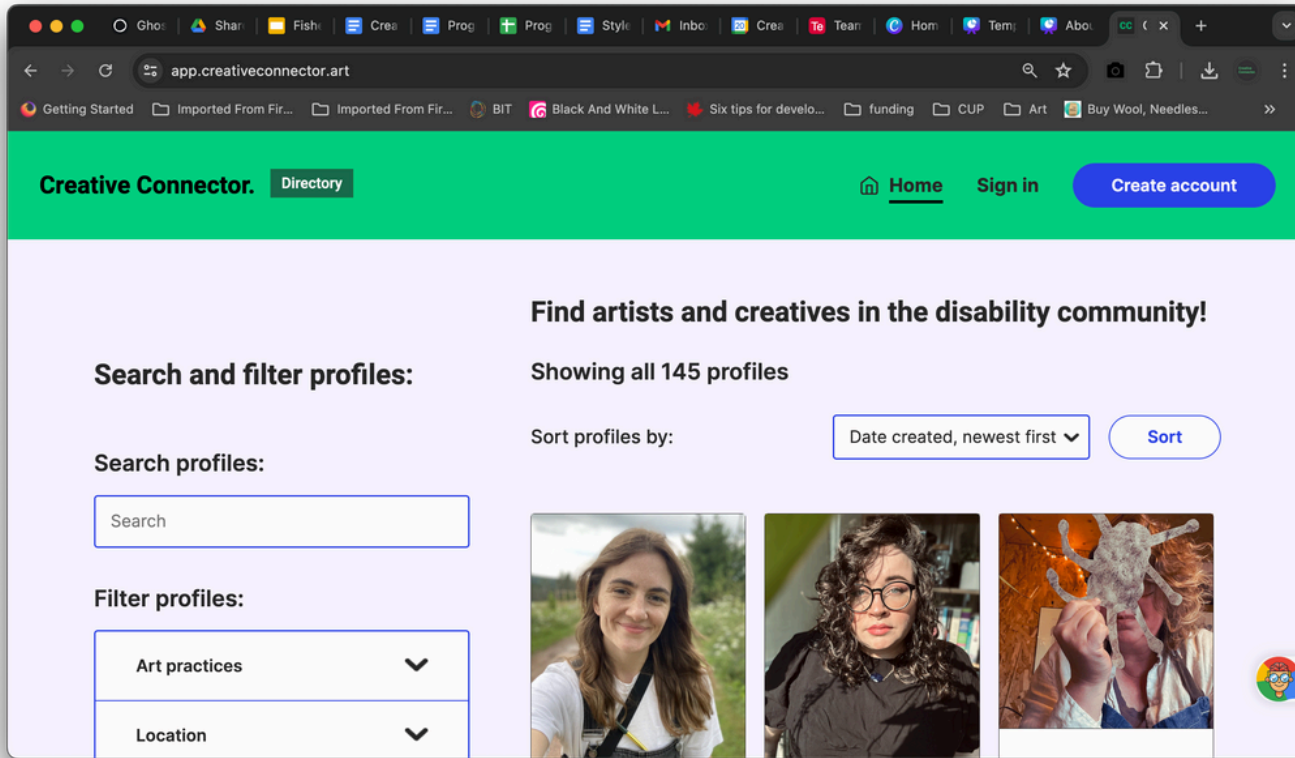
134 creatives joined Creative Connector with 60 creating public profiles on the artist directory.



75 participants attended Crip Livelihoods skills workshops with 70% reporting high satisfaction.



Established 12 new partnerships, increasing advocacy and opportunities for members.



"I have gotten more than one person reach out to me as a cold call from the connector. It's working!"

-Member

THE ARTIST DIRECTORY

With **60 members** creating public profiles, the directory is successfully amplifying the online presence of Deaf and Disabled artists, making their work more discoverable and fostering professional connections.

+60

artists created a public profile in the last year.

+823

new users visiting directory in the last year.





THE DISABILITY FILES

By publishing quarterly issues featuring artists and their stories, we're not just sharing narratives but actively celebrating disability art, creativity, and lived experience.

