

# THINKING BIG FOR TWO DECADES

Two decades ago Big Thought started thinking BIG. North Texas education has not been the same since.

Twenty years ago, Edith O'Donnell and Mitch Jericho knew in their hearts that the arts had the power to help children learn. They pooled their resources and launched the 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Young Audiences here in Dallas.

Twenty years later, the organization has grown to serve children, teachers and parents in more ways than its founders ever imagined. The umbrella name Big Thought was added to reflect the organization's broadened scope of vision and ideas. Today, Big Thought has initiatives that address academic achievement, family services, life skills development, and workforce development. Our programs have expanded beyond the traditional in-school programs. We now reach children and families in-school, after-school, during the summer, in their neighborhoods and in their communities.

Through its work, Big Thought programs provide learning opportunities proven to help students become more imaginative, adaptable and productive adults resulting in stronger communities and a capable future workforce. It is remarkable how 20 years ago two women came together in a closet-sized office and planted seeds that grew into such a strong and influential organization.



## KEY DATES IN BIG THOUGHT HISTORY

**March 1987:** Mitch Jericho and Edith O'Donnell founded the 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Young Audiences, Inc. under the name Young Audiences of North Texas.

**1988:** The agency presents 56 performances to 3,000 children in 17 schools with five artist ensembles.

**1990:** 50,000 students are served by 205 performances. Gigi Antoni is named Program Director.

**1993:** 100,000 students are served. Residency programs are introduced and Creative Solutions is launched.

**1994:** 302,480 children are served by 926 performances and 1,513 residencies.

**1996:** Gigi Antoni is promoted to Executive Director. Young Audiences of North Texas is awarded Young Audiences Chapter of the Year.

**1996:** Library Live! is piloted. The program goes on to grow to 26 libraries serving over 8,000 children annually by 2006.

**1998:** Dallas ArtsPartners is piloted. The program grows to serve all 156 Dallas ISD elementary schools by 2000.

**2002:** 417,371 children and adults are served by the agency's combined programs.

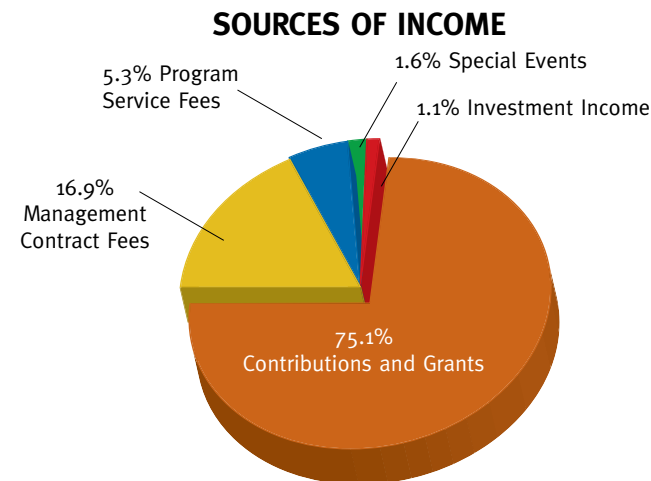
**2003:** Selected by the Ford Foundation to develop a family learning and parent advocacy component of the ArtsPartners program. Nokia, Inc. chooses Young Audiences as U.S. implementation partner for their global MAKE A CONNECTION program.

**2004:** The agency is renamed Big Thought. Creative Solutions is awarded the Coming Up Taller award by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

**2006:** The Wallace Foundation grants Big Thought \$1.06 million to plan a city-wide arts learning initiative. Big Thought is recipient of a U.S. Department of Education grant to train arts specialists as arts integration resources.

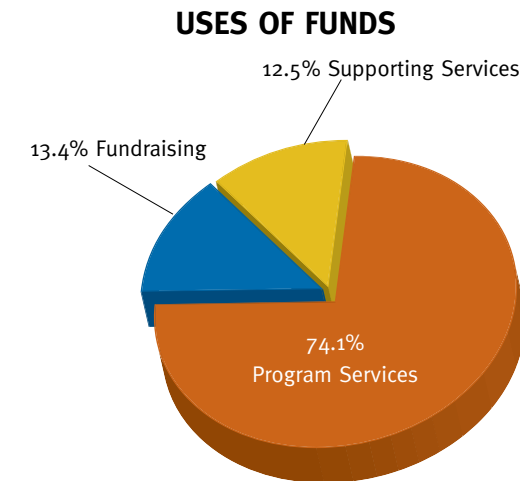
**2007:** The Wallace Foundation grants Big Thought a three-year \$8 million grant to implement the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative. Big Thought Endowment Fund is established.

