JACOB BURNS FILM CENTER

Stories We Shared

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Contents

Our Year in Review 3

Memorable Moments 2025 4

Connecting Through Cinema 6

- Letter from Eric Hynes, Director of Film Curation & Programming
- Special Guests, Special Moments
- Artists-In-Residence

Inspiring Dreams. Changing Lives. 10

- Letter from Brandon Shenkman, Director of Education
- School and Community Programs
- Enrollment Numbers for 2025
- After-School Programs
- All Ages
- Education: Enrollment and Partners

A Tribute to Our Community 20

- Connecting Our Community Celebration
- Thank You for Helping to Make So Much Possible

Operating Financials 27

Our Year in Review

2025 was a year of growth, momentum, and creative possibility at the Jacob Burns Film Center—shaped, above all, by the strength of our community. Across our theaters, classrooms, and gathering spaces, our programs continued to expand and evolve, deepening our connection to the diverse audiences we are proud to serve.

As we reflect on the year, we are profoundly grateful to our donors, members, audiences, students, teachers, artists, staff, and Board. Your generosity and commitment to our mission made so many meaningful shared experiences possible.

In the pages that follow, you will discover many of the stories that define our year together. Guided by our creative vision and sustained by a passionate and engaged community, we remain dedicated to inspiring hearts and minds through the transformative power of film.

This year also built powerful momentum, carrying us into our 25th Anniversary—an extraordinary milestone that reflects all we have accomplished together and the future we continue to shape.

Thank you for being an essential part of our remarkable journey and for helping lead the Jacob Burns Film Center into the next chapter.

Dr. Ray Sanchez
Chair, Board of Directors

Mary Jo Ziesel
Executive Director

Memorable Moments 2025

John Pizzarelli and Friends: Jazz on a Summer's Day

August 3

A full day of jazz filled The Burns, hosted by John Pizzarelli, featuring dynamic live performances and screenings. Presented as part of our Sounds of Summer series, the program brought audiences together through music and film in a vibrant, communal setting. This second annual event was presented in memory of Maria Traversa, longtime Jazz Sessions Series Curator and cherished friend of The Burns.

"Every time I walk out of a special film program – or even a regular screening – I'm reminded of how fortunate I am to have the Jacob Burns Film Center in my life."

– Alan Tepper, Donor

30th Anniversary of *Apollo 13*, with Ron Howard

June 17

The Burns was thrilled to honor the 30th anniversary of *Apollo 13*, featuring a memorable evening of film, conversation, and community. Following the screening, JBFC Board member Ron Howard joined us for an engaging conversation with JBFC Board President Janet Maslin.

Director's Cut: Documentary Filmmaking

We were proud to launch a new Fellowship course in 2025—**Director's Cut: Documentary Filmmaking**, developed in collaboration with NYU Tisch School of the Arts and Imagine Entertainment. This program provides students with hands-on training, professional mentorship, and opportunities to develop their creative voices while working collaboratively on an original film on The Burns campus.

An Evening with Alicia Silverstone and Christian Siriano

November 12

The Burns was honored to celebrate Alicia Silverstone's career in film, television, theater, and activism with a 30th anniversary screening of *Clueless*. The screening was followed by a conversation with Alicia Silverstone, moderated by Leslie Ziff. They were joined onstage by yet another special guest, legendary fashion designer Christian Siriano.

"I am so thankful The Burns is part of our community."

– Bonnie Gale, Donor

Connecting Through Cinema

Letter from Eric Hynes, Director of Film Curation & Programming

As we reflect on 2025, we are reminded of the enduring power of film to bring people together, spark dialogue, and expand the way we see the world. At the Jacob Burns Film Center, our commitment to sharing the power of film remains at the heart of all we do.

This past year, our theaters were alive with a rich and varied mix of storytelling, from internationally acclaimed features to bold independent voices. Just as important as what played on screen was what happened around it: the conversations in our theater spaces, connections formed between filmmakers and audiences, and the sense of discovery that keeps The Burns community engaged and curious. We both added and re-conceived ongoing series with an eye toward cultivating new audiences and deepening our connections with loyal patrons, emphasizing the importance of communal and transformational experiences.