292

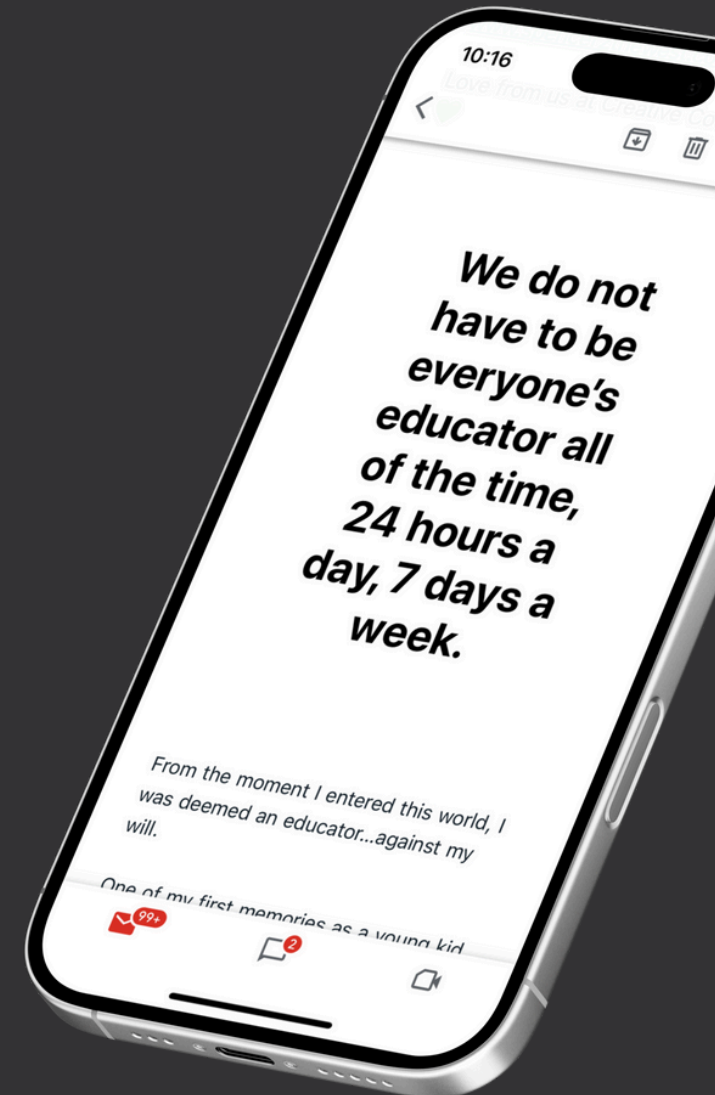
Received The
Disability Files in the
last year.

60%

Average open rate

"I love this so much. Thank you for having these conversations! It can be such a challenge figuring out how best to make things accessible."

