

2025

SUMMER STARS GRATITUDE REPORT

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

This past Summer, our 26th, one hundred and twenty-five deserving campers from the New York and Boston areas experienced a 9-day performing arts camp at absolutely no cost to them or their families. They arrived nervous and excited about camp, and left knowing themselves better, more prepared to succeed, and excited to take what they learned into their real lives. Our internal surveys (noted elsewhere in this report) show how Summer Stars changes the way campers see themselves—and the world around them.

Thank you so much for your contributions to this important work.

2025 was a great year for Summer Stars. Once again it was our biggest and best fundraising year ever, highlighted by our *A Day in the Life at Summer Stars* Gala. The gala was attended by over 200 people and netted a record one-night raise for the Foundation. (This year's event promises to be even better! Please hold March 28, 2026 on your calendar now. Details to follow.)

This growth comes despite the squeeze the federal government is currently putting on grants to arts organizations and its funders. While our grant-writing program is profitable, many funders deferred our request because they simply didn't have the money they had the year before. Things are ever-changing in the grant world, and we're hopeful that things lighten up in the future for all arts organizations.

Fortunately, our community base of support has grown—in addition to gifts from new and long-time individual supporters, we received more grants in 2025 than ever from family Foundations like Sonic Boom Foundation, William P. Anderson Foundation, the Horn Foundation and the Michele E. Dufault Foundation, plus continued support from businesses

and professional funding organizations like WB Mason, TD Bank, Rockland Charitable Trust, and South Shore Playhouse Associates and our partners at Northfield Mt. Hermon School.



Your support for Summer Stars and its mission becomes even more important as we kick off our first-ever Annual Campaign in 2026. Among our goals: a second Summer Stars session, changing the lives of another 125 deserving kids each year, and a teacher recruiting and training program.

Finally, we are thrilled to welcome founder Donna Milani Luther as our first salaried Executive Director. Having Donna devote so much of her time to our mission has given the organization even more passion, energy and creative power to grow and do even more for kids who need us.

We are poised for major success going forward, and on behalf of the Board and all of us, let me say THANK YOU AGAIN—for your support, your contributions and your friendship. We're thrilled to have you as part of our community.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Stockman".

Steve Stockman
President, Board of Directors
Summer Stars Foundation, Inc.

MEET THE TEAM



DONNA MILANI LUTHER

Executive Director of the Summer Stars Foundation, Norwell, MA

Founding Director of Summer Stars, now in its 26th year, where she leads a transformational program that provides underserved youth ages 12–17 with life-changing experiences in the performing arts. Helping Summer Stars Campers Chase their Dreams is one of the greatest pleasures of her life.

A passionate educator in leadership, creativity, and the arts, Donna also served as Head of Inly School, a progressive Montessori-inspired independent school in Massachusetts. During her tenure, she more than doubled enrollment, tripled the campus size, secured dual accreditation, and significantly advanced faculty development and fundraising.

Beyond Inly and Summer Stars, Donna shares her expertise in creativity, innovation, leadership, and team building with educators and business leaders worldwide. She has taught at the Creative Education Foundation's CPSI Program and Lesley University's M.Ed. Creative Arts in Learning program. Donna has presented at conferences across the U.S. and internationally, including Italy, Brazil, China, South Africa, and Israel.



SARAH STOCKMAN

Grant Writer, Minneapolis, MN

Sarah has been part of the Summer Stars family since she was little, and loved visiting her dad, Steve Stockman, every summer. She was a camper for 5 years, participated in leadership training for 2 years, worked as a counselor for 5 years, and now writes grants for Camp. She works in mental health at the University of California, Los Angeles, writes screenplays about strong women with her dad, and aspires to go to medical school. She holds a B.A. in Writing Seminars from Johns Hopkins University.

