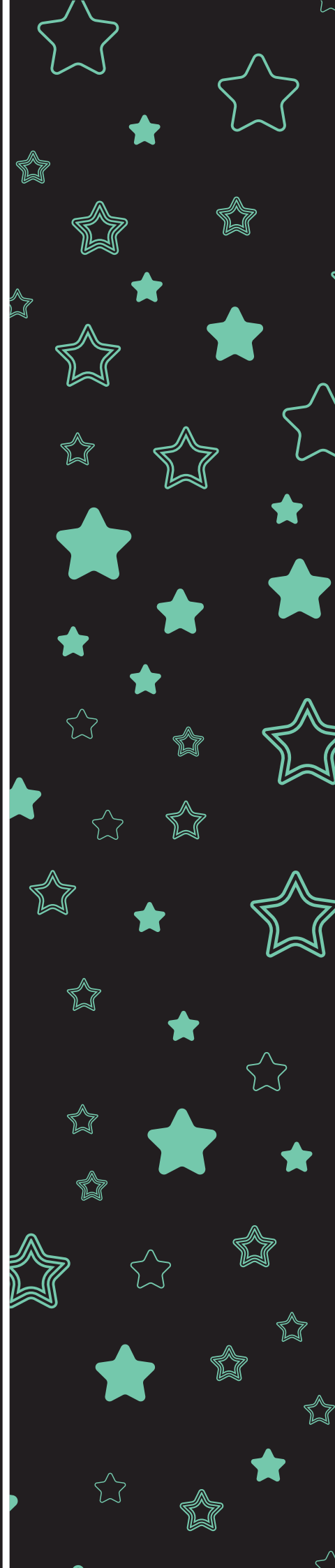


# GIRLS ROCK! ROCHESTER

2020 Annual Report



**USING MUSIC CREATION  
& PERFORMANCE AS  
TOOLS FOR CULTIVATING  
SELF-CONFIDENCE IN  
GIRLS & LGBTQ+ YOUTH.**



## MISSION

Girls Rock! Rochester is dedicated to using music as a vehicle for personal growth & positive change for girls, women, & the LGBTQ+ community.

## PRINCIPLES

We believe that music is a powerful vehicle for personal growth & positive change.

We value constructive approaches to fighting sexism.

We promote collaboration & community above competition & isolation.

We recognize the importance of diversity in all forms.

We provide a safe & accessible environment for personal & creative exploration.

We encourage all voices & stories to be shared & heard.



## OUR STAFF MEMBERS:

Jess Southwell (she/her) Executive Director  
Kaci Smith (she/her) Program Director  
Amanda Rampe (she/her) Gear Director

## GR!R BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Zora Gussow (she/her, they/them) Treasurer  
Hawa Ibrahim (she/her) Board Secretary  
Eileen Ryan (she/her) Board Chair  
Jane Bryant (she/her, they/them)  
Dina Giovanelli (she/her)  
Maggie Rex (she/her)



# A LETTER FROM OUR E.D.

Without a doubt, our ninth camp season was not what we expected. 2020 was a challenging year for everyone, but I am so pleased to report that those challenges afforded us the opportunity to get creative and engage with our community in ways we never imagined. I think we were all reminded in 2020 of the value of connecting and lifting one another up – even if we could only gather virtually, that togetherness and support was essential.

Our traditional camp experience was not possible in the Summer of 2020. Instead, our team came together to create a virtual camp experience. Our Program Director, Kaci employed all the skills she honed teaching remote classes during the school season to create an interactive and literally rocking Radical Online Collaboration (ROC) Studio experience for our campers. With support from incredibly talented interns from the University of Rochester (shout out to Annie and Tessa!) the ROC Studio campers created a showcase experience like our community has never seen. Of course we would have preferred to rock out together at a local venue, but ours became one of many online music performances and fundraisers and we had incredible support from our GR!R community! If you missed the ROC Studio Showcase, I invite you to check it out on our YouTube channel.