In 2025, our programming reflected a wide spectrum of perspectives and experiences, featuring extraordinary artists who brought their work and insights directly to our audience. We also committed ourselves to strengthening our Artists-in-Residence program by partnering with international festivals and industry forums to select and welcome emerging and established voices from around the world. The Residency offered them the time, space, and tools to develop new work. These artists didn't just create here—they became part of The Burns and our shared cultural home. At a time when independent filmmaking faces increasing challenges, we have remained committed to actively supporting these artists and their work, championing stories that take risks and deepen our understanding of one another.

Together, these efforts speak to our mission to create meaningful experiences around film and the stories shaping our world. We are grateful to our community for making The Burns such a vital and vibrant home for these stories, and for continuing to believe in the power of film.

CLICK HERE for the list of films we screened in 2025.

Special Guests, Special Moments

Malgosia Turzanska

Alessandro Nivola

Celine Song

Griffin Dunne

Ron Howard

Just a few of the 150 special guests who entertained, educated, and inspired us this year.

Brendan Fraser

Elizabeth Lo

Kenneth Cole

Alicia Silverstone

Jafar Panahi

Mstyslav Chernov

Ari Aster

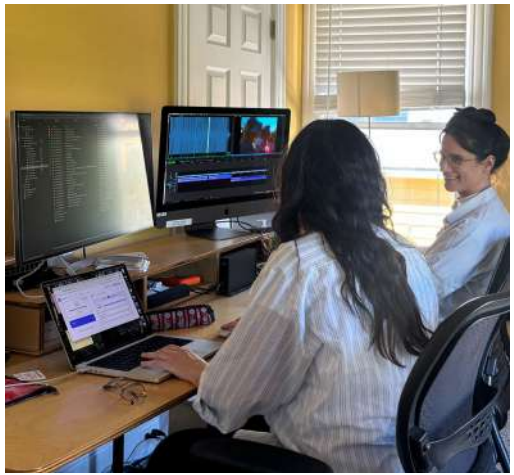
Marina Zenovich

CLICK HERE for the list of special guests who joined us in 2025.

Artists-in-Residence

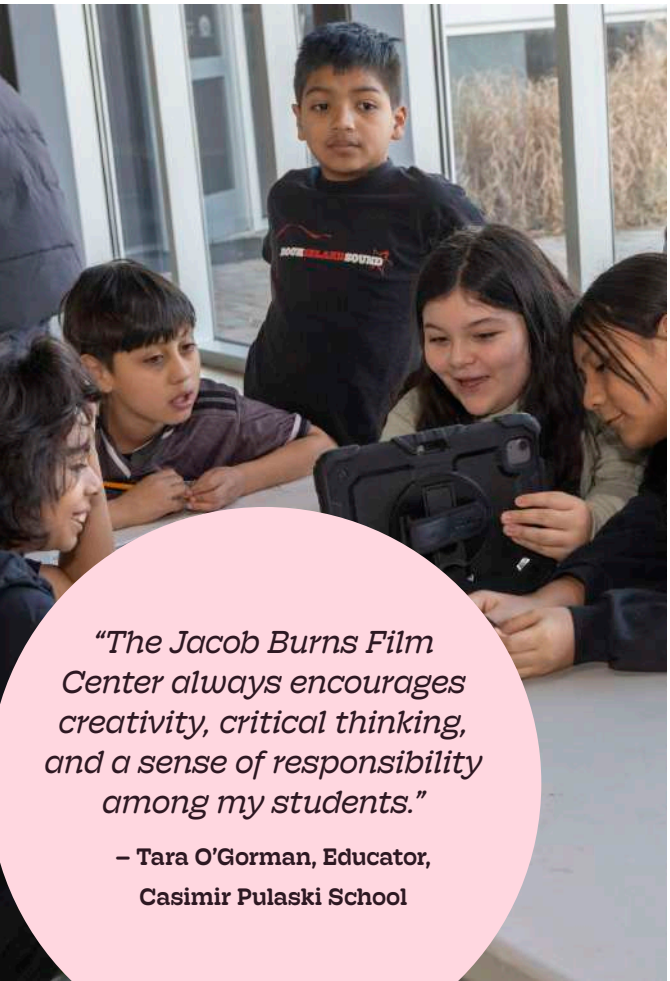
In 2025, the Burns supported 14 Artists-in-Residence:

- Dolya Gavanski
- Leland James
- Fahd Ahmed
- Rachael DeCruz
- Jeremy Levine
- Rebecca Zweig
- Efrain Mojica
- Hannah Jayanti
- Alex Porter
- Noga Chevion
- Mika Friehmann
- Leo Regan
- Sarah Keeling
- Todd Chandler



CLICK HERE to learn more.

