

2025-2026 TWA Grant Application

Contact Information

Organization Name:	<u>Hope Stone, Inc.</u>
Contact Title:	<u>Executive Director</u>
Contact Name:	<u>Amy Pearl</u>
Address:	<u>2726 Bissonnet St, Ste 240-513</u>
City:	<u>Houston</u>
Email Address:	<u>amy@hopestoneinc.org</u>
TWA Sponsor:	<u>Virginia Blanton</u>
TWA Sponsor Email:	<u>gingerblanton@sbcglobal.net</u>

Artistic Significance & Project Innovation and Creativity: (Question 3)

Organization's Mission:

To unlock the innate creativity of young people through our arts outreach programs.

Name of Project/Program to be Funded:

The Hope Project

Project Description:

The Hope Project serves 900 economically disadvantaged children in their schools through music, dance, theater, photography, video design, garden design, and creative emotional intelligence classes.

Project Purpose: What are the goals of the project/program?

Our goals of The Hope Project are: (1) to deliver weekly arts classes in dance, music, theater, video design, garden design, and creative emotional intelligence that nurture creativity and engagement; (2) to equip children with skills in self-expression, empathy and emotional regulation; and (3) to strengthen student well-being and resilience while contributing to a positive school culture.

Is this program offered at a cost to children? If there is a fee for this program, please enter the cost in numerical dollar amount per child to enroll.

No, this is a free opportunity for all children participating.

What is the expected number of children to be directly served by project/program?

900

What is the age range of children served by this project/program?

2-14

Identify the artistic discipline(s) included in this project/program: Check all that apply.

Dance, Film/Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts, garden design, creative emotional intelligence (arts-based SEL integration)

Project Innovation and Creativity: (Question 4)

Describe how this program provides arts access for children.

The Hope Project ensures arts access by bringing high-quality dance, music, theater, visual arts, video design, and garden design classes into the school day at underserved campuses. With no cost to families and no need for transportation or after-school availability, children receive consistent creative learning they would not otherwise experience.

Explain what makes this program/project innovative. Program/Project innovation differs for each community. If your program is a traditional arts experience but is unique to your community, please specify. If your program is innovative, relative to traditional arts offerings in your community, please specify.

The Hope Project is innovative in providing weekly, year-long arts classes during the school day at underserved campuses. We integrate mindfulness and creative emotional intelligence into every discipline, and at several schools all students or full grade levels participate, ensuring consistent, equitable arts access.

What type or level of arts experience do children have as a result of your program? Please select one.

Student Artists: Children observe, are introduced to, and engage in the arts, and practice the artistic process first hand by creating visual and/or performing arts of their own.

Is this a new program? If the answer is NO, how long has the program been in existence?

24 years

Organizational Management and Capability: (Question 5)

The organization has the following human capital. Check all that apply.

Board, Staff, Project Manager/Director, Volunteers

Describe your organization's staffing structure.

Number of full-time employees	3
Number of part-time employees	28
Number of volunteers	10

Describe the qualifications and experience of the individuals who will provide this programming and work directly with children.

The Hope Project's 30 teaching artists include working and retired professional artists and trained arts educators experienced in teaching youth. All receive a comprehensive yearly orientation and monthly training based on "A Guide to Mindful Arts Methodology," Hope Stone's curriculum created to equip artists to work effectively with at-risk students.

Race and Ethnicity

Describe the race proportion of your:	Staff	Board
African American	0	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0
Asian	1	11
Black or African American	23	11
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0
White	53	56
Two or More Races	0	0
Other	23	22

Describe the ethnicity of your:	Staff	Board
Hispanic/Latino	23	22
Not Hispanic/Latino	77	78

Outside Support: (Question 5 continued)

List community partners supporting the program:

Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation, Brookdale Senior Living Solutions, Kinder High School for the Performing Arts, St. Mark's United Methodist Church

Organizational Funding: (Question 5 continued)

Has the organization received a TWA Grant in the past? If so, which years?

Yes 2016, 2022, 2023

Budget at a Glance

Total Organization Budget Amount	395384
Total Program/Project Budget	245685
TWA Grant Request	20000
Grant request's percentage of total organization budget. Cannot exceed 25%.	5

If awarded the full grant request, what amount of TWA funding would support the following categories? Please provide a numerical dollar amount for each area.