-Member



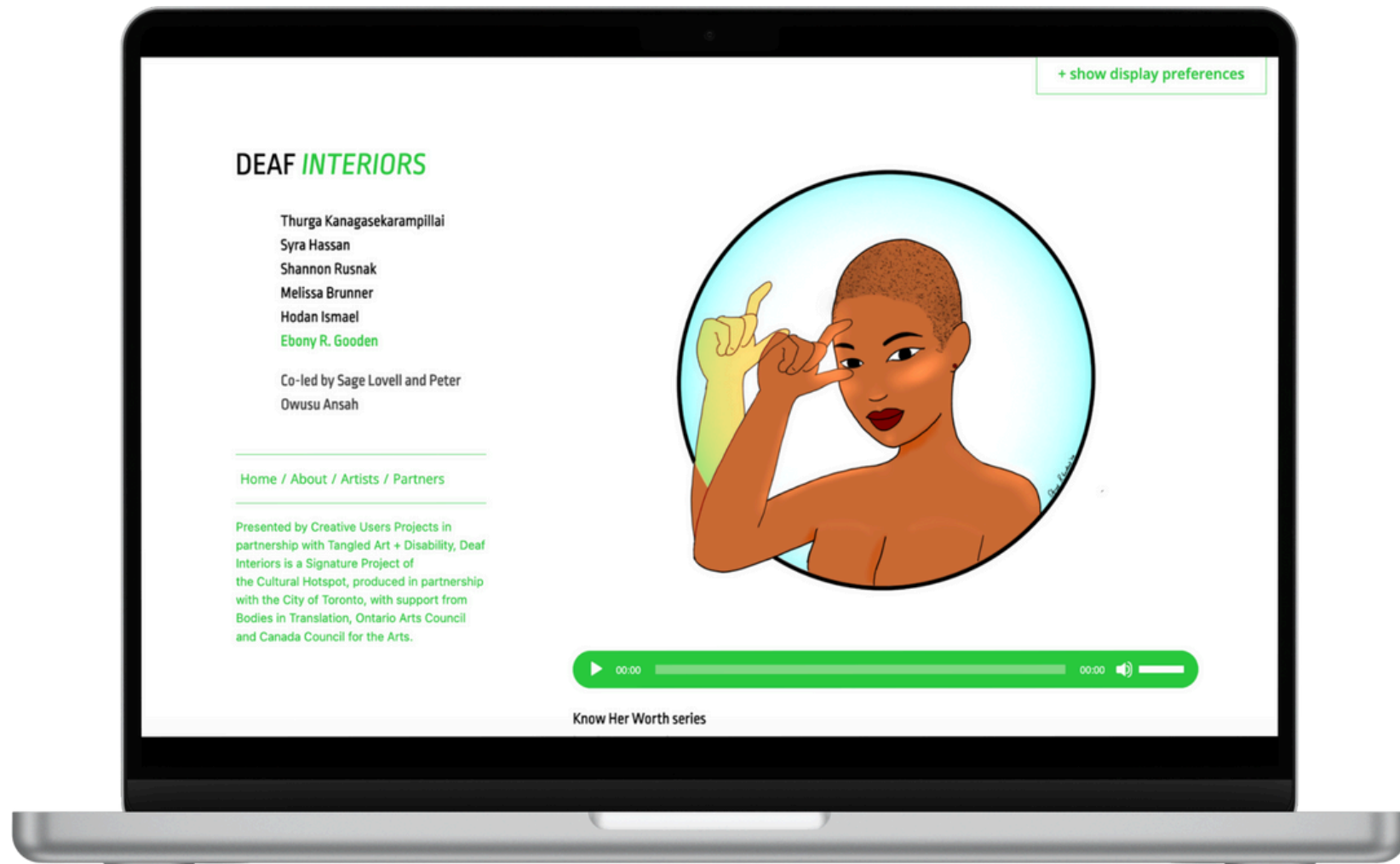
DEAFINTERIORS.CA

This online multidisciplinary exhibition continues to showcase Deaf artists, generating engagement and visibility for their work, reinforcing our commitment to representation of Deaf artists.

+430



Unique visitors
to site in the last
year.



CRIP LIVELIHOODS WORKSHOP SERIES

Through a diverse range of workshop topics—spanning advocacy for accessibility, financial literacy, and understanding artists' rights—the program has empowered 75 participants with the tools and knowledge to build sustainable and thriving professional and creative practices.

PowerPoint Slide Show - [Creative Connector ST 90 mins Online Yes Yes Marsha Storytelling Workshop 2024]



"I love your series. I get a really good feeling from Creative Connector, like really honest and helpful and intelligent programming, I think that shows that you really understand what we're all needing to hear."

-Member

High participant satisfaction and relevance demonstrate the impact of our professional development programs. Testimonials highlight how these workshops have empowered members to apply new skills in their artistic practices.

"I learned so much and can't wait to learn more. I wanted to thank you again for this opportunity and let you know that I'm already putting the skills I'm learning to use in my daily work."

-Member

Participation

75

Participants **attended** workshops

Participant Satisfaction

70%

Participants report being **very satisfied** with workshops

Professional Growth

40%

Participants **strongly agree** that workshops contributed to their professional growth.