In the spirit of togetherness, the team, led by Amanda, our incredibly talented Gear Director, created a singing telegram fundraiser that gave local musicians the opportunity to create custom music recordings to be sent around the community, spreading good vibes and good tunes when everyone needed both. The donations received for singing telegrams supported GR!R and our talented local musicians.

GR!R has been especially interested in creating year-round programming for folx of all ages. We did not let a global pandemic stop us from offering online workshops of all kinds. Songwriting, guitar, and piano workshops were offered this year and we were fortunate to be able to offer financial aid for these workshops the same way we do during the summer camp season. Kaci also brought back the Amplified Teen Voices program for an encore, virtually of course. This program is key to empowering young people to carry our mission throughout the community and into the future.

2021 brings the promise of brighter days and the hope that we will be able to be together, in real life, very soon. This will also be a year of change for GR!R. We will welcome new staff members, and new board members; but what won't change is GR!R's dedication to community, creativity, personal growth, and positive change. From all of us at GR!R, thank you for your continued support – we could not do this work, and we could not have weathered this pandemic, without you. Please stay tuned for all that is to come.

Best,  
Jess Hasler Southwell

# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW...



## THE MOVE!

In fall of 2019, we moved our headquarters from a tiny office on University Ave. into an amazing and accessible space in the Village Gate Square! Our new home allows us to host all-ages open mic events, rent affordable practice spaces to our musicians, and hold classes and workshops in an incredible location.



# ROCK ROULETTE!

In September of 2019, we unveiled Rock Roulette 1.0, a rock camp experience for grown folks! Our kick-off party was at The Spirit Room, where all participants were sorted into bands and got to know each other. Each band was assigned a designated, experienced band coach as a resource and was given access to any GR!R gear that they needed. Some groups were able to practice in our new practice space at the Village Gate! We had five amazing bands come together during the six-week program to create original music and then perform at an inspiring event at Lovin' Cup in November. Our Rock Roulette bands fundraised online and offline for GR!R, raising a total of \$11, 855.49 for Girls Rock! Rochester, Inc.



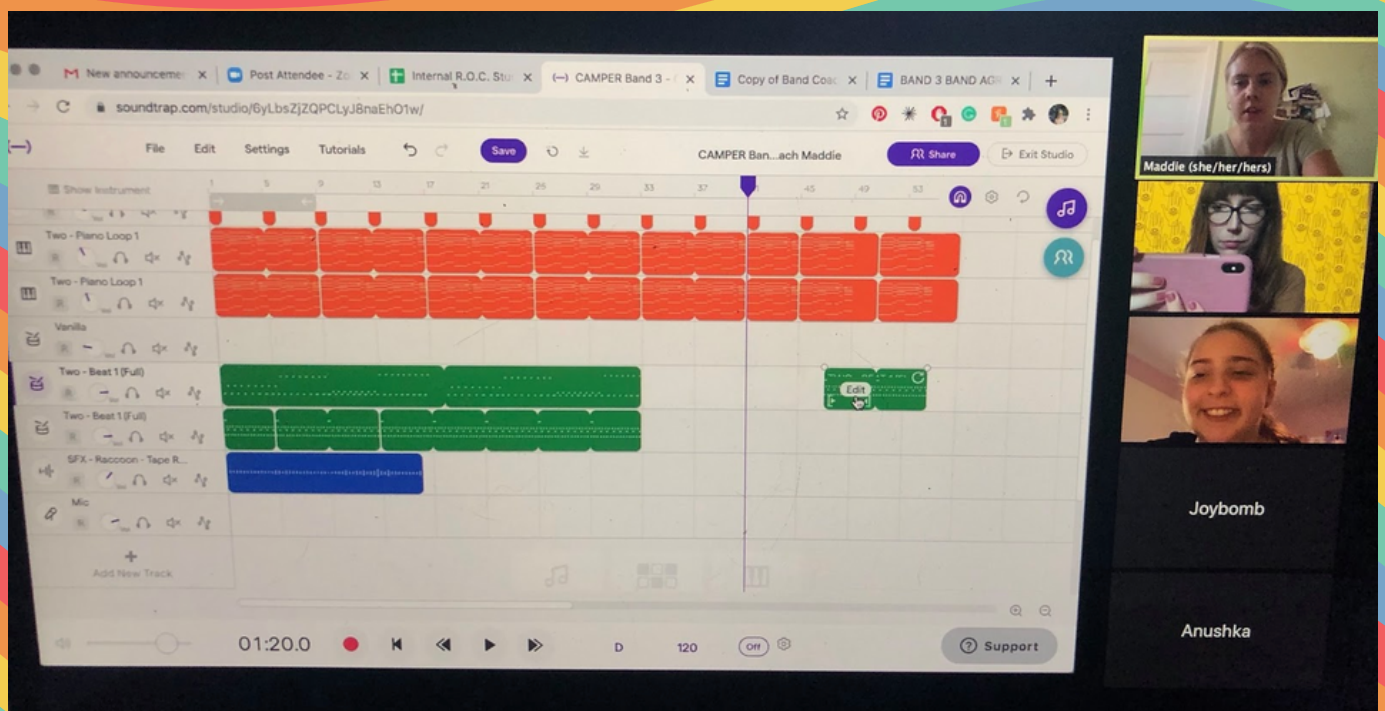
“Lovin' Cup was filled with love; everyone present rooting with all their hearts for every brave band. We, The Five Seasons, took the stage first; powered by joy, excitement, and nerves. We opened slowly with "Season of Human Nature", ramped it up with "Little Miss Perfect and Mr. Know It All" and wound up the crowd... KILLING IT with "Don't You Forget About Me". I felt every note in my soul; that feeling seemed to emanate through my eyes, my smile, and most definitely through my bell-bottomed, sequined feet! That feeling was enhanced each time I made eye contact with Andrea, Phyllis, Cori, or Bennie. I left the stage knowing that THIS was a highlight of my life.”