Staffing/Salaries	20000
Operational Expenses	
Supplies and Materials	
Facilities (Rent/Mortgage)	
Technology Equipment	
Instructional Resources and Curriculum	
Student Transportation Fees	
Other: Please specify	

Attachments Included

1. Organization's current year budget.
2. Organization's final/actual budget for the previous year.
3. Program/project budget

Other sources of revenue (\$2,000 or more) for the project/program: Provide a list of sponsors, grants, etc., and include dollar amounts.

\$30,000 – Keating Family Foundation; \$10,000 – Texas Commission on the Arts; \$20,000 – Brown Foundation; \$10,000 – AKR Foundation; \$10,000 – Favrot Foundation; \$10,000 – William E. and Natoma Pyle Harvey Charitable Trust; \$41,000 – Individuals/Board

Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation: (Question 5 continued)

Program Implementation (if new) or Operational Plan: How will/is this project/program administered? Limit 1500 characters including spaces. Please include details such as where the program will be hosted, how children will be enrolled, how students gain access to this program, if transportation is needed or provided, and how the program will be administered.

The Hope Project is administered through partnerships with four youth community sites: Small Steps Nurturing Center (two campuses), Clemente Martinez Elementary, Looscan Elementary, and Marshall Middle School. All programming is delivered on campus during the school day, eliminating transportation needs and ensuring full access for students. Enrollment is automatic for participating grade levels, ensuring access is not dependent on family schedules, transportation, or registration. Classes are scheduled in coordination with school administrators and hosted in designated classrooms, gym spaces, libraries, or multipurpose rooms. Hope Stone staff work closely with each campus to finalize schedules and ensure continuity throughout the year. Our 30 teaching artists are assigned to schools based not only on discipline expertise but also on their strengths with specific grade levels, and all receive monthly training and a comprehensive yearly orientation. Program delivery is overseen by Hope Stone's administrative team, which manages scheduling, staffing, payroll, communication with campuses, reporting, and ongoing coordination with partner principals and counselors.

Evaluation Plan: How will you evaluate the success of this program? Limit 500 characters including spaces.

We evaluate success through administrator feedback, attendance and behavior reports, and internal assessments three times a year. Teaching artists track student engagement, joy, kindness, curiosity, and involvement, and students complete simple self-evaluations using thumbs-up/neutral/down on statements such as – “I am in control of my own actions,” “All feelings are welcome,” “I matter,” and “I am strong and curious.”

Program/Project Timeline: Provide a detailed timeline to implement this program. If you choose to upload a file to answer this question please type, "Project Timeline attached" in the box below. TWA grant funds must be spent between June 1 - May 31. Limit 800 characters including spaces.

The Hope Project operates September 1–May 15 and is delivered weekly during the school day at our four community partner schools. Planning, budgeting, and staffing begin in June, with schedules finalized with each campus before the school year starts. Classes run throughout the fall and spring semesters – typically 10-12 weeks in the fall (September-December) and 12-14 weeks in the spring (January-May) – adjusted to each school's calendar and needs. Teaching artists receive monthly training, and Hope Stone staff manage scheduling, communication, and evaluation across the full year. All grant funds will be expended within the June 1-May 31 cycle.

Program/Project Timeline: Optional File Upload.

Impact: (Question 6)

Demographic Information of Children Served

Demographic description of the children served by this project/program: Check all that apply.

At-Risk of dropping out of school* See explanation in #18

Title I

Low Socioeconomic

Low arts access

Children recovering from an unusual life crisis. (i.e Foster Care, Neglect, Abuse, Trauma)

Children served represent cultural diversity

What percentage of children served by this program are considered at-risk? The term at-risk is used to identify students or groups of students who statistically have a higher probability of failing academically or dropping out of school.

98

What percentage of the children served by this program are economically disadvantaged?

98

Describe the community served by this program: Check all that apply.

Urban, Inner City, Major Metro Area, City- Large

Project Need: What need(s) does this project/program fulfill? Limit 200 characters including spaces

Children in our partner schools face economic poverty and poverty of experience. The Hope Project provides arts learning and creative opportunities they would not otherwise have.

Describe the race percentage of the student population served by the program. Please enter a numerical percentage for each. Percentages must add up to 100%.

American Indian or Alaska Native	0
Asian	0
Black or African American	23
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0

White	5
Two or More Races	2
Other	70

What percentage of the children served by this program are Hispanic/Latino? Enter a numerical response totaling 100%.