Recurring Participants

11

Participants attended **two or more** workshops

Relevance

70%

Participants report workshop topics being **highly relevant** to their current professional needs

Skills Development

71%

Participants report being **very likely** to apply what they learned in their professional lives.



PAID ARTISTS

By compensating artists for their contributions, workshops, and consulting roles, we are setting a standard for equitable treatment and fair pay.

“Before Creative Connector, I didn't know where accessible arts jobs and opportunities were.”

-Member

35

artists were paid for guest hosting workshops, commissioned work and consulting on program design.



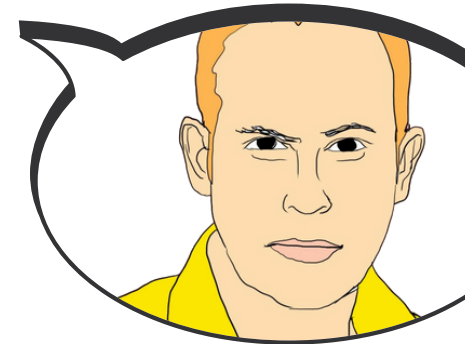
Featured Artwork by
Michaela Oteri for
homepage

WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE SAYING

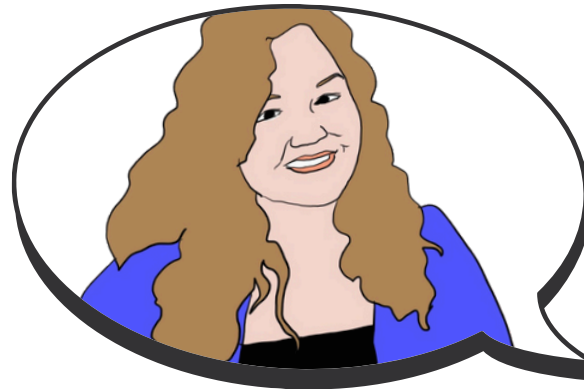
"WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THE WORK THAT Y'ALL WERE DOING AT CREATIVE CONNECTOR, IT REALLY EXCITED ME, BECAUSE Y'ALL ARE DOING IT VIRTUALLY, AND I THINK IT ENDS UP BECOMING A LANDING SPACE FOR SO MANY PEOPLE."
-HARMEET REHAL



"GROWING UP HERE IN ALBERTA, FOR A LONG TIME THERE WERE NO OTHER DEAF ACTORS HERE. IT WAS VERY ISOLATING."
-CHRIS DODD



IT'S HARD AS, I THINK, BEING AN ARTIST OR AN ACTOR TO SEE YOU KNOW, OTHER FOLKS FINDING WORK. AND I'M LIKE, WHERE DO THEY FIND THIS WORK? LIKE, WHERE DO THEY WHERE DO THEY FIND THAT AUDITION?"
- ASHLEY KING



"IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE A SUPPORT SYSTEM. IT'S IMPORTANT TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND TO BE ABLE TO LEVEL UP THAT LOVE FOR YOURSELF."
-SAGE LOVELL



Co-hosted a workshop with CARFAC on legal rights for artists with disabilities and created new resources for members on how to advocate for yourself.

Through CARFAC, **we joined the Provincial Arts Service Organizations (PSAO) Coalition**, positioning us to influence provincial arts policy.

“By intentionally setting aside room for disabled artists within our program, we not only created opportunities for participants who might not have been able to financially afford the program but we also broadened our own perspective, inspiring us to further integrate disabled perspectives in the program.”

- Program Partner, Generator

Annual Friend contributions totaling to \$3,000 helped sustain our programs and services.