SUMMER STARS IMPACT

We ask campers ten questions about **how they view themselves and their place in the world around them** on the first day of camp and the same questions again on the last day of camp. **We saw an average increase of 18% across the questions.**

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SUMMER STARS CAMPER

7:00 AM
Wake up



8:00 AM
Breakfast

8:45 AM
Morning Sing



9:45 AM
Act 1



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SUMMER STARS CAMPER



11:00 AM
Act 2



ACT 1 & ACT 2 CLASS CHOICES INCLUDE:

Hip Hop, Music Video, Beatboxing, Rock and Record, Vocal Singing, Improvisation, African Dance, Poetry and Rap, Acting, Contemporary Dance, Technical Theatre, Musical Theatre, Art and Set Design



1:00 PM
Open Mic



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SUMMER STARS CAMPER

1:45 PM
Rest Time



2:30 PM
Workshop or
Camp Activity 1

**WORKSHOP
CHOICES INCLUDE:**

Audition Class, Photography,
Yoga, Mindfulness, The Art
of Self-Taping, Discover Your
Creative Superpowers,
Improv, Storytelling through
Modern Dance

4:00 PM
Workshop or
Camp Activity 2



**CAMP ACTIVITY
CHOICES INCLUDE:**

Hiking, Swimming,
Basketball, Soccer,
Circus Arts,
Arts and Crafts



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SUMMER STARS CAMPER

5:30 PM
Dinner



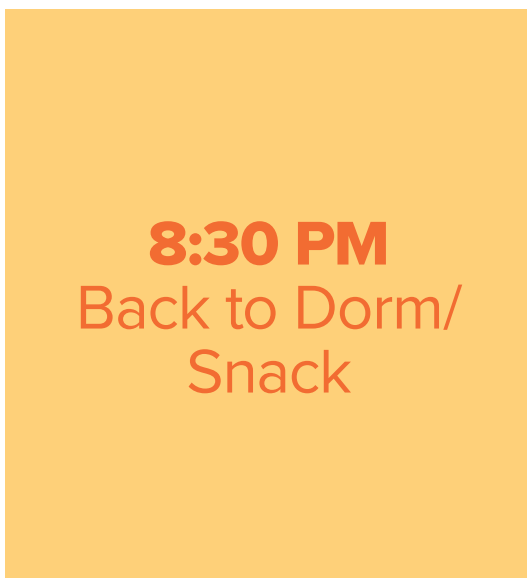
6:45 PM
Troupe Time



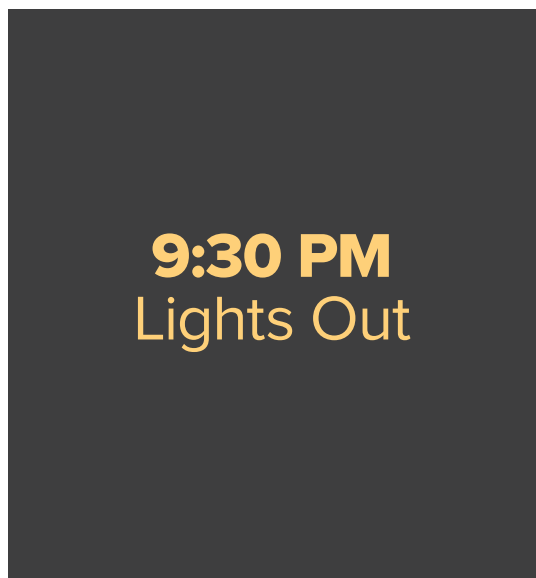
7:30 PM
Evening
Performance



8:30 PM
Back to Dorm/
Snack



9:30 PM
Lights Out



A LETTER FROM FIRST-YEAR VOLUNTEER, ISMET MAMNOON

I can feel the magic of Summer Stars before the first campers even arrive on campus. I sense it in the excitement that starts to build as the staff arrives and hugs are exchanged. The buzz builds as people who haven't seen each other for a year catch up and every conversation is peppered with the sense of anticipation that this will be the best year yet. As a newcomer, I play with the babies on the sidelines, watching and hoping that I can add something of value. This is my first time as a contributor at Summer Stars and I'm not (yet) sure that I really belong. Other than being a member of an appreciative audience, I have had no prior experience in the performing arts, so I'm not really sure what I can add here.

Quiet observation seems like the best strategy, that is, until the singing starts. "I **can't** sing!!!" The warning bells are ringing in my head as Donna hands out the music and lyrics. I try to pass the book along to the next person politely explaining that I just plan to watch and listen. One look from Donna and I realize that this is not an option. One does not disappoint Donna Luther, and if she believes I can sing, I must try. Am I soprano or alto? I have no clue. The panic is real — I don't know the lyrics, I can't read music, and I have no business singing. People to the left and right of me make encouraging sounds as I add my tuneless voice to the mix. An hour later, my heart is no longer racing and I dare say, I am actually starting to enjoy the experience.