Hispanic/Latino	70
Not Hispanic/Latino	30

Optional Content Provided

Is there anything else that should be considered about this project/program? (Optional)

For our partner schools, The Hope Project is a meaningful part of their culture. Students know their Hope Stone teachers will arrive every week, ready to create with them, and they know the arts belong to them. Administrators consistently tell us that our combination of arts instruction and Creative Emotional Intelligence fills a critical gap that no other program provides. Thank you for supporting this work over the years and for helping us make a real difference in these students' lives.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date:

MAR 08 2001

HOPE STONE INC
2476 BOLSOVER STE 406
HOUSTON, TX 77008

Employer Identification Number:

76-0519238

DLN:

17053055728021

Contact Person:

EDWARD J SKELLY

ID# 31374

Contact Telephone Number:

(877) 829-5500

Our Letter Dated:

October 1997

Addendum Applies:

No

Dear Applicant:

This modifies our letter of the above date in which we stated that you would be treated as an organization that is not a private foundation until the expiration of your advance ruling period.

Your exempt status under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) is still in effect. Based on the information you submitted, we have determined that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are an organization of the type described in section 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

Grantors and contributors may rely on this determination unless the Internal Revenue Service publishes notice to the contrary. However, if you lose your section 509(a)(1) status, a grantor or contributor may not rely on this determination if he or she was in part responsible for, or was aware of, the act or failure to act, or the substantial or material change on the part of the organization that resulted in your loss of such status, or if he or she acquired knowledge that the Internal Revenue Service had given notice that you would no longer be classified as a section 509(a)(1) organization.

You are required to make your annual information return, Form 990 or Form 990-EZ, available for public inspection for three years after the later of the due date of the return or the date the return is filed. You are also required to make available for public inspection your exemption application, any supporting documents, and your exemption letter. Copies of these documents are also required to be provided to any individual upon written or in person request without charge other than reasonable fees for copying and postage. You may fulfill this requirement by placing these documents on the Internet. Penalties may be imposed for failure to comply with these requirements. Additional information is available in Publication 557, Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization, or you may call our toll free number shown above.

If we have indicated in the heading of this letter that an addendum applies, the addendum enclosed is an integral part of this letter.

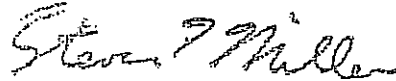
Letter 1050 (DO/CG)

HOPE STONE INC

Because this letter could help resolve any questions about your private foundation status, please keep it in your permanent records.

If you have any questions, please contact the person whose name and telephone number are shown above.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven T. Miller".

Steven T. Miller
Director, Exempt Organizations

Hope Stone, Inc.		
Budget vs. Actuals: Budget FY25		
June 2024 - May 2025		
	Total	
	Actual	Budget
Income		
40 Revenues		
40100 Individual	81,982.34	85,922.00
40110 Corporations	63,659.90	58,000.00
40115 Corporate Matching	10,549.00	1,000.00
40120 Grants/Foundations	144,973.93	126,474.00
40125 Government Grants	16,500.00	19,000.00
40130 Board Contributions	11,126.38	15,000.00
40190 Teaching	17,815.00	26,180.00
Total 40 Revenues	\$ 346,606.55	\$ 331,576.00
Expenses		
71050 Accounting Fees	7,210.00	2,100.00
71105 Auto/Gas Reimbursement	225.40	50.00
71110 Bank/Credit Card Fees	1,860.92	500.00
71120 Board/Committee Meetings	383.69	50.00
71125 Cleaning	250.00	
71130 Computer-Hardware & Software	360.14	700.00
71131 Data Base Fees	4,161.51	3,800.00
71140 Depreciation Expense	857.00	
71150 Donor Relations	102.79	100.00
71160 Dues, Fees, & Subscriptions	1,042.65	500.00
71162 Employee Relations	1,046.50	150.00
71200 Insurance-Directors & Officers	1,047.00	1,040.00
71210 Insurance-Gen Liab & SAM	8,930.76	8,660.00
71220 Insurance-WC	356.74	790.00
71224 Insurance - Accident	424.01	424.00
71230 Payroll - Executive Director	72,499.92	72,500.00
71231 Payroll - Program Coord.	5,833.32	
71237 Payroll Taxes - FICA & SS	18,461.43	19,123.00
71238 Payroll - SUTA	331.35	431.00
71239 Payroll - Service	2,924.79	2,700.00
71240 Employee Benefits	28,241.55	26,225.00
71244 Payroll - Sound Designer	500.00	
71245 Offsite Storage	1,485.75	1,400.00
71246 Payroll - Hourly Admin	4,764.86	4,000.00
71247 Payroll - Contract Admin	2,625.00	4,500.00
71248 Payroll - Teaching Staff -THP	85,723.50	98,180.00
71249 Payroll - Founder & Pres.	72,499.92	72,500.00
71260 Photo, Video & Music	1,800.00	
71270 Postage, Shipping, & Delivery	379.69	300.00
71280 Printing & Copying	1,014.30	400.00
71293 Graphic Design	1,000.00	800.00
71294 Arts Outreach Supplies	2,967.23	1,500.00
71296 Office Supplies	1,116.62	500.00
71300 Telephone and Internet	3,809.85	3,700.00
71301 Theater or Space Rental	264.00	
71320 Website Design	985.57	900.00
Total Expenses	\$ 337,487.76	\$ 328,523.00
Net Operating Income	\$ 9,118.79	\$ 3,053.00

