



# **FIREBIRD COMMUNITY ARTS**

## **Empowering and connecting people through the healing practice of glassblowing and ceramics**

### **We serve**

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those who have been impacted by structural or individual trauma, including violently injured youth, veterans, formerly incarcerated individuals, undocumented and immigrant populations, and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students on the South and West sides

### **We help**

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people heal by teaching them about glassblowing and ceramics—two media that are typically expensive and difficult to access, but by their very nature elicit healing and build community

### **We provide**

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a safe space, as well as a network of relevant wraparound services and professional and educational pathways for underrepresented communities in the arts



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**Our flagship program offers healing through glassblowing, mentoring, and trauma psychoeducation for young people injured by gun violence in Chicago**

# **PROJECT**

# **FIRE**

# OUR IMPACT

- We serve more than 1,000 people each year
- Since 2016, we have served more than 2,000 CPS students at 18 neighborhood schools
- We pay more than \$60,000 in stipends for young people
- We provide up to six in-school residences per year
- In the past four years, seven of our participants and two of our instructors received scholarships from the Corning Museum of Glass in New York
- Sixty-two percent of our Project FIRE participants have remained active in the program's mentorship and employment for four or more years
- We have presented at conferences around the country and been featured in local and national media outlets, including NBC Nightly News, the Washington Post, and WGN9: Faces of Chicago

# OUR STORIES

One participant's best friend was killed. Rather than seek retaliation, he came into the studio the very next day and created a glass angel to honor his friend's memory.

Seeking positive support and community, a participant came directly to the Project Fire studio after leaving his father's funeral.

Another participant received a week-long glass-blowing scholarship in New York. Once there, he was tasked with creating something meaningful. He blew 45 bullets and shell to represent the number of times he and his friends had been shot at.

**"It's more than a program. It's motivation."**

—Joseph Young, Fall 2019

# PARTICIPANT PROFILE

## Deaunata Holman

Deaunata has been a Project FIRE participant since 2015. As he improved his glassblowing skills he also became more in touch with his emotions and started relating to his peers. Today, Deaunata continues to attend tutoring on a weekly basis. He has approached this new challenge with great maturity—and has excelled in the program. Deaunata was selected to present at the Alaska Child Traumatic Stress Conference this summer, and he also received a full scholarship to attend a week-long intensive at the Corning Museum of Glass in New York.

**"Glass blowing helps you cope with all the crazy things that happen in your life. You get to pour your feelings into your piece and almost make it feel for you. It makes you feel like you're doing something good with your life. It helps you learn a new way of building yourself."**

