

The Creative Collective

Vision Framework

A place where students discover they matter, build meaningful relationships, and use their gifts to positively impact others.

**This document represents the current vision of the Creative Collective. As we learn, grow, and partner with our community, this vision will continue to develop while remaining rooted in our commitment to Belonging, Collaboration, and Ownership.*

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Our Foundation

What is The Creative Collective ORGANIZATION?

The Creative Collective is a youth-centered organization that helps students discover that they matter, that their voice matters, and that they have something valuable to contribute to the world.

We believe every student deserves a place where they feel seen, valued, and accepted. Too often, young people receive messages that tell them who they should be rather than helping them discover who they are. In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General identified loneliness and social isolation as a growing public health concern, highlighting the importance of meaningful relationships, community, and social connection. In a time when many students report feeling increasingly disconnected, fear, insecurity, and isolation can cause young people to withdraw, remain silent, or doubt their value.

The Creative Collective exists to create an environment where students can belong, grow, and contribute. Through mentorship, relationships, creative experiences, and meaningful projects, students develop confidence, learn to express themselves, and discover how their gifts can positively impact others. Mentorship may include both adult mentors and student leaders who are given opportunities to guide, encourage, and support others.

We are not a therapy organization. Our purpose is not to diagnose or treat emotional challenges. Instead, we provide opportunities for students to build confidence, develop skills, form meaningful relationships through teamwork, and use their voice in ways that benefit both themselves and their communities.

At its core, The Creative Collective exists to help young people realize that they matter and that they have the ability to make a difference.

Our Programs

What is a Creative Collective Program?

A Creative Collective program is a structured experience designed to help students build relationships, discover their strengths, develop confidence, and use their gifts to positively impact others.

Programs may take many forms, including “Collective” groups, creative experiences, mentorship opportunities, community gatherings, and service initiatives. While each program serves a unique purpose, all programs work together to help students find belonging, grow as individuals, and contribute to something larger than themselves.

This will include:

“Collective” Groups – How its structured

Small groups of students who journey together. Just like a soccer team.

A student might be in:

- Group A
- Group B
- Group C

The groups provides:

- Shared projects, team-building activities, discussions, creative experiences, and community events, students have opportunities to connect with others, support one another, and grow together over time.

Creative Experiences –

Provide students with opportunities to explore interests, develop skills, and create meaningful projects.

Students:

- Participate in hands-on learning experiences.
- Explore creative interests and talents.
- Collaborate with other students.
- Develop confidence through project-based learning.
- Create and share meaningful work.

Examples:

- Summer Intensives
- Workshops

- Project Labs
- Creative Challenges

These are focused experiences.

Leadership + Mentorship - Support System (Adults or Older Students)

Provide students with guidance, encouragement, and opportunities for growth.

Students may:

- Receive support from adult mentors.
- Work alongside experienced teachers, volunteers, or assistants.
- Receive guidance on projects and teamwork.
- Build positive relationships with peers and adults.
- Develop leadership skills through experience.

Leadership Opportunities:

- Team Leaders
- Project Assistants
- Event Volunteers
- Peer Supporters
- Student Mentors for younger students

Creative Community Space – The environment

This is The Lounge.

Provide an ongoing space where students can remain connected beyond individual programs.

Students May:

- Continue projects with friends.
- Access creative equipment and resources.
- Explore new project ideas.
- Build friendships and community.
- Meet with mentors and peers.

Community Opportunities:

- Open Project Time
- Performances
- Showcases

- Workshops
- Game Nights
- Special Events
- Community Gatherings

This is home base.

Service Experiences - Application

Help students use their gifts, talents, and projects to positively impact others.

Internal Service Opportunities:

- Welcome new students.
- Assist with events.
- Support younger students.
- Help lead activities.
- Contribute to the Creative Collective community.

Community Service Opportunities:

- Community Events
- Performances
- Fundraisers
- Volunteer Projects
- Community Partnerships
- Service Initiatives

This is where contribution happens.

Our Projects

What is a Creative Collective Project?

A Creative Collective project is a meaningful experience that allows students to apply their ideas, talents, and skills while working toward a shared goal.

Every project is intentionally designed with both an Individual Phase and a Collective Phase. During the Individual Phase, students develop their own ideas, explore their creativity, and contribute their unique strengths. During the Collective Phase, students work together to combine their contributions into a larger project that reflects the efforts of the entire team.

This approach helps students develop both Personal Voice and Collective Voice. Students learn that their ideas matter, while also discovering how collaboration can create something greater than any one person could accomplish alone.