Hope Stone Inc. 2025-2026 Operating Budget	Administration (Mngmt/General)	The Hope Project	Total Budget
Revenue			
Individual	29,500	116,586	146,086
Corporations	1,000	54,000	55,000
Corporate Matching	2,500	0	2,500
Grants/Foundations	40,000	115,000	155,000
Government Grants	10,000	2,000	12,000
Board Contributions	15,000	3,123	18,123
Teaching	0	15,625	15,625
Total Revenue	98,000	306,334	404,334
Expenses			
Total Operating	34,545	13,889	48,434
Total Payroll	57,303	289,647	346,950
Total Expenses	91,848	303,536	395,384
Net Revenue	6,152	2,798	8,950

The Hope Project 2025-2026* Budget
Community Partner Schools

Income

(Contributed)

\$70,000 – Individuals
\$35,000 – Corporations
\$95,000 – Foundations
\$10,000 – Government
\$20,000 – Texas Women for the Arts Request

(Earned)

\$15,685 – Teaching Fees
\$245,685 Total Income

Expenses

\$88,040 – Teaching Artists
 6,700 – (Small Steps Nurturing Center)
 40,820 – (Clemente Martinez Elementary)
 15,320 – (Looscan Elementary)
 25,200 – (Marshall Middle)
119,925 – Program Administration
24,630 – Fringe
13,090 – Supplies/Operational
\$245,685 Total Expenses

*** Submitting 2025-2026 budget as 2026-27 budget will not be Board approved until the spring of 2026. We expect to continue working with all community partner schools above in 2026-27, and our anticipated growth in classes (and therefore teaching artist expenses) for 2026-27 is reflected as follows:**

\$103,000 – Teaching Artists (\$15,000 increase from 2025-26 budget)
 10,000 – (Small Steps Nurturing Center)
 45,000 – (Clemente Martinez Elementary)
 18,000 – (Looscan Elementary)
 30,000 – (Marshall Middle)



Hope Stone, Inc.

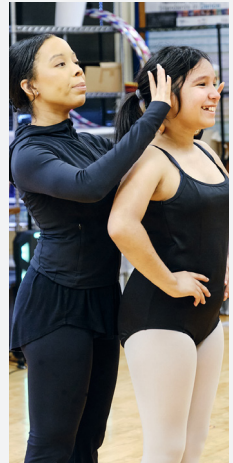
A leader in arts education since 1997

2025-2026
hopestoneinc.org

900 STUDENTS SERVED || **2-16** YEARS OF AGE



90 CLASSES A WEEK
1900 CLASSES A YEAR
IN MUSIC (DRUMMING, GUITAR, KEYBOARD, VOCAL), THEATER, DANCE (CREATIVE MOVEMENT, MODERN, BALLET, ETHNIC), PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO DESIGN, AND CREATIVE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
30 TEACHING ARTISTS



98% OF OUR STUDENTS ARE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

“Hope Stone’s curriculum has made such an impact. In a time when our students face trauma, instability, and systemic barriers, these lessons help them build resilience, regulate their emotions, and respond to challenges with confidence. **There is something powerful that happens when a child feels seen.** The joy on our students’ faces when Hope Stone artists arrive says it all. **They know they matter.”**

*–Former Principal,
Clemente Martinez Elementary*



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



KEATING FAMILY FOUNDATION



The Fondren Foundation • SQA Foundation • Steen Family Foundation • The Favrot Fund
Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation • Mithoff Family Charitable Foundation • RYDE • Mann Design



**Grant Request Presented to Texas Women for the Arts
Submitted by Hope Stone, Inc. for support of
The Hope Project – Arts Education Outreach**

Hope Stone, Inc. Mission

Founded in 1997, Hope Stone is driven by its mission to unlock the innate creativity of young people through its arts outreach programs. In our 29th season, we more than ever remain committed to improving the quality of life for children through art.