Inspiring Dreams. Changing Lives.



"The Jacob Burns Film Center always encourages creativity, critical thinking, and a sense of responsibility among my students."

– Tara O'Gorman, Educator, Casimir Pulaski School

Letter from Brandon Shenkman, Director of Education

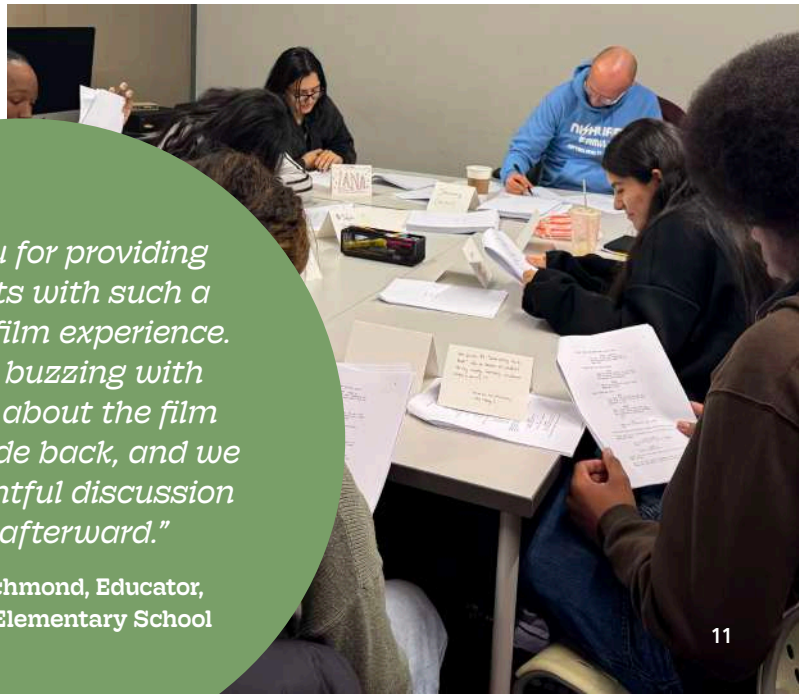
When students are given access to stories, and the tools to tell their own, something meaningful takes root. From classrooms across Westchester County to our own spaces, we have continued to build an environment where curiosity, creativity, and connection can thrive.

Over the past year, we welcomed more than 6,000 students into our programs. Just as important as how many students we served is how we made that possible: 70% of participating students attended at no cost, ensuring that financial barriers never stand in the way of meaningful arts education. We also increased our busing budget by 33%, expanding access for under-resourced schools and making it possible for more students to participate fully.

This year, we expanded our public and after-school offerings to their highest level since pre-Covid, while also deepening our cinema studies curriculum for both young people and adults. This spirit of engagement extended into new areas as well, including the launch of our first Environmental Film Challenge as part of our Environmental Sustainability Initiative—an opportunity for students to explore pressing global issues through the lens of storytelling and personal expression.

At the same time, we strengthened the broader ecosystem that supports this work. Our third-grade literacy initiative, What's the Story, reached more students than ever before, and as we continue to assess its impact, we are seeing encouraging signs of growth in both traditional and visual literacy skills, as well as confidence with storytelling. We also reengaged with educators through meaningful professional development, including a session on teaching the Holocaust in high school using visual texts, presented in partnership with the Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center. These efforts are further enriched by our deepening partnerships with NYU, Imagine Entertainment, and Stony Brook University, which help power our high school scholarship programs in documentary filmmaking and screenwriting, offered in both English and Spanish.

The pages that follow offer a closer look at these efforts and the people who make them possible. Together, they tell a story not just of growth, but of deepening impact—one that continues to evolve with the needs of our community and the voices of the students we serve.



