

Arizona Lottery Awards \$100,000 Grant to Free Arts for Abused Children of Arizona

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[Free Arts for Abused Children of Arizona](#) has received a \$100,000 grant from the Arizona Lottery, a significant contribution that will help the organization continue its mission of transforming children's trauma into resilience through the arts. The funding will provide 600 "meaningful interactions" between youth participants and trained volunteer mentors or performing artists, expanding access to healing, creativity, and connection for vulnerable young people across the state.

"The Arizona Lottery is honored to support organizations like Free Arts that are creating real and lasting change for children in our state," said Alec Thomson, Executive Director of the Arizona Lottery. The Lottery supports initiatives that strengthen communities statewide, investing in programs that enhance education, economic development, environmental conservation, and health and human services, including efforts that uplift and empower Arizonans facing adversity.

Free Arts serves children, teens, and young adults aged 3 to 24 who have experienced abuse, neglect, or homelessness, many of whom live in out-of-home care such as group homes, treatment centers, shelters, or foster and kinship placements. Working in partnership with 40 social service agencies across 120 sites in cities including Phoenix, Glendale, Mesa, and Tucson, Free Arts brings creative programming and mentorship directly to those who need it most.

At the heart of the organization's work is its Art + Mentors = Resilience model, a research-based approach that pairs intentional arts experiences with the guidance of caring adult mentors. This model helps participants develop crucial protective factors such as self-expression, emotional regulation, and trust in others, laying the groundwork for long-term well-being and resilience.

"The trauma these young people face often leaves deep emotional scars," said Matt Sandoval, CEO of Free Arts. "With this grant, we can deepen our impact and provide safe, healing spaces where children connect, create, and begin to reclaim their stories through art and consistent support from trusted adults."

With nearly 9,200 young people currently in Arizona's foster care system, the need for trauma-informed, resilience-building programs like those offered by Free Arts has never been greater. Through the support of community partners like the Arizona Lottery, Free Arts continues to empower children to heal, grow, and thrive through the transformative power of art. Learn more at freeartsaz.org.