



EMBRACE
— ARTS FOUNDATION —

Embrace Arts: 2021 Report

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The Music Jam with Erin

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Embrace respectfully acknowledges that we are working and creating on the traditional and unceded territories, of the Ləkʷəŋən (Esquimalt and Songhees Nations) and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples.



Top Image: A camper playing the gathering drum

Bottom Image: Adam & Luka in the forest in Chilly

Reflections on 2021

2021 was a jam packed year for Embrace. It was filled with new programs like The Music Jam with Erin and the Artist to Facilitator program, as well as the return of old favourites like our summer day camps. There were certainly many twists and turns throughout the year as we navigated the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, staff health challenges, and the continued work of accessing adequate funds and space. In the face of these challenges, our team chose to focus on what we could reasonably do. Our aim was to work within our capacity to create the most meaningful impact.

Looking back on the year, I get excited about the kinds of growth we experienced. We expanded who was taking on leadership roles at Embrace, further extended our reach, and shared our knowledge. There was also a continued focus on our values of connection, care, and play.

As our performance company is currently filming the new dance piece *articulate*, I can't help but notice how one of the central themes that has emerged in *articulate* is that play is a valuable form of communication. That is something I truly cherish about our community: We know how to play together. I'm excited to further connect and play as a community in 2022, and discover what magic unfolds.

Tiffany Tjosvold
(She/Her)

Executive Director of Embrace



Top Image: Max & Claire dressed as fairies in Chilly

Bottom Image: Dancers improvising together in the studio

Community

This year we had the pleasure of running a variety of events and programs that focused on community connection. All of our community programs were run online this year via Zoom. Due to the format these events were run in, we had the pleasure of having participation from individuals all across the country.

Embrace: Community Events

- The Music Jam With Erin
- Friendship Formal (*In collaboration with CNIB*)
- Embrace Summer Summit
- The Annual Halloween Dance (*In collaboration with CNIB*)



Image: A Zoom screen from *The Music Jam With Erin*

Program Spotlight: The Music Jam With Erin

The Music Jam with Erin (online) has quickly become a core Embrace program. Throughout the year, more than 40 participants, ages three to 65+ attended from across the country. This program focuses on creating a space for people to connect and share music together. A beautiful community dynamic has formed with the majority of participants having attended since the program's inception.

Programs

In 2021, Embrace had the privilege of running a wide variety of online and in-person programs. In previous years, the vast majority of programs were taught by our year round staff: Tiffany and Erin. While they continued to teach numerous programs, this year we were pleased to have many new instructors guiding our community in classes, camps, and workshops. Huge thanks to our 2021 sessional instructors & camp staff: Alexa, Claire, Devon, Gen, Melissa, Mina, and Wally.

Embrace: Internal Programs

- Summer Day Camps (In-Person)
- Visual and tactile art classes (Online & In-Person)
- All Ages Musical Theatre (In-Person)
- Music & Movement for Kids (Online)
- Adult Dance Programs, including Contemporary, Dance Fitness (Online)

Embrace: External Programs

- Dance classes in partnership with Vertical Performing Arts
- Dance classes in partnership with CNIB
- Dance classes for Ottawa West Community Support
- Dance Classes for CLV
- Weekly dance classes for SD61

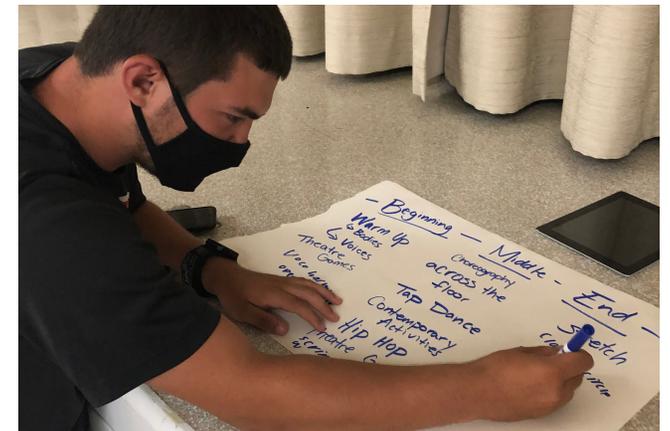
This year we ran programming for more than 200 individuals of all physical and cognitive abilities. We had the privilege of working with individuals from coast to coast, ranging in age from 3 weeks old to 80+ years old.

Project Spotlight: Artist To Facilitator

This year, thanks to funding from the Disability Alliance of BC, we were able to run the all new Artist To Facilitator program. Embrace staff worked with a small cohort of artists who self-identified as neurodivergent and/ or disabled, to provide a specialized training program on how to facilitate arts based programming. The curriculum for this program was designed by Embrace's core staff team and included a wide array of learning from lesson planning to basic first aid certification, as well as workshops from other disabled facilitators in the community.

Each artist then co-facilitated a program in their chosen art form for the community. The classes and workshops these artists ran were free for the community and included visual arts, musical theatre, and contemporary dance.

This program was truly meaningful for both the cohort and the community members who participated in the classes. When asked about the classes a community member said, "It filled my soul just the way that I needed."



Top Image: A group photo of the Artist to Facilitator cohort and program staff on the last day of training.

Bottom Image: Wally working hard on lesson planning.

Embrace: Performance

Embrace: Performance is Embrace's professional performance stream where neurodivergent, chronically ill, disabled, and non-disabled artists work together to develop original works. This year all the work that was created or supported was presented in online settings.

First up was our family friendly adventure show, *Chilly*. This playful piece of recorded theatre was available for audiences worldwide and for the first time ever, we had international audiences. Local audiences were able to enrich their experience of the show using tactile maps that were designed by the Embrace team. In fall, Embrace supported the Elevators residency program that took place as a part of Impulse Theatre's Peek Fest. This residency was an opportunity for a small group of neurodivergent or disabled artists to develop micro performances.

In fall we also started work on *articulate*. This project is a screen dance piece that features original electronic music created by youth composers (ages 8 - 13) with the support of our Director of Music Programming. This piece will debut in early March 2022.



Image: Branding from Chilly that features a drawing of the title character peeking out from the L



Image: An Instagram post about the Elevators program featuring all three artists who participated

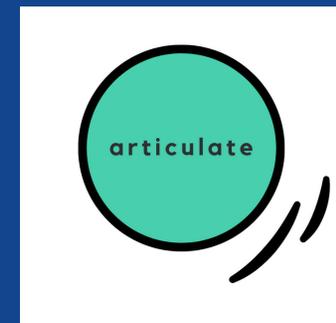


Image: The ball in motion graphic for the upcoming show articulate

Thank You.

We are so grateful to have collaborated this year with a number of fantastic organizations. Embrace is truly thankful to be able to work with these groups in order to better serve our community.

We also wanted to express our sincere gratitude to the funding bodies who provided our primary finances during 2021.

Primary Collaborators in 2021:

- CNIB
- Impulse Theatre
- Vertical Performing Arts

Primary Funding Received in 2021:

- British Columbia Arts Council
- British Columbia Community Gaming Grant
- Canada Summer Jobs
- The City of Victoria
- CRD Arts & Culture Support Service
- The Disability Alliance of BC

In addition to these organizations, we wanted to extend our gratitude to the many other individuals who made it possible for Embrace to operate. We are thankful for the amazing volunteers who support us with their time, and also to the individual donors who have financially supported us this year. Every ounce of time and money makes a huge impact. Thank you all for your continued support.