"Thank you for providing my students with such a remarkable film experience. They were buzzing with excitement about the film on the bus ride back, and we had a thoughtful discussion in class afterward."

– Dennis Richmond, Educator, Pennington Elementary School

School and Community Programs

The Burns is committed to enriching the lives of students through a wide range of school and community programs.

Classroom to Screening Room (grades 3–12) features films that enhance students' study of literature, history, science, world languages, and the arts. Supported by JBFC education faculty and guest speakers, each screening provides social, historical, and aesthetic context, encourages thoughtful discussion, and helps students connect film to broader academic and cultural themes.

CLICK HERE for a glimpse into our Classroom to Screening Room program.

Community Matters Student Screenings (grades 9–12) engage high school students in discussions of timely social issues through film, followed by moderated conversations with filmmakers and community partners. These free programs create space for dialogue, reflection, and civic engagement.

"Most of my knowledge about the filmmaking process comes from my experience at the Jacob Burns Film Center. Thank you so much."

–Daphne, High School Student, School 30 Yonkers

In **Show, Don't Tell (grades 5-12)**, students discover how the filmmaking process is built through different shot types and storyboarding skills. The experience culminates in students constructing a short scene of their own and a celebratory screening of their projects.

Designed for younger learners, **What's the Story? (grade 3)** introduces students to essential storytelling skills through an immersive writing- and creating-based visual literacy program. Students engage with a variety of animated, live-action, fiction, and nonfiction films from around the world, exploring the tools filmmakers use to bring their stories to life.

"We set out to accomplish a mission: provide a meaningful and creative experience for our students free of charge. We simply could not have done that without the Jacob Burns Film Center."

–Michael Devlin, Educator, Yonkers Montessori Academy

"The programs at the Jacob Burns Film Center allow all students to learn in a fun and engaging way."

–Maureen Mott, Educator, Park Avenue School, Port Chester

Enrollment Numbers for 2025

School Programs

6,567

Public Programs

271

CLICK HERE for a list of our education partners.

After-School Programs

Building on the work we do to serve more than 6,000 students through our school and community programs, we also offer immersive after-school courses, high school fellowships, summer camps, and adult education opportunities for film enthusiasts of all ages.

Filmcraft 101 introduces students to the technical foundations of visual storytelling, allowing participants to experiment with professional cameras, lighting techniques, and editing software while developing an understanding of cinematic style and craft. Designed as a pre-collegiate experience, **Fundamentals of Filmmaking** guides students through the complete filmmaking process, finishing with a public screening at The Burns that celebrates students' original work.

Frame by Frame aims to foster a deep appreciation of cinema by pairing film screenings with guided discussion and critical analysis. Through different thematic courses, the program encourages students to explore how films reflect cultural contexts, experiment with storytelling, and engage broad audiences. In 2025, we offered five Frame by Frame courses: **Coming-of-Age in America**; **Exploring Film through Horror Part 1**; **Exploring Film through Horror Part 2**; **Journeys, Adventures, Growing Up on Screen**; and **The A24 Aesthetic**.

The JBFC offers hands-on, collaborative learning experiences in the craft of storytelling and performance. Through courses like **Writing the Short Screenplay**, **Acting Technique**, and **Screenwriting & Story Workshop**, participants actively develop their creative voices through writing exercises, script analysis, live readings, and peer critique. Designed for newcomers and more experienced artists, these workshops offer practical skill-building in a supportive, workshop-style environment that brings the process of filmmaking to life.

Fellowships

Director's Cut continued to strengthen its commitment to cultivating the next generation of storytellers through immersive screenwriting intensives for high school students, offered in collaboration with NYU Tisch School of the Arts. The program featured both English- and Spanish-language screenwriting cohorts, culminating in special events where student scripts were brought to life by professional actors in front of an audience, including the fellows and their families.

This year, the program expanded to support a broader range of filmmaking pathways. **Director's Cut: Documentary Filmmaking**, developed in collaboration with NYU Tisch School of the Arts and Imagine Entertainment, reflects the program's continued evolution and our deepened commitment to empowering young storytellers across multiple disciplines.