– Susan Stanger, Rock Roulette Participant

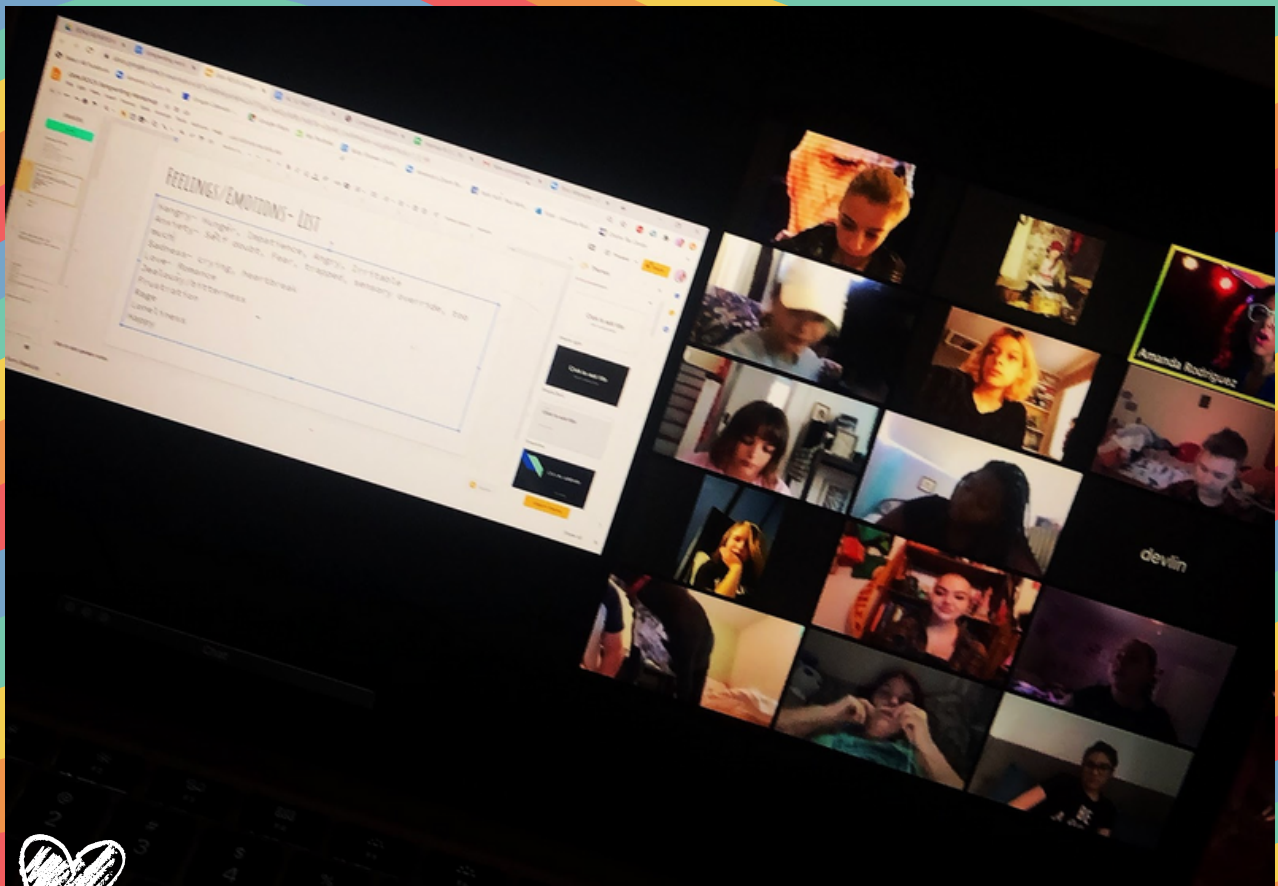


# R.O.C. STUDIO (Radical Online Collaboration) + OUR SUMMER INTERNS!

In summer of 2020, seventeen campers embarked on our virtual "camp" experience called R.O.C. Studio. With the pandemic derailing our traditional camp plans, we worked with other organizations across the Girls Rock Camp Alliance to create a safe and accessible online program for our community. Campers learned about music theory, the history of Black women in music, songwriting, music production, and how to collaborate with their band using Soundtrap. They had the awesome experience of meeting musicians from around the US, including the all Black female rock band, TXLIPS! The week culminated with a livestream telethon featuring volunteers from our community and our campers' original songs!







“This past summer I interned with Girls Rock! Rochester, and it was an invaluable experience that I will forever refer back to. Over the course of the internship, I gained an understanding of how a non-profit runs through doing various administrative tasks such as creating a social media calendar, finding sponsors, and compiling a list of Black Lives Matter resources to send out to the greater GR!R community. One of the most memorable and rewarding experiences during my time interning with GR!R, however, was being a part of the virtual camp experience, ROC Studio. There were so many uncertainties due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but seeing how hard the leaders of GR!R worked to still provide a meaningful and engaging camp experience was truly inspiring. Throughout ROC Studio, I was trusted to lead a workshop on Black women rock artists, co-coach a band via Zoom using the DAW Soundtrap, and create an hour-long telethon video that showcased the talents of the campers, guest performances, sponsor shout-outs, and more. The environment of the camp was so successful, that after only a week via Zoom, I was sad to say goodbye to my campers.

This experience of interning with Girls Rock! Rochester has also helped me gain a better sense of what I want my career to look like. After seeing firsthand how music can play a role in creating positive change, I now feel confident that I can incorporate my passion for music into a career that works towards making the world a better place. The thought of this excites me to my core, so I cannot thank Kaci, Jess, and the whole GR!R community enough for all that you have taught me!”

-Tessa Shlonsky, University of Rochester, Humanities for Life

# CAMPER SPOTLIGHT: ZOE!

My name is Zoe and I've gone to Girls Rock! Camp every summer since I was 8, making 2020 my 9th camp. That's kind of bananas, but it makes sense when I think of the massive impact GR!R has had on me. Yeah yeah, things might get cheesy, just go with it!