Through the week, I learn the lyrics, I join every Morning Sing, and I practice the songs on repeat every night so that I can learn the music. I no longer care about whether I am a performing artist. As long as I'm showing up, doing the work, taking a risk, and trusting the process — I am honoring the art and I have earned my place here.

Over the next week and more, I come to recognize that my experience is not unique. The campers arrive on day one wondering the same thing — "Do I belong here?" For some it shows up as shyness,

quiet voices, hesitant attempts at socializing. For others it's bravado, swagger, and a little bit of attitude.

By midweek the process of transformation has begun as they dance, sing, write, and perform under the tutelage and guidance of exceptional professionals. Community is being created and confidence is emerging in this space where there is safety, acceptance, and support, balanced by accountability and expectation. Everyone contributes in some way — by cheering for their friends as they step up to Open Mic or taking turns to clean up the tables after mealtimes, or helping each other learn lyrics, choreography or lines. Everyone stretches physically, mentally and emotionally. They work hard to hone their craft and try their hand at new things. Dancing in the mornings, painting back drops in the afternoon, and surprising themselves over and over again with what becomes possible when they try.

As the campers take their places on the stage for the big show, the message is writ large on every face, in every stance, in every note sung and every word spoken — the metamorphosis is complete. Not just on this stage before an audience composed of their families and friends, but on any stage, metaphorical or real, large or small, with or without an audience, that they need to show up on in their lives — They belong!



We are endlessly grateful to the professionals who give their time and heart to Summer Stars—our Board Members, Support Staff, Videographers, Wine Tasting Sponsors, and many Teaching & Workshop Artists. This work is possible because of you!

SUMMER STARS ALUMNI, **MALIK MITCHELL, AGE 25**

What is your experience with Summer Stars?

I attended Summer Stars as a camper and a part of the Leadership team from 2013-2018. From 2021-2023 I was a counselor, and I currently now serve as a Lodge Leader.

What do you do outside of Camp?

Outside of camp I'm a professional actor, Singer/Songwriter, choreographer, and teaching artist.

What it is about Summer Stars that keeps you coming back?

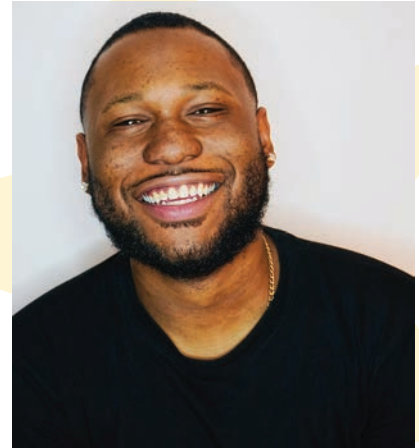
What keeps me coming back every year is the opportunity to pour into the next generation of young artists. Navigating them through their highs/lows so that they can find their purpose.

How does your work at Summer Stars impact you?

This work keeps me humble, hungry and reminds me everyday of what is necessary to push our young people forward.

How did Summer Stars impact you as a person/performer?

As a performer summer stars has taught me the basics of professionalism in an artistic space at a very young age. It also has shown me that no matter how old I get I will never lose my sense of wonder because that is the key to creating new ideas that can change the world.



"I used to think I wasn't good enough, but now I know I am."



SUMMER STARS ALUMNI, **ZANYAH DORFEUILLE**, AGE 26

What is your experience with Summer Stars?

I first started out as a camper in 2012, then moved to camp counselor, and now I am the contemporary teacher and host our Mindfulness workshop.

What do you do outside of Camp?

Outside of Summer stars, I am a professional dancer and entrepreneur. While taking a break from dance due to an injury, I started Seed To Sól Creative Wellness Program where my main focus is combining my love for mindfulness work and the creative arts.

What it is about Summer Stars that keeps you coming back?

What keeps me coming back to Summer Stars, it the impact it leaves on my soul. Summer stars is my chosen family who I can never get enough of.

How does your work at Summer Stars impact you?