Summer Camp

The 2025 season of **Summer Camp** provided emerging young artists with the opportunity to produce an original short film through **Filmmaking Camp** or to bring their imaginative ideas to life through **Animation Camp**—all within small, supportive classes that emphasize collaboration.

"I want to go to bed early so I can get to camp sooner."

–Olly, Summer Camper

All Ages

All Ages is a weekend film series that brings audiences of every generation together to celebrate the shared joy of cinema. Building on the spirit of our longtime JBFC Kids series, All Ages opens the door wider—welcoming kids, parents, grandparents, longtime cinephiles, and first-time moviegoers alike.

On April 1, 2025, we set the ticket price for All Ages programs at just $5 for everyone.

We screen All Ages films every **Saturday and Sunday at 11:00**, featuring a rotating lineup of universally-loved films, from animated favorites and musicals to silent-era classics and sing-alongs.

We are also proud to continue our commitment to accessibility through **monthly sensory friendly screenings**, offered on the **first Sunday of each month**. Designed for individuals who may find traditional moviegoing overwhelming, these screenings feature lower sound levels, raised house lights, no trailers or advertisements, and an environment where audiences are free to move, talk, or take breaks as needed. When available, we include open captions, creating a welcoming experience for all.

Sharing Their Stories: Meet several of our students, teachers, and parents!

Jaden and Michelle Sturner

Chris Vaughan

Marissa Wiley

A Tribute to Our Community

Connecting Our Community Celebration

September 15

We were extremely proud to honor Ginny Gold, Impact Partners, and Will Reeve for their extraordinary service and contributions to the Jacob Burns Film Center. All proceeds from this event supported our vibrant film and education programs.

GINNY GOLD

David Swope Leadership Award

Ginny and her beloved late husband, Marty, were among our founding supporters, united by a vision for The Burns to become both a cherished cultural institution and one of the nation's leading nonprofit film and education centers. Ginny's philanthropic foresight—paired with her steadfast commitment to enriching shared experiences and fostering deeper connections—played a vital role in bringing our Take 3 Wine Bar and Café to life in April 2024.

IMPACT PARTNERS

Vision Award

Impact Partners is dedicated to supporting independent documentary storytelling that entertains audiences, engages with pressing social issues, and propels the art of cinema forward. They bring together a community of investors with filmmakers to tell powerful stories about critical issues facing our world. Over the span of 18 years, Impact Partners has been involved in the financing of over 150 films, including *Icarus*, *Sugarcane*, *32 Sounds*, *Aftershock*, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, *Of Fathers and Sons*, *Dina*, *How to Survive a Plague*, and *Hell and Back Again*.

WILL REEVE

New Lens Award

A New York-based correspondent reporting for all ABC News platforms, Will Reeve has covered a variety of stories and topics. He serves on the board of directors of the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, an organization founded by his late parents dedicated to finding cures for spinal cord injuries and providing quality of life care for those impacted by paralysis. His film, *Will Reeve: Finding My Father,* retraces his father's journey, traveling to the places his father visited 30 years ago, and shares never-before-seen family home videos and photos of his dad at the time.

CLICK HERE for the list of donors to the Connecting Our Community Celebration.

A Tribute to Ginny Gold

Our dear friend, founding supporter, and Board member, Virginia "Ginny" Gold passed away on January 17, 2026.

Though petite in stature, Ginny was a force of nature, captivating all fortunate enough to orbit her universe. She was smart, spunky, caring, and endlessly charming; a true original. Her quick wit, warmth, and generosity of spirit will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Ginny's devotion to The Burns was shared with her beloved husband, Martin Gold, who predeceased her in 2017. Marty was a valued member of the JBFC Board of Directors and served with distinction as Treasurer. Ginny and Marty joined the JBFC family in the very beginning and remained steadfast champions of our mission, giving generously of their time, leadership, and support. Their partnership and shared love for The Burns helped lay the foundation for so much of what the JBFC is today.

Thank You to Our Supporters

From longtime supporters to those who have joined us along the way, we are energized by the engagement, passion, and generosity of all who share our belief in the power of film to inspire, engage, and connect.

Thanks to our vibrant community, we continue to open hearts and minds, build dreams, and change lives. We are deeply grateful for your vital support, which makes so much possible.