With support from Canada Council for the Arts and Ontario Arts Council, **65% of every dollar invested funded programs, and 18% went directly to paying artists.**

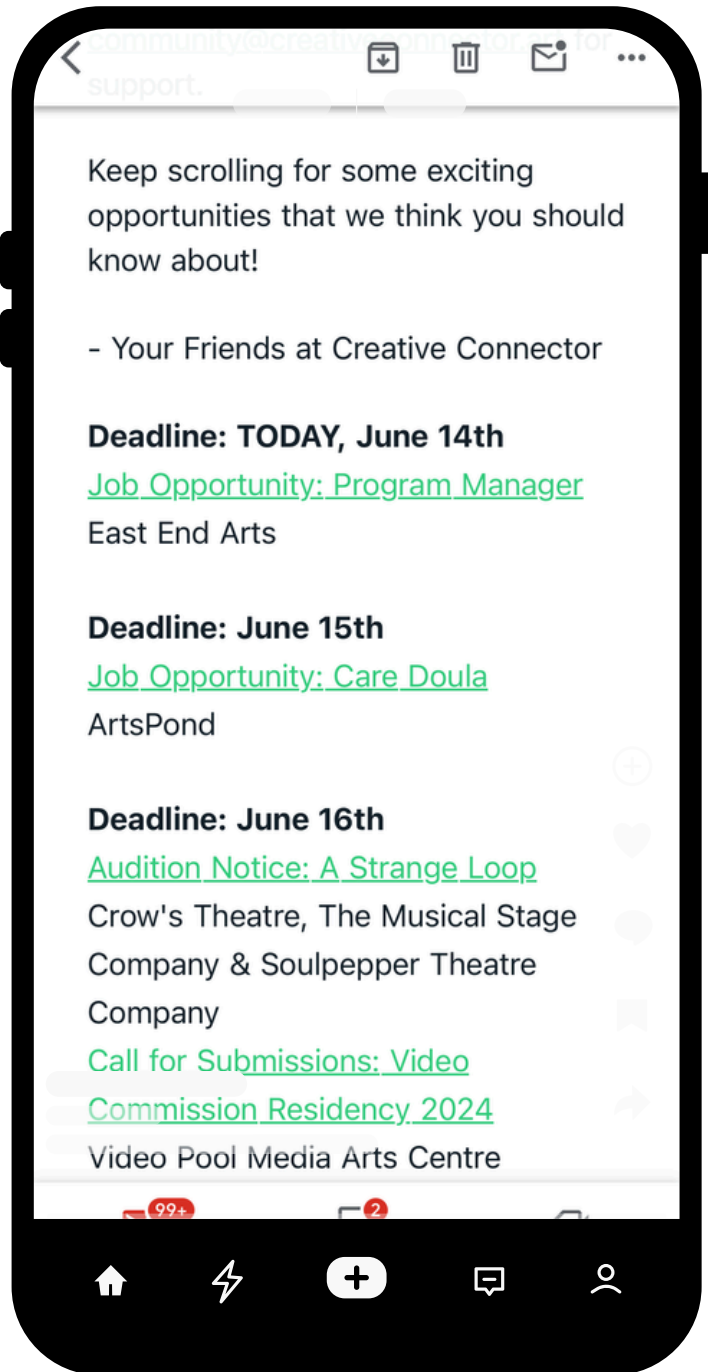
Sponsored opportunities for 5 arts workers with disabilities to participate in Generator’s 6-week Financial Literacy program.

Our collaborations with organizations broadened awareness of our services, boosting membership.

Partnered with Kim Collins and survivors Pat Seth and Marie Slark to support the development of Time Travel Wheels, a children’s novella about the history of institutionalization of people with disabilities.