The Hope Project – Arts Education in the schools

Our mindful arts healing and education outreach program serves children in their schools and facilities through classes taught by professional artists. In addition, we have a Creative Emotional Intelligence Curriculum that focuses on the mental health of the children we serve.

Across our partner schools, 900 students (98% of whom are economically disadvantaged) participate in classes in music (drumming, guitar, keyboard, vocal), theater, dance (creative movement, modern, ballet, ethnic), photography, video design, garden design, and creative emotional intelligence. Our arts classes combine mindfulness (self-awareness that helps children focus and calm their minds) with social/emotional learning (SEL) (skills for developing healthy identities, managing emotions, and showing empathy).



Jane Weiner, Hope Stone’s Founder and Education Director, began The Hope Project with 40 children. It had been her dream to bring passionate working artists into the classroom as she herself combines a professional dance career with a degree in deaf/elementary education. Through her commitment to the organization’s vision of “Art for All,” the program has solidified its place as a significant arts education program in Houston.

We intentionally serve youth community partners in the Near Northside neighborhood of Houston and other marginalized communities where we can make the most difference. The needs in our youth community partners are so great with students undergoing severe stress and often trauma in their homes – food scarcity, inconsistent housing situations, economic strain, and anxiety and health concerns. So many of these children experience not only economic poverty, but poverty of experience.

The Hope Project offers students new opportunities to explore their creativity and build confidence. We believe that if this generation learns to creatively problem-solve, think broadly and boldly, and trust that their ideas matter, they will be better equipped to help themselves, their families, and their communities. Art teaches all of these skills.

Since the pandemic, our students continue to need tools to cope with its lingering effects. The United Nations noted in an April 2020 policy brief, “Children are not the face of this pandemic. But they risk being among its biggest victims. ... All children, of all ages, and in all countries, are being affected, in particular by the socio-economic impacts. This is a universal crisis and, for some children, the impact will be lifelong.”

To meet these needs, our students must continually develop ways to socially and emotionally connect with themselves and others. Without the ability to focus, self-regulate, relate, communicate, and recognize that their feelings matter, how can they succeed in school, careers, or life? In response, we developed a Creative Emotional Intelligence Curriculum that teaches self-regulation, problem solving, impulse control, kindness, and the essential message that they matter – all through music, movement, and a fun, child-centered approach.

Creative Emotional Intelligence in Arts Education

Also known as emotional quotient or EQ, we teach our students that emotional intelligence is the ability to be smart about feelings – our own and other people's. It involves being able to notice, understand, and act on emotions in an effective, kind, and curious way.

The “creative” part is Hope Stone’s specialty.

For 29 years our mission has been to unlock the innate creativity of young people. Approaching any subject creatively helps students both to retain information and to critically think of different possibilities and solutions. Adults can easily recall popular songs or nursery rhymes from their childhood or old television commercial jingles they haven’t heard in years. In that same way, we could either *tell* students they are in charge of their brain’s thoughts – or they can *sing* that in verses with movement and clapping, which is much more fun, active, and interactive with their classmates.



The first graders at Clemente Martinez Elementary sing in their emotional intelligence classes and throughout their school day –

Who’s in charge of my brain?
I’m in charge of my brain!
How do I make it calm?
Breathe in.
Breathe out.

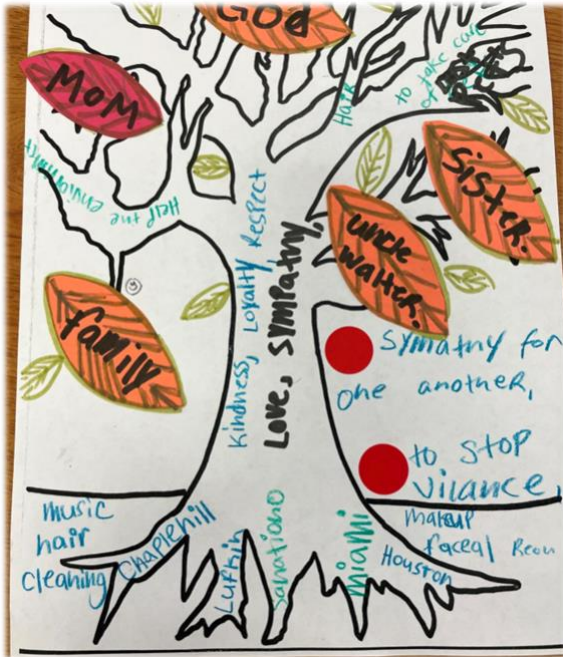
Codified into 20 lessons developed by our curriculum team, a core group of teachers have been trained to teach these 20 classes to our community partners, grades Pre-K to 8th over 10 weeks in the fall and spring. Several of our schools are part of a feeder pattern in the Near Northside neighborhood of Houston – Looscan Elementary, Clemente Martinez Elementary, and Marshall Middle school, all HISD schools. The goal is for a student entering Pre-K in the fall of 2025 to receive 10 years of emotional intelligence training (from Pre-K to 8th grade). As well, our entire staff uses emotional intelligence “mini-lessons” in their weekly art classes as a second EQ touch point for students.

