Rhode Island Black Storytellers, aka RIBS, annual report

January 2023: RIBS produced FUNDA FEST 25: A Sankofa Birthday Celebration of Black Storytelling, celebrating 25 years of our festival. We brought in $7,714 in ticket sales, $10,908 in donations, $13,605 in sponsorships, $29,150 from schools’ income; we sold 230 Festival passes, which enabled our audience to come in person, or attend via live stream; We were very pleased with our hybrid programming and plan to do it again in Jan 2024.

15+ performers and reached over 10,300 students and teachers in our programming throughout the year.

In 2023 RIBS had 84 school programs, and 42 library performances, primarily in RI, but also in MA and CT. RIBS has been making Black storytelling and storytellers available to schools, organizations, and public venues all year long.

February and April 2023: RIBS received funding from the Rhode Island Department of Education to offer programs during school vacations. February programs were online: Storytelling is FUN, is a daily 1-hour storytelling class for elementary school children; HipHop to Hamilton is for middle schoolers. We had 12 students participate. In April we had 20 elementary school students for in person FUNDA Story Camp. In the summer, we offered 2 week -long sessions of FUNDA Story Camp and had 25 students each week. They learned stories, made art, did African drumming and dance, and performed for their families at the end of the week.

RIBS has been working on strengthening its organizational structure and its board of directors. We have had changes in staffing and Board leadership. We are currently participating in a cohort for Executive Directors of small nonprofits, and just got accepted in an organizational strengthening program through the Rhode Island Foundation.

Big projects:

RIBS received a $50K Innovation Award through the Social Enterprise Greenhouse to create a pilot program we are calling our Legacy Academy: A Culturally Based Storytelling Training Program. This is designed to train new storytellers who can become part of the RIBS “roster”, available to do professional/high quality programs in the community. We plan to launch this program after FUNDA FEST 2024.

RIBS received a $100k endowed fund from the Rhode Island Foundation, in recognition of our 25 years of impact despite limited resources, and as a tool for us to use to invest in our future.

RIBS will be working with the Brown University Arts Ignite Program on a project called Our Storied Health. This is a partnership with the school of Public Health at Brown, and this is at an intersection of art and community health that RIBS has been involved in for several years.

Attached is a link to a recent slide show with some photos from our programs this year.

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/a1o9e2t3sgpybx6hmzzn0/Presentation1-final.ppsx?rlkey=f3zjq55mkme8ke8a3g0u8gqwe&dl=0>

For more information on RIBS and FUNDA FEST: [www.ribsfest.org](http://www.ribsfest.org) and <https://fundafest.org/>

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Tutson

RIBS Executive/Festival Director