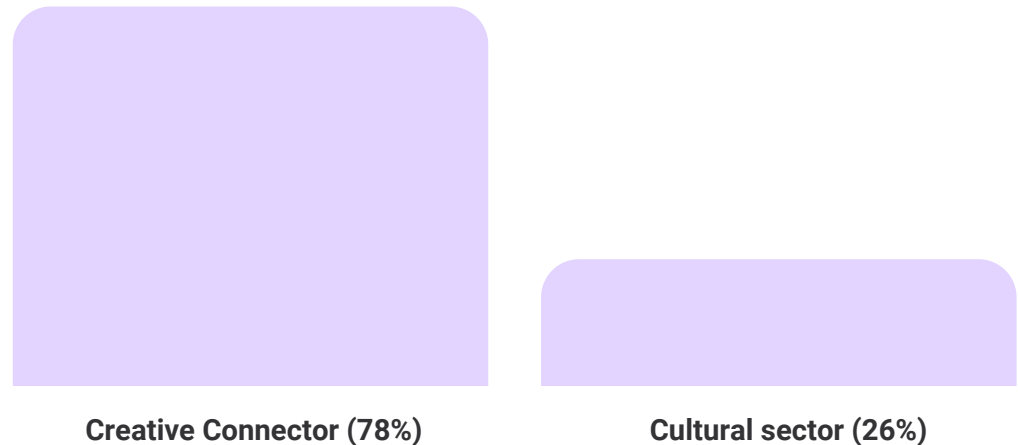
IMPACTFUL COLLABORATIONS

In 2024, our partnerships with arts organizations, funders, and community groups strengthened our ability to deliver professional development programs, advocate for equity, provide accessible resources, and create paid opportunities for Deaf and Disabled artists across Canada. We couldn’t do this on our own!



ENGAGEMENT

Our community of subscribers is small (535) but eagerly engaged, with an average engagement rate of **78%**. Compared to average engagement stats in the cultural sector (26%), this clearly demonstrates a vital resource for connecting artists with accessible opportunities, filling a critical gap in the arts sector.



"I really look forward to Fridays, getting the newsletter and reading it every day. Some of it doesn't apply to me, but I read it anyway."

-Member



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

Membership growth in the last year reflects the growing reach and appeal of Creative Connector's community, and the need for professional development opportunities.