Summer Stars gave me the space to host my own Mindfulness workshop and I fell in love with the work and the impact it has on the youth. Without Summer Stars, there would be no Seed To Sól. Every year Summer Stars gives me a gift and the reminder that growth may be uncomfortable but it's necessary.

How did Summer Stars impact you as a person/performer?

Summer stars has impacted me so much as an individual. It has taught me to just go for it, whether is be in the arts or just in life. Helping me accept that I can truly do anything all I have to do is reach for the stars.



"I used to think I couldn't sing, but now I know I can."

SUMMER STARS ALUMNI, **VICTORIA CHAN-FRAZIER, AGE 38**

What is your experience with Summer Stars?

I started as a camper in 2000 at 13 years old (when Summer Stars was founded). Since then, I've had the opportunity to be a counselor in training, junior counselor, counselor, staff photographer, and serve on the Board of Directors.

What do you do outside of Camp?

I'm on the Social Impact and Influencer Engagement team at The Kids Mental Health Foundation and live in Atlanta with my husband Michael (who has also worked at Summer Stars) and two children.



What it is about Summer Stars that keeps you coming back?

Summer Stars is a chance to explore connections with yourself and your peers, all while learning and having fun together in a safe space. Navigating the world is not always the easiest, but Summer Stars equips you with the tools to build confidence in performing arts, which you can take to any corner of the world. This keeps me engaged, knowing that the next generation will have this opportunity the same way that I did at age 13!

How does your work at Summer Stars impact you?

Summer Stars was life changing! At 13 years old, I knew that I loved the performing arts. The Summer Stars curriculum, teachers, fellow campers, and being outdoors gave me the opportunity to explore my own confidence — in the performing arts space and as a teenager figuring things out. Summer Stars was the first time I saw the intersection of entertainment, non-profit, and advocacy and that's what helped shape my career. I've had the opportunity to work with actors, musicians, and athletes who utilize their platforms to bring awareness to causes that they're passionate about. It's a blessing to wake up everyday and be in this career, thanks to everything I learned at Summer Stars.



"I used to think trying new things was boring, but now I know it helps you grow."

SUMMER STARS ALUMNI, **ANTHONY BINGHAM, AGE 37**

What is your experience with Summer Stars?

I first was connected with Summer Stars back in 2001 when I became a camper for the first time. My current role at Summer Stars is the Camp Volunteer Coordinator. So, if you come to camp and want to add value to our legacy, I would be the person to help guide you to maximize your full potential and skill sets to camp.

What do you do outside of Camp?

I have my dual Masters in Education & Special Education, and I work in Boston Public Schools for the Central Office as an Inclusive Practices Community Support Coordinator. I've been a special educator for over a decade and love making an impact in our future, our students.



What it is about Summer Stars that keeps you coming back?

What keeps me coming back to Summer Stars yearly with my wife and children is the magic that Summer Stars spreads. This magic consists of joy, love, security, safety, talent expression, rigor, challenging self — all full of fun and excitement. This shining magic is spread to new and returning campers, families, staff, volunteers, donors who help us continue our legacy, and everybody else who we can reach near and far.

How does your work at Summer Stars impact you?

My work at Summer Stars impacts me by allowing me to be a part of the whole experience from start to finish and be the glue that's needed at any point. I feel energized when I'm at camp as I see our staff makes such a great difference in our campers' lives.

Summer Stars impacts me in my daily work in Special Education, as it allows me to think innovatively and critically, and be resourceful.



"I used to think I should be realistic, but now I know I can dream bigger."

THANK YOU, **NINA!**

The entire Summer Stars community wishes to extend our deepest gratitude to Nina Biggar DelVecchio.

For more than 25 years, Nina has poured her heart, vision, and steadfast dedication into building and elevating our program.

We are profoundly grateful for her unwavering commitment, her grace in every challenge, and her abiding belief in the potential of our young people.



MEET THE BOARD



ROB BISHOP

Long Beach, CA

I serve on the Summer Stars Foundation board because I believe deeply in the power of creativity, mentorship, and community to transform young lives. Summer Stars offers underserved kids a rare opportunity to discover confidence, express themselves through the arts, and experience a supportive environment that can change the trajectory of their future. Having seen how profoundly these experiences shape a young person's sense of possibility, I'm committed to helping expand that impact.