## Fiscal Year July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007



Contributions & Grants	\$5,120,225
Management Contract Fees	1,150,813
Program Service Fees	362,945
Special Events	107,982
Investment Income	72,115
<b>Total Sources of Income</b>	<b>\$6,814,080</b>

Current accounting standards for non-profit organizations require that the value of certain multi-year grants be included as revenue in the year grant notifications are made. However, the expenses for carrying out these grants are not recorded until the year in which they are expended resulting in a surplus of sources over uses of funds.



Program Services	\$3,814,788		
Fundraising	688,622		
Supporting Services	642,799	<b>Total Uses of Funds</b>	<b>\$5,146,199</b>
<b>Total Uses of Funds</b>	<b>\$5,146,199</b>		

**Note:** This year was a year of investment in the organization infrastructure to position Big Thought for planned growth.

Big Thought is a nonprofit charitable organization under Section 501(c)3 of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Wood, Hearn, McClanahan & Co., PLLC audits the financial statements. Copies are available, upon request, from Big Thought.

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**BigThought**  
A Learning Partnership  
FOUNDED 1987

ANNUAL REPORT 2006-2007  
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## Big Thought Programs

- » **Dallas ArtsPartners** Integrating arts and culture as a catalyst for general classroom learning
- » **Creative Solutions** In-depth, life skills residencies for at-risk youth
- » **North Texas Wolf Trap** Trains teachers to improve reading readiness for early childhood learners
- » **Library Live!** Family learning and literacy in partnership with the Dallas Public Library
- » **Young Audiences of North Texas** Places artists in schools to enrich the learning environment
- » **MAKE A CONNECTION Thru Art** Develops life skills through the arts for middle school students
- » **Dallas Arts Learning Initiative** Coordinated, city-wide system of arts learning opportunities to support education in the classroom and year-round out-of-school time



## Impact

- » Big Thought, the City of Dallas and Dallas ISD are partnering to unify the city and enrich our children, families and neighborhood through innovative learning programs.
- » Creative Solutions, a partnership between Big Thought and the Dallas County Juvenile Department, gives at-risk youth the opportunity to work with professional artists. This innovative, alternative education program was honored by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities for the programs efforts to equip teens with valuable life skills and to encourage creative thinking, problem-solving and teamwork.
- » The Dallas Arts Learning Initiative is ensuring positive education outcomes through in-school, out-of-school and summer programs that influence how teachers teach and how students learn to ultimately create a stronger, more viable workforce.

*When creativity drives learning—students flourish.* - Gigi Antoni, President/CEO, Big Thought

## Results 1987-2006

Big Thought provided programs and educational opportunities:

- » 124,000+ workshops and residencies
- » 19,400+ performances
- » 5,700,000+ student participants
- » 6,000+ teachers annually receiving professional development

## National Research

- » 93% of Americans agree that the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education for children.<sup>1</sup>
- » Learning experiences in the arts contribute to the development of academic skills, including the areas of reading and language development and mathematics.<sup>2</sup>
- » Research has found that arts education can enhance academic achievement, reach students on the margins of the educational system, create an effective learning environment and connect learners' experiences to the world outside of school.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> May 2005 Harris Poll commissioned by American for the Arts. <sup>2</sup> *Making a Case for the Arts* published by Arts Education Partnership.

<sup>3</sup> *Champions of Change: the Impact of the Arts on Learning*



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## Financial Support

As a nonprofit, our funding comes from the generous support of corporations, foundations, endowments, government grants and individuals. Big Thought focuses donor contributions toward the valuable work of conducting and coordinating learning experiences for children, training teachers, and enriching families. The growth of Big Thought's capacity to do more for the community is a direct reflection of the generosity of our donors. To make a contribution, click on **Donate Now** at [www.bightought.org](http://www.bightought.org).



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