Who gives us this expertise to create an emotional intelligence curriculum? After receiving her Master’s degree in counseling education, Gayla Miller, M.Ed., who is our SEL Specialist (social/emotional learning), developed a curriculum based in foundations of neuroscience, psychology, and mindfulness that builds emotional intelligence skills. She is a keynote speaker and educator working with colleges, arts organizations, schools, businesses and private students. Her creative approach is informed by her over 20- year history working in professional theater, producing, performing and educating. She is also the Middle School Counselor at Duchesne Academy, and provides training to our master teaching artists.



“Hope Stone is an ideal organization for implementing this vital work. It has been an honor to train the teaching artists Hope Stone sends into our public schools and community partners. We saw a need in 2024-25 to go beyond Creative Mindfulness and create a more encompassing curriculum. Creative Emotional Intelligence is rooted in foundational concepts in neuroscience, psychology, and mindfulness. This curriculum was developed to empower young learners with essential tools to navigate their emotions, build self-awareness, and foster healthy relationships through a creative and relevant approach.”

–Gayla Miller, Social/Emotional Learning Specialist



Clemente Martinez Elementary students creating “trees of life” to understand their roots, their vision, and their support.

The curriculum includes units in: EQ vs IQ; inner/outer/other focus; parts of the emotional brain used to help self-regulate; mindfulness; sympathy/empathy/compassion; rude/mean/bullying; friendship problem-solving; healthy vs. unhealthy friendships; relational aggression, and impulse response theory. The arts are the delivery mechanism for these complex and essential life skills.

“As the principal of Marshall Middle, I can say with confidence that Hope Stone has a profound positive impact on our school and our community. Marshall is located in the historic Near Northside community and is represented by a population that is largely Hispanic, 95% Economically Disadvantaged, and 100% on Free and Reduced Lunch. Marshall is also home to recent immigrant children and over 200 students who are Emergent Bilingual.

Our partnership with Hope Stone also benefits the school in the areas of attendance and behavior. 6th grade was the only grade level for the 2023-2024 school year that received Hope Stone’s Creative Mindfulness class, and they were also the grade level with the highest attendance consistently. In terms of behavior, Marshall experienced a 15% decrease in disciplinary incidents which can be attributed in large part to the Creative Mindfulness and SEL education facilitated by Hope Stone’s teaching artists.”

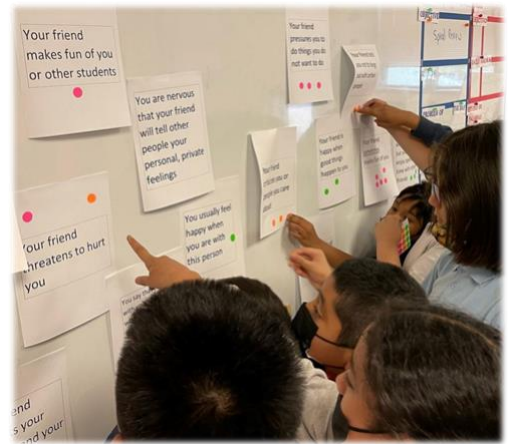
–Principal, Marshall Middle School



6th graders learning inner focus and breathing techniques

“Hope Stone’s Creative Emotional Intelligence curriculum has made such an impact. In a time when our students face trauma, instability, and systemic barriers, these lessons help them build resilience, regulate their emotions, and respond to challenges with confidence. There is something powerful that happens when a child feels seen. The joy on our students’ faces when Hope Stone artists arrive says it all. They know they matter.”