Through projects, students develop ownership, creativity, problem-solving skills, relationships, and a sense of contribution while creating meaningful work together.

(IDEAS IN THE MAKING)

“Collective” Groups through Creative Experiences

Helping students connect, build friendships, and belong.

- **Create your own Music Album**
 - Students collaborate to write, record and produce original music while expressing their ideas, stories and creativity through a shared album project.
 - **Individual Ownership**
 - Each student:
 - Writes lyrics
 - Creates a beat
 - Records a melody
 - Shares a personal story
 - **Collective Ownership**
 - The team:
 - Chooses a theme
 - Creates an album
 - Designs artwork
 - Decides track order
 - **Poetry and Spoken Word Project**

- Students create and perform original poetry and spoken word pieces that communicate personal experiences, ideas, and perspectives while encouraging discussion and collaboration.
 - **Individual Ownership**
 - Each student:
 - Creates an original poem
 - **Collective Ownership**
 - The team:
 - Collaborate to create a shared performance
 - Anthology
 - Showcase
 - Presentation
 - That combines individual contributions into a unified experience
- **Music Video**
 - Students plan, film, and produce an original music video while working together through storytelling, performance, and creative media production.
 - **Individual Ownership**
 - Each student:
 - Contributes ideas
 - Chooses roles
 - Creates part of the story
 - **Collective Ownership**
 - The team:
 - Produces one final video
- **Write Your own Musical**
 - Students create an original musical by developing the story, characters, music, and performance elements as a collaborative team.
 - **Individual Ownership**
 - Each student:
 - Creates a character
 - Writes a scene
 - Develops lyrics
 - Suggests story ideas
 - **Collective Ownership**
 - The team:
 - Builds one cohesive musical
- **Create a song for a Video Game**
 - Students design and compose original music that enhances the story, mood, and experience of a fictional or existing video game.
 - **Individual Ownership**
 - Each student:
 - Creates a musical idea or theme

- Creates a melody or sound effect
- Creates story concepts or characters

■ **Collective Ownership**

- The team:
 - Create a complete soundtrack that supports the game's world, story, characters and overall experience.

Our 3 Core Pillars

Belonging

"I Belong Here."

Belonging is the foundation of the Creative Collective. We believe every student deserves to be part of a community where they are welcomed, known, valued, and accepted. Through meaningful relationships with peers, mentors, and the Creative Collective community, students discover that they matter and have a place where they can grow, contribute, and belong.

The Creative Collective is intentional about creating an environment where every student who walks through our doors is welcomed with kindness, respect, and genuine care. We believe belonging is not something that simply happens—it is something we intentionally cultivate. Students, mentors, volunteers, and families are encouraged to help create a culture where everyone feels included, supported, and valued.

Students experience belonging by:

- Feeling welcomed, seen, known, and valued.
- Being accepted and encouraged.
- Building meaningful friendships.
- Connecting with mentors and positive role models.
- Becoming part of a supportive community where they know they belong.

Ownership

"My Contribution Matters."

Ownership is a core pillar of the Creative Collective. We believe students grow when they are trusted to contribute ideas, make decisions, take responsibility, and actively participate in the creative process. Students are encouraged to use their unique gifts, talents, and perspectives while working alongside others toward a shared goal.

The Creative Collective is intentional about creating opportunities for every student to contribute in meaningful ways. While mentors provide guidance, encouragement, and accountability, students are encouraged to help shape projects, solve problems, and take ownership of meaningful roles within the team.

Ownership is not about having every idea accepted or controlling the outcome. Rather, it is about contributing to the creative process, respecting the ideas of others, and working together to create the strongest possible final product. While

every idea may not become part of the final project, every student is given meaningful opportunities to contribute, influence the creative process, and take responsibility for helping the team succeed.

Students experience ownership by:

- Contributing ideas and creative solutions.
- Taking responsibility for meaningful roles within a project.
- Helping shape creative decisions.
- Developing confidence through real-world experiences.
- Recognizing that their individual contributions strengthen the success of the entire team.

Creative Collective Example

During a **Create Your Own Music Album** project, students first work together to establish a shared vision for the album, including its theme, style, and message. Each student then takes ownership of a meaningful part of the project, such as writing lyrics, creating melodies, producing beats, designing album artwork, or recording vocals. Throughout the project, students share ideas, provide feedback, and help refine one another's work.