134

People became members in 2024

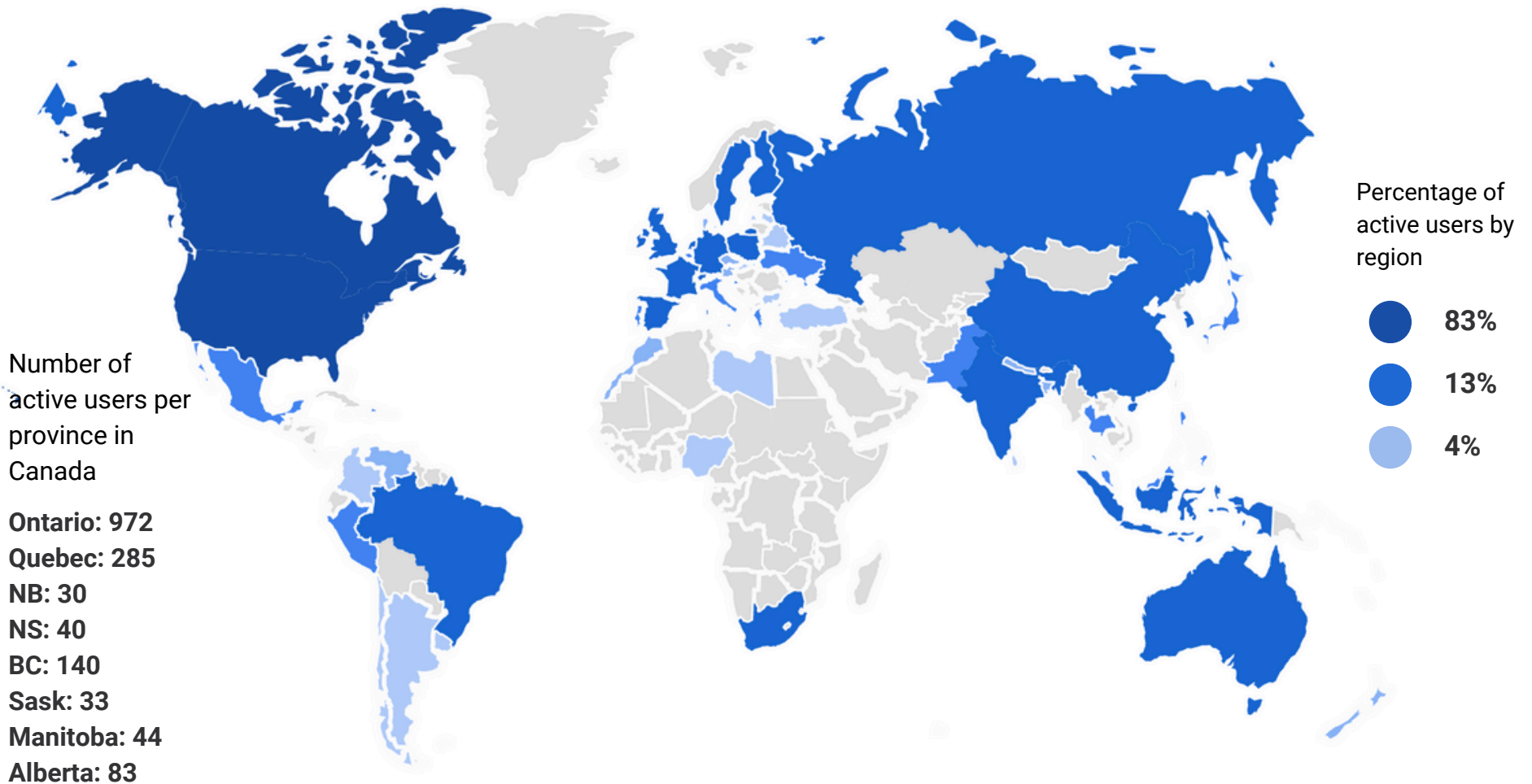


DEMOGRAPHICS

+62%

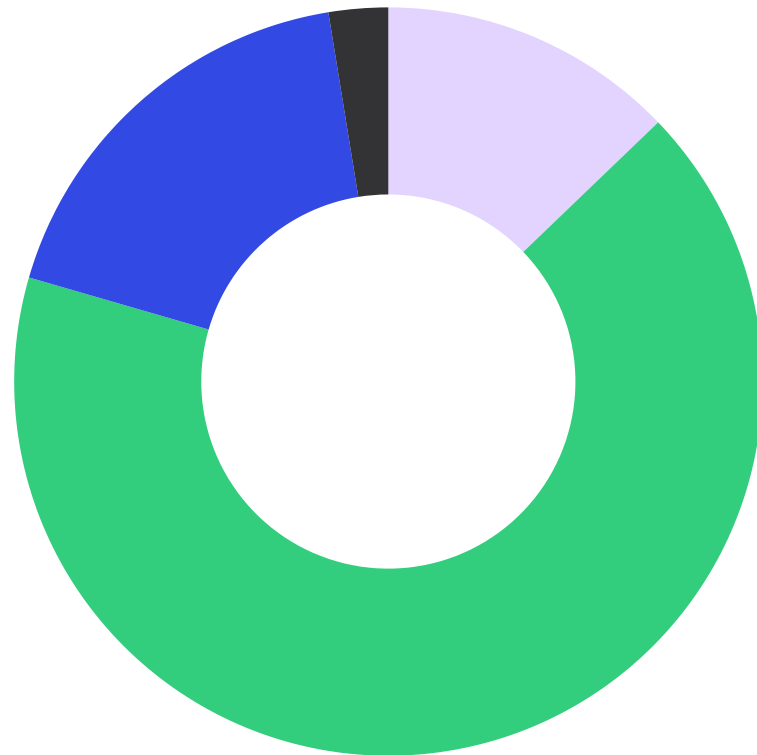
Website traffic to grow by 62% compared to 2023.

Visitors from 30 countries engaged with our site this year, with 29% based in Canada, 54% based in the US and a growing percentage coming from international locations. This demonstrates an exciting trend of increasing global engagement, as our platform becomes a valuable resource for Deaf and Disabled artists and arts professionals worldwide.



2024 FINANCIALS

We raised \$200,000 with thanks to Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, our Friends and paying subscribers.



\$130K

went to delivering programs and resources connecting artists to opportunities.