–Former Principal, Clemente Martinez Elementary



Upper elementary students determining traits of healthy vs. unhealthy friendships

IV. 2025-2026 Community Partners

Small Steps Nurturing Center provides early childhood education to economically at-risk children living in the inner-city of Houston, specifically at two schools in the Fifth Ward and Gulfton communities. Their Fifth Ward campus student body is largely Hispanic, while their Gulfton campus is culturally diverse, as Gulfton is a common refugee resettlement area. Students are from Africa, Central and South America, and the Middle East. With an average annual family income of \$24,350, these students and their families have an abundant need for special services. As we move into our thirteenth year this fall with Small Steps, we are proud to be a collaborative partner as we share the belief that all students are deserving of art, regardless of their socioeconomic status. All students receive weekly creative movement classes.



“Hope Stone’s creative movement and dance program is a valuable component of our program, benefiting our preschool children by enhancing their social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development.”

–Director of Education & Leadership Development, Small Steps Nurturing Center

Clemente Martinez Elementary School (CMES) (Houston ISD) CMES’ student body is predominately Hispanic (57%) and Black (42%), and 99% come from economically disadvantaged homes. An education partner since 2019, it has our most comprehensive schedule. All students will receive 10 weeks of classes in the fall and spring, including 14 creative emotional intelligence classes for Pre-K–5th and 20 arts classes each week. Pre-K–2nd receive dance and music, while 3rd–5th choose from smaller, specialized electives in modern, ballet, or ethnic dance; drumming, guitar, keyboard, or vocal music; photography; theater/spoken word; or an Odyssey of the Mind team.



“In our sixth year of partnership, Hope Stone is a cornerstone of our school culture. Weekly classes in dance, theater, photography, spoken word, drumming, and digital arts have introduced students to new worlds. These aren’t just enrichment activities, they are lifelines—safe, healing, and joyful spaces where students can express themselves and be seen as creators.”

–Former Principal, Clemente Martinez Elementary

Our involvement at CMES has gone beyond the classroom. As we say, “loving a school back to its feet” involves a deep commitment in order to expand children’s experiences. Hope Stone partnered in the 2023-24 school year with the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, to form a class with seven 4th and 5th grade girls called “Start with Art.” These girls had the unique, immersive experience of five docent-led visits at the museum, supported by a class at school where they each created wearable art inspired by their favorite work of art. That summer, four of the girls received scholarships to attend the summer art camp at the Glassell School of Art.



In the 2024-25 school year, we partnered with Houston Center for Photography and held a small class for 5th grade girls called “Girls’ Own Stories,” which uses photography, collage, mixed media and writing as a means of creative expression and empowerment for girls. The program is designed to help girls develop their technical skills in photography and storytelling as they learn about the contributions of female photographers by viewing and discussing their work. Girls create journals to write about their experiences and respond to prompts provided by the teaching artist, offering them the space to reflect on their images and help promote self-awareness and confidence.



A continuing partnership exists with Houston Ballet where students from CMES are invited into their Chance to Dance program and then have the potential for further study at the Academy. Several girls are beginning their fourth year of study and now participate annually in the Ballet’s annual Nutcracker performances. Priority in the program is given to schools that have 75% or more of their students qualify as economically disadvantaged.



Looscan Elementary School (Houston ISD) is a two-year community partner in the same Near Northside neighborhood as Clemente Martinez Elementary. We teach dance and music to Pre-K–2nd grades, as well as creative emotional intelligence classes for K and 1st grade. The school serves a 97% Hispanic student body, with 96% from economically disadvantaged homes. The school is in great need of our services as it has been recently graded as an F-rated school by the Texas Education Agency. Before we provided services at Clemente Martinez Elementary, they too were an F-rated school, and have since risen to B and C grades. Our goal is to have the same effect at Looscan Elementary.



*“We’ve seen measurable benefits in attendance and behavior. Grade levels participating in Hope Stone programs consistently show **higher attendance rates and reduced disciplinary incidents**. These outcomes speak to the deep engagement and joy that Hope Stone brings into our students’ lives. I am proud to call Hope Stone a partner. **Their work is not only meaningful, it is life changing.**”*

–Principal, Looscan Elementary

Marshall Middle School (Houston ISD) is in the feeder pattern for CMES and Looscan Elementary students. Marshall's demographics are 80% Hispanic and 18% Black, with 96% economically disadvantaged. As an eight-year community partner, they have a robust creative emotional intelligence class schedule. The entire school, 6th through 8th grade, receives creative emotional intelligence classes twice a week for 10 weeks in the fall and spring. Hope Stone teaches 36 EQ classes a week at Marshall.