By combining Individual Ownership with Collective Ownership, students experience the value of contributing their unique gifts while working together toward a shared vision. They learn that meaningful ownership is not about working alone—it is about taking responsibility for their contribution while helping the entire team succeed.

Collaboration

"We Are Better Together."

Collaboration is a core pillar of the Creative Collective. We believe students grow by learning to work alongside others toward a shared goal. Through teamwork, communication, creative problem-solving, and mutual respect, students discover that meaningful work is often accomplished together rather than alone.

The Creative Collective is intentional about creating experiences where students learn to communicate effectively, listen to different perspectives, solve problems together, and work through challenges as a team. Mentors help foster an environment where collaboration is practiced through respectful communication, shared decision-making, and collective responsibility. Students are encouraged to view disagreements not as obstacles, but as opportunities to listen, learn, and find solutions that strengthen both the team and the final project.

Students experience collaboration by:

- *Creating together toward a shared vision.*
- *Solving problems as a team.*
- *Listening to and respecting different perspectives.*
- *Working through disagreements with respect and understanding.*
- *Encouraging and supporting one another.*
- *Celebrating both individual contributions and shared success.*

Through collaboration, students discover that working together strengthens relationships, develops leadership, and often leads to better ideas, stronger projects, and greater impact than working alone.

Student Ownership

Student Ownership is a foundational part of the Creative Collective experience. Students are encouraged to contribute ideas, make decisions, take responsibility, and actively participate in the creative process.

Projects are designed to develop both **Individual Ownership** and **Collective Ownership**. Students have opportunities to contribute their unique ideas, talents, and perspectives while working together toward a shared goal. While not every idea becomes part of the final product, every student is given meaningful opportunities to help shape the project, contribute to its success, and take ownership of a meaningful role within the team.

Students are encouraged to make creative choices, explore solutions, contribute ideas, and help shape portions of a project. Opportunities for ownership may include selecting roles, contributing creative direction, developing project elements, and participating in team decision-making. Ownership exists within established guidelines and expectations, where students learn to balance individual contributions with the shared vision of the team.

Mentors provide support, guidance, encouragement, and accountability throughout the creative process. Rather than directing every decision, mentors help students develop confidence, responsibility, collaboration skills, problem-solving abilities, and initiative while ensuring projects remain aligned with the goals and Core Pillars of the Creative Collective.

Throughout each project, mentors intentionally pause at key checkpoints to help students reflect on their experience of **Belonging, Collaboration, and Ownership**. These conversations encourage students to celebrate progress, identify challenges, and ensure every team member has meaningful opportunities to participate, contribute, and grow. If one of the Core Pillars is not being fully experienced, mentors work alongside students to strengthen the team through discussion, encouragement, and practical problem-solving.

Responsibility is developed by giving students meaningful roles, trusting them with real contributions, and encouraging them to follow through on commitments. As students grow in confidence and experience, they may be given additional opportunities to lead, mentor others, and take greater ownership within projects and the Creative Collective community.

Through this process, students learn that their contributions matter, that they can positively influence the people and projects around them, and that meaningful work is often accomplished through shared ownership and teamwork.

Examples:

Music Album

Individual Ownership

- Create lyrics, melodies, artwork, stories, or musical ideas.

Collective Ownership

- Collaborate to create, produce, and share a complete album.

Student Ownership

Each student contributes a meaningful piece of the album while helping shape the final project.

Poetry & Spoken Word

Individual Ownership

- Create original poems, stories, lyrics, or spoken word pieces.

Collective Ownership

- Combine individual work into a performance, anthology, or showcase.

Student Ownership

- Each student's work becomes part of a larger creative experience.

Music Video

Individual Ownership

- Contribute ideas, performances, filming, editing, or visual design.

Collective Ownership

- Work together to create a unified story and final video.

Student Ownership

- Each student takes responsibility for a meaningful role within the production.

Write Your Own Musical

Individual Ownership

- Create characters, scenes, dialogue, lyrics, or performance ideas.

Collective Ownership

- Collaborate to build and perform one complete musical.

Student Ownership

- Each student helps shape a portion of the production while contributing to the larger story.

Create a Song for a Video Game

Individual Ownership

- Develop melodies, themes, sound effects, characters, or story concepts.

Collective Ownership

- Create a soundtrack that supports the game's world and experience.

Student Ownership

- Each student contributes creative elements that help bring the final project to life.

Why This Matters

In life, students will regularly find themselves working alongside other people. Whether in a family, workplace, business, community organization, ministry, or creative team, they will be asked to contribute ideas, collaborate with others, solve problems, and work toward shared goals.