\$5K

went to accessibility measures

\$35K

went to paying artists with disabilities

\$25K

went to administration

 PROGRAMMING

 ARTISTS FEES

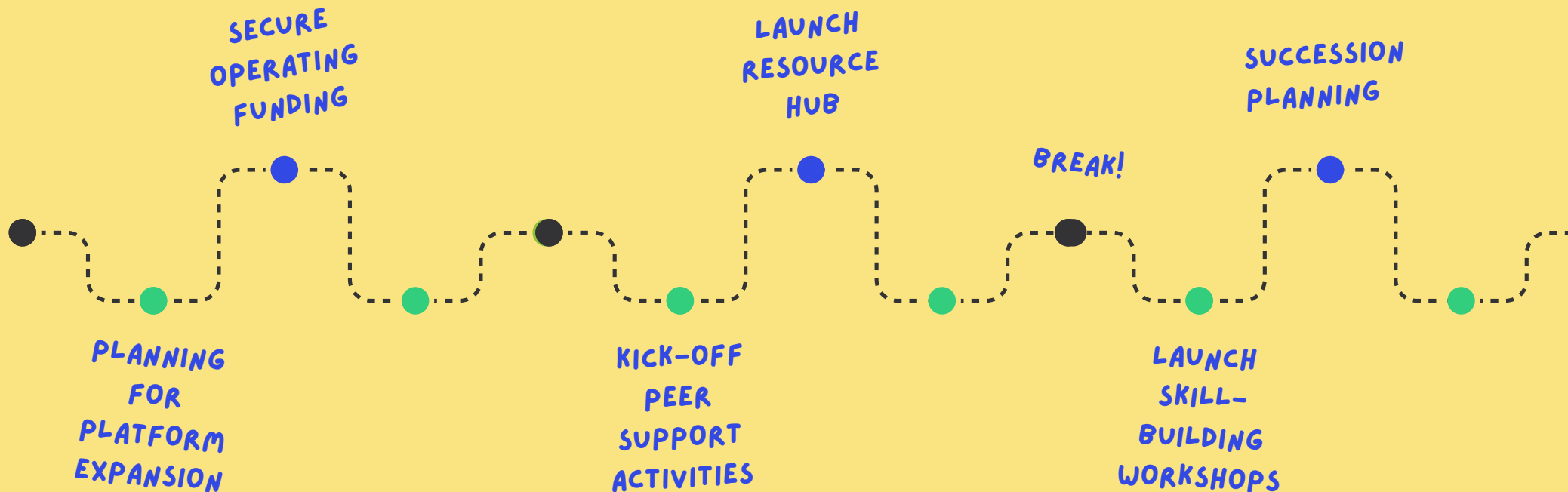
 ACCESS

 ADMIN

LOOKING AHEAD: 2025 MILESTONES

- Launch a national **Resource Hub and Micro-Grant Program** to enhance equity and accessibility in the performing arts.
- Establish dynamic **peer support and mentorship initiatives** for our members.
- Introduce **comprehensive skills workshops** to foster professional development.
- Secure **sustainable, multi-year operating funding**.
- Develop a **strategic succession plan** for future leadership.
- **Expand platforms** to highlight and celebrate Deaf and Disabled artists.

12 month timeline



OUR TEAM AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This year has been a remarkable journey, and we owe it all to the dedication, creativity, and resilience of our incredible team. Thank you for showing up with purpose, compassion and innovation and for making our shared vision a reality.



LINDSAY FISHER
FOUNDER AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR



ALEXIA VASSOS
HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS AND
OUTREACH



ROBERT TU
BOARD CHAIR



EYRA ABRAHAM
BOARD VICE-CHAIR



TRISTAN WHISTON
BOARD TREASURER AND SECRETARY

OUR FUNDERS

Our achievements this year have been made possible by the generosity and commitment of our funders, Friends and collaborators. Your belief in our mission has empowered us to create accessible opportunities, champion disability leadership, and foster meaningful change in the arts. Thank you for investing in our vision and standing with Deaf and Disabled artists.



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



FRIENDS AND COLLABORATORS



CARFAC
ONTARIO