Connecting Our Community:
Meet Members of Our Community

"The films shown at the Jacob Burns Film Center are so timely. I appreciate everything you do for our community."

–Linda Evans, Member

"I enjoy coming to the JBFC, not only for the quality programming, but because of the community here – they are like friends and neighbors to me."

–M. Farooq Maroof

Annual Giving

January 1–December 31, 2025

We rely on annual gifts, beyond membership support, to sustain the vibrant programs that advance our mission. While every contribution makes a difference, we are especially grateful to recognize our major annual supporters for their leadership and generosity.

CLICK HERE for a list of our donors who make so much possible.

Connecting Our Community Campaign

January 1–September 30, 2025

Connecting Our Community was established to strengthen The Burns' role as a cultural hub—expanding access to global cinema, deepening cross-cultural connections, and enriching inclusive film and education programs. All gifts to Connecting Our Community were matched dollar-for-dollar, up to $125,000. The Connecting Our Community Matching Gift Challenge was made possible by a leadership gift from Ann and Weston Hicks, with generous support from Leslie and Benjamin Arnow.

CLICK HERE for a list of our donors to Connecting Our Community.

2025 Year-End Giving Campaign

Inspired by the extraordinary commitment of our community, the JBFC Board of Directors matched all year-end contributions received by December 31, up to $150,000. We are sincerely grateful to our donors whose meaningful support made our year-end giving campaign such a success.

CLICK HERE for a list of our donors to our Year-End Giving Campaign.

"The JBFC is our favorite thing about living in Westchester. Thank you for all the extraordinary experiences."

–Eileen & Scott Gottesman

CHARITY NAVIGATOR
★★★★
Four Star Charity

The JBFC is proud to receive support from

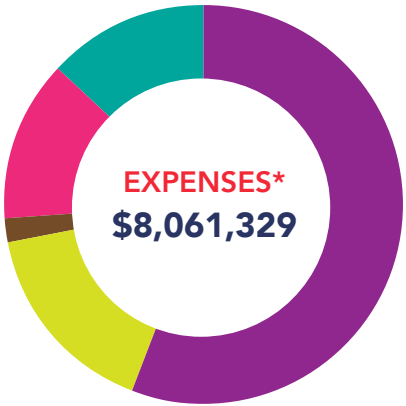
ARTSW
ARTSWESTCHESTER

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS
arts.gov

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY.
Council on the Arts

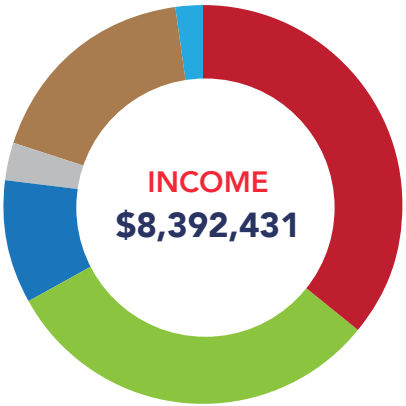
Operating Financials

FY 25: OCT 1, 2024 – SEPT. 30, 2025



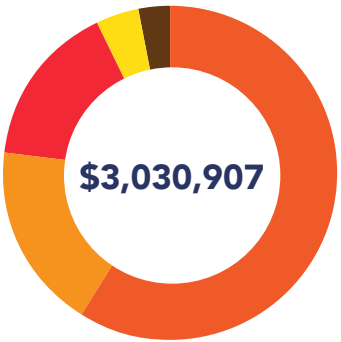
- Film Programming – 56%
- Education – 16%
- Artist Support – 2%
- Management – 13%
- Fundraising – 13%

**Does not include depreciation*



- Contributions – 36%
- Tickets/Concession Sales – 31%
- Membership – 10%
- Education – 3%
- Investment Income – 18%
- Other – 2%