The Creative Collective helps students practice these skills in a supportive environment. Students learn how to express their ideas, listen to others, navigate differences, take responsibility, and contribute to something larger than themselves. While not every idea becomes part of the final product, every student is encouraged to contribute meaningfully and help shape the outcome.

By developing both Individual Voice and Collective Voice, students learn that their ideas matter while also recognizing the value of teamwork, collaboration, and shared ownership.

The Lounge

Belonging and The Lounge

The Lounge serves as an ongoing space where students can continue building relationships, exploring creative interests, and participating in the Creative Collective community beyond individual programs and projects.

While programs often provide the first opportunity for students to connect with others, belonging is developed through consistent relationships over time. The Lounge creates opportunities for students to reconnect with friends, meet new people, collaborate on creative interests, and remain connected to a community where they are known and valued.

A helpful comparison is youth soccer. A player may attend a soccer camp to learn skills and meet teammates, but belonging often develops through the continued experiences that happen outside the camp. Time spent practicing, playing, and building friendships with teammates creates a stronger sense of connection and community.

In a similar way, The Lounge provides students with a place to continue creating, connecting, and growing together. Whether participating in creative activities, exploring new interests, attending special events, or continuing projects with friends, students are invited into a community where relationships can deepen and a sense of belonging can grow.

The Lounge is supervised by adult mentors who provide encouragement, guidance, and accountability while helping maintain a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment. Students are given opportunities to explore ideas, collaborate with others, and take ownership of creative interests and projects.

Students may:

- Continue building friendships.
- Explore creative interests and hobbies.
- Participate in creative activities and events.
- Connect with mentors and peers.
- Collaborate on new ideas and projects.
- Continue projects that began during programs.

The Lounge supports the mission of the Creative Collective by creating opportunities for Belonging, Collaboration, and Ownership. Students are encouraged to build meaningful relationships, work alongside others, and continue developing their gifts in ways that positively impact their community.

Potential Early Version of The Lounge

As The Lounge develops, one potential starting point is to provide students with ongoing opportunities to explore creative interests through hands-on experiences, guest presenters, and community events. Students may learn from musicians, artists, filmmakers, entrepreneurs, and other creative professionals who can share their work, demonstrate real-world skills, and provide interactive learning experiences.

These events would allow students to continue exploring interests introduced through Creative Collective programs while building relationships with peers, mentors, and members of the creative community. Over time, The Lounge may also provide opportunities for students to continue projects, pursue new ideas, and take greater ownership of their creative interests.

Parent Partnership

Parents play an important role in the Creative Collective community. While students are the primary focus of our programs and experiences, parents are invited to partner with us in creating an environment where students can belong, collaborate, and grow.

Ways Parents Can Contribute

- Share professional skills, knowledge, or creative expertise.
- Assist with projects, events, and community activities.
- Provide resources, materials, or support when appropriate.
- Encourage and support student participation.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Event setup and cleanup.
- Showcase and performance support.
- Hospitality and refreshments.
- Photography and videography.
- Project and activity assistance.
- Mentorship opportunities when appropriate.

Feedback and Communication

- Parent surveys.
- Program evaluations.
- Community discussions and listening sessions.
- Ongoing communication with staff and mentors.

Long-Term Involvement Opportunities

- Regular volunteering.
- Event and program support.
- Advisory or planning opportunities.
- Guest presenters and workshop leaders.
- Mentorship and community-building roles.
- Supporting future growth and development of the Creative Collective.

The goal of Parent Partnership is to create a collaborative community where families, mentors, and students work together to support the growth, development, and success of young people.

Join the Journey

The Creative Collective is more than a collection of programs and projects. It is a growing community built around the belief that every young person deserves to know three things:

I Belong Here.

We Are Better Together.

My Contribution Matters.

As we continue developing the Creative Collective, we invite parents, educators, artists, businesses, churches, and community members to join us in building a place where students can belong, collaborate, and discover the value of their unique contributions.

Whether you volunteer, mentor, share your expertise, partner with us, or simply encourage a student, your involvement can help shape the future of this community.

Help Shape the Creative Collective

We'd love to hear your ideas, learn about your interests, and keep you updated as the Creative Collective grows.

Scan the QR code or visit the link below to:

- Join our mailing list
- Share your ideas and feedback
- Express interest in volunteering or mentoring
- Learn about future programs and events
- Stay connected as the vision develops



 [Creative Collective | steveperkins](https://www.steveperkins.org/creativecollective)