I've always been a musician in one way or another. When I was a toddler, I would hit my hands on any surface within my reach, so much that I ended up taking drum lessons when I was old enough. For as long as I can remember, I've been a singer, and I've been involved in both my school's choir and orchestra since 4th grade. My only passion has been music, in any form, but I loved the idea of performing. There was only one issue: I had some INTENSE stage fright! That's why my parents believed Girls Rock! would be good for me.



After my first ever day of camp, I came home bawling my eyes out, babbling about how, "There's no way I'll ever be able to learn the bass and write a song in one week! I can't go in front of people to perform and I can't go back and I can't, I can't, I can't!"

(I did go back, thank goodness!)

The people at camp were so understanding and helpful. They work so hard to make sure that the week is fun and impactful, without being completely overwhelming. They're the reason I came back every year, and eventually gained enough confidence to choose the instrument I really wanted to try:  
my voice. ☆☆

The community I've found at GR!R is one I never imagined could be a reality. Their support has made me who I am today.





# ZOE'S CAMPER SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED:

Now, this past year was hard for everyone, and I was worried about what would happen with camp. We all wanted some semblance of normalcy. Of course, an online version of camp can't really be seen as "normal," but there were many aspects of it that took me back to my first year--trying something new and not really knowing what would happen.



Though it was strange at first, the workshops, the lunchtime performances, bonding with my band, and seeing the people I know and love made it all worth it. (I also learned how to use Soundtrap, an online recording program, which I've actually used after camp for my own projects!) The staff were all very aware of screen fatigue and the need for breaks, so it didn't feel like the whole day was spent on a computer. In fact, it really did feel

like camp. Leave it to GR!R to figure out how to make the best out of a tough situation. Sure, I wished we could be together, to hug one another, to go down to the kitchens and grab bagel chips and beg Zora and Joey for just a little coffee, but it really was an amazing experience.

I feel like I've come a long way since the little 8-year-old that never thought she'd be capable of performing, much less singing, in front of anyone. Being almost 17 now, I've been thinking about my future more and more. Music has been my only thought for years. When I'm asked what I want to study in college, all I say is something in music. GR!R has shown me what I could pursue, and helped me gain the confidence needed to realize that it's not so far out of my reach. I would like to thank them, all of them, every person at camp these past years. I really owe you all the world!



# 2020 INCOME

Grant Funding

- \$5,000.00

Camp Tuition

- \$2,250.00

Individual Contributions

- \$31,706.88

Rock Roulette

- \$11,855.49

Business Partnerships

- \$2,112.55

Fundraising Events

- \$7,920.72

Other Sources

- \$9,941.81



## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

Individuals who gifted \$100 or more:

Aberrant DSP, Alby DeBlieck, Alexandria Iadanza, Anna Creadick, Barbara Johnston, Ben Robistow, Catherine Hurt, Christie Raymo, Clayton Cowles, David Rose, Derek Crowe, Dina Giovanelli, Eileen Ryan, Elise Wojciechowski, Emily Lynch, Emma Stroop, Faith Ryan, Gary Long, Girth Records, Hannah Ryan, Hawa Ibrahim, Irene Shaw, Jenny Avellar, Joel Glovacki, Joseph Paladino, Julie Parker, Karen Genett, Kevin Dunn, Kristin Elias, Lore McSpadden, Maggie Rex, Marjorie Crum, Mark Osterling, Mark Martin, Mary Ryan-Moretti, Maureen Ryan, Monika Reifenstein, Neil Demchick, Nicholas Ruth, Nora Rubel, Olga Hauptman, Peter & Hannah Ryan, Positive Force Movement, Rolling Elbow, Rory & Kathryn Shaw, Scott & Christy Burgess Jackson, Sharon Turner, Sharon Underberg, Stephanie Seiffert, Sue Carroll, Susan Stanger, Thomas Ryan, Thyra & Jonathan Endicott Chute, Valerie Hollenbeck-Loyet, Victoria Hartman, Wendy Demchick-Alloy, and William Ryan

**WE COULD NOT DO THIS INCREDIBLE WORK  
WITHOUT YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT.**





**GR!R**

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