I joined the board to contribute my experience and energy to an organization whose mission aligns with my values. Summer Stars' immersive camp model creates a space where growth happens quickly and authentically, and I'm proud to support its long-term sustainability and reach. By strengthening the foundation's programs and resources, I hope to ensure that more young people have access to this empowering, life-changing opportunity for years to come.



SHAUMBA-YANDJE DIBINGA

Boston, MA

For more than 22 years, I have had the joy and privilege of being part of Summer Stars Performing Arts Camp. My connection to this community runs deep—my children grew up at Summer Stars, first arriving with me as newborns and toddlers and later becoming campers, leaders-in-training, junior counselors, and ultimately a master teacher and a counselor.

Summer Stars is far more than a camp. It is a transformative environment that uplifts both young people and staff, providing tools, confidence, and a sense of belonging that last well beyond the summer. It cultivates creativity, emotional resilience, and a powerful belief in what is possible.

I choose to serve on the Board because SummerStars embodies everything I value: a peaceful and energetic spirit, a commitment to inclusivity, and an unwavering dedication to supporting ALL youth in their artistic journeys. It is a place where young people are seen, encouraged, and celebrated in the most profound way.

I remain committed to this work because SummerStars changes lives—mine included—and I am honored to help ensure its impact continues for generations to come.

MEET THE BOARD



MAGGIE DUGAN

Board Clerk, Barcelona, Spain

I serve on the Summer Stars Board because I see, every single year, how this camp changes kids' lives. They step away from whatever pressures they're carrying at home and land in a place built by extraordinary teachers who challenge them, support them, and help them stretch into a newer version of themselves.

I get something from the team, too. Working with this dedicated group of professional teachers and coaches is invigorating and inspiring. We work hard together, and we make it fun for ourselves, as well as the kids. The campers sense that, I'm sure — which means we're also modeling for them how to collaborate creatively and work as a team to get results.

I see a spark in our campers each summer as they discover their strength, their voice, and their potential. Watching their confidence rise over the week is one of the real joys of being part of Summer Stars.



TIM DUNNE

Board Treasurer, Barcelona, Spain

I serve Summer Stars for three reasons.

1. It's a family legacy. My mother was involved since the beginning. She asked me to attend many times and I did.
2. It's my touchstone to theatre. Summer Stars gives me the chance to enjoy performances, and participate in some.
3. I love meeting the campers, hearing their stories, enjoying their talent, and encouraging them to stretch.



MICHAEL GERALD

Houston, Texas

The reason I serve on the Summer Stars board is because I want to witness its growth for the next 50 years. Summer Stars has been an instrumental part of my development and creativity. Every year I attend, I learn something new, I see something different, and I grow in new ways. I see Summer Stars as an incubation space for creation—where young people develop leadership skills and tap into their potential through the guidance of world-class creatologists from around the globe.

MEET THE BOARD



DEBORAH KOKINOS

Arlington, MA

I love the Summer Stars mission—to ensure that every camper’s voice is heard and that their individual talents and hard work are appreciated. And, the opportunity Summer Stars provides campers—to live independently, spend time in nature, and learn from peers—is invaluable. These unplugged, open, and safe spaces allow campers to thrive and spread their wings, and I’m grateful to be a part of it!



STEVE STOCKMAN

Board Chair, Woodland Hills, CA

Why Summer Stars for me?

Kids arrive at Summer Stars from schools where they don’t get the attention they need, from homes where their parents may be so wrapped up in surviving that they don’t have the time or money they’d like to spend helping them. From lives where adult guidance is scarce, and success is for other people.

Those kids come to Summer Stars, work hard and succeed—some for the very first time in their lives. And it changes them. In 9 short days, they learn to see themselves and the possibilities that surround them in new and different ways. They learn what success looks like for them. And that learning carries into their real lives from the moment they get home.

I think most of us would like to make some positive change in this world. To leave the world a little bit better than we found it. Summer Stars, now 26 years old, remains the best, most efficient, most rewarding way I’ve found to do that.

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Summer Stars is presented by the Sonic Boom Foundation and produced with the generous support of Northfield Mount Hermon School.