*“The skills our students are learning and the experiences they are having with their Hope Stone teachers and peers are truly life changing. **These opportunities infinitely expand their lists of dreams and their potential to reach them.***

—Arts Magnet Coordinator, Marshall Middle School

When financial means becomes the determining factor in a child's participation in the arts, the chance to understand and apply creativity as a life skill is lost. Now more than ever, children need opportunities to build problem-solving abilities that will serve them, their families, and their communities. Because of your support, children who might otherwise be left out are discovering the healing power of the arts.

Thank you for considering our request.

Clemente Martinez Elementary School

901 Hays Street • Houston, TX 77009

Tel: 713-224-1424 * Fax: 713-224-1304



June 1, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with deep appreciation and heartfelt conviction that I write in strong support of Hope Stone and the tremendous impact their programming has had on our community at Clemente Martinez Elementary School (CMES). The school is located in the Near Northside community and is represented by a population that is 55% Hispanic and 44% Black.

As a proud principal and lifelong advocate for public education, I believe schools must be places of possibility where every child, regardless of background, has access to the experiences and opportunities they deserve. At CMES, a Title I campus where 98% of our students come from economically disadvantaged homes, those opportunities can often feel out of reach. But thanks to Hope Stone, our students aren't just surviving, they're thriving.

Now in our sixth year of partnership, Hope Stone is a cornerstone of our school culture. Weekly classes in dance, theater, photography, spoken word, drumming, and digital arts have introduced students to new worlds. These aren't just enrichment activities, they are lifelines. Safe, healing, and joyful spaces where students can express themselves and be seen as creators.

Hope Stone's Creative Emotional Intelligence curriculum has taken that impact even further. In a time when our students face trauma, instability, and systemic barriers, these lessons help them build resilience, regulate their emotions, and respond to challenges with confidence. I've seen these skills carry over into academics where students are thinking more critically, communicating more clearly, and showing stronger focus and reflection.

There is something powerful that happens when a child feels seen. The joy on our students' faces when Hope Stone artists arrive says it all. They know they matter.

What makes Hope Stone exceptional isn't just the depth of their programming, but their belief in every child's potential. They live out the mission of equity and access for all. Their staff has been adaptable, passionate, and fully committed to our school community. They are more than partners; they are family.

It is with pride and full support that I recommend Hope Stone. Their work is not only essential, it is transformational. I am deeply grateful for all they've done for our students and look forward to all that's ahead.

With sincere appreciation,

Wayne Lopes, Principal



Adele B. Looscan Elementary

3800 Robertson St. Houston, TX, 77009

(phone) 713-696-2760 ~ (fax) 713-696-2765

<http://www.houstonisd.org/looscanes>

Anna Montalvo, Principal

Shenita Long, Asst. Principal

May 22, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

It is truly my privilege to write to you in support of Hope Stone. As the principal of Looscan Elementary, I can say with confidence that Hope Stone has a profound and transformative impact on our school and our greater community.

Since our partnership with Hope Stone began, their programs have provided more than just enrichment—they have offered opportunities for creative expression, healing, and hope. In a school community where many of our children face financial hardship and a poverty of experience, the arts have become a vital outlet for growth, confidence, and connection.

Hope Stone's Creative Emotional Intelligence class has expanded and enriched our students for the better. These offerings have become essential to our school, especially considering recent educational reforms and budget limitations across the district. Hope Stone's programs are not just supplementary, they are core to our students' development and to the unique identity of our campus.

One of the most significant impacts we've witnessed has been in our students' emotional and social development. Through Hope Stone's classes, students have developed stronger emotional regulation, increased self-confidence, and improved collaboration skills. Creative Emotional Intelligence has played a crucial role in supporting our students' mental wellness. Many of our students arrive at school carrying emotional burdens far too heavy for their age. These classes offer them a space to breathe, reflect, and build resilience. Students who participate in Hope Stone programming are more engaged in class, more respectful of their peers, and more hopeful about their future.

Moreover, we've seen measurable benefits in attendance and behavior. Grade levels participating in Hope Stone programs consistently show higher attendance rates and reduced disciplinary incidents. These outcomes speak to the deep engagement and joy that Hope Stone brings into our students' lives.

I am proud to call Hope Stone a partner. Their work is not only meaningful, it is life changing. They have my full and unwavering support, and it is my hope that through continued funding and support, Hope Stone will thrive and grow, reaching even more students in need.

With gratitude,

Anna Montalvo, Principal