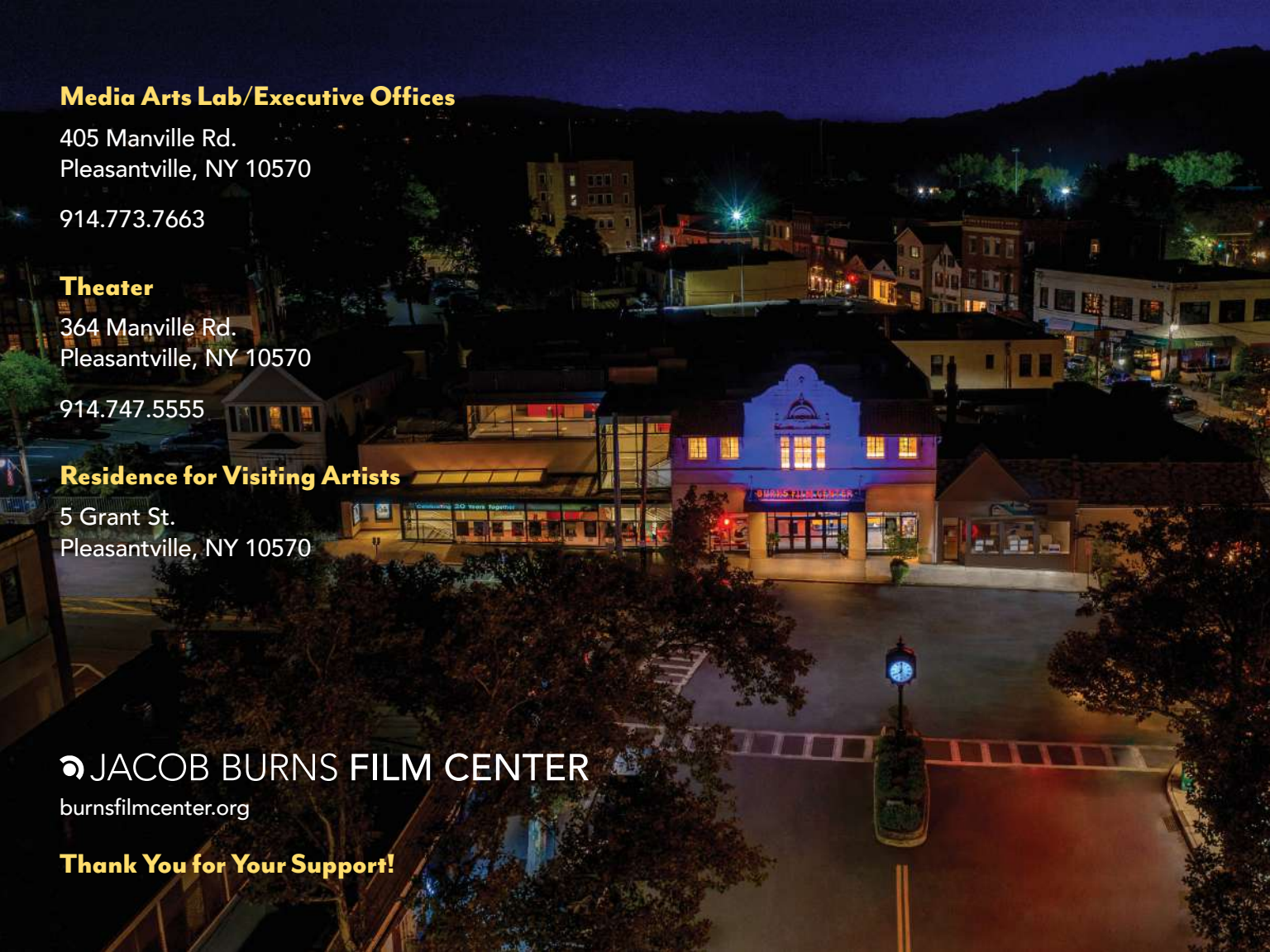
CONTRIBUTIONS



- Individuals – 59%
- Foundations – 18%
- Special Events – 16%
- Government – 4%
- Corporations – 3%

CLICK HERE for a copy of our 2025 audited financial statements.

For further information, please contact Blair Hartley at bhartley@burnsfilmcenter.org or 914.773.7663, ext. 422.



Media Arts Lab/Executive Offices

405 Manville Rd.
Pleasantville, NY 10570

914.773.7663

Theater

364 Manville Rd.
Pleasantville, NY 10570

914.747.5555

Residence for Visiting Artists

5 Grant St.
Pleasantville, NY 10570

JACOB BURNS FILM CENTER

burnsfilmcenter.org

Thank You for Your Support!