

# Chicago Academy for the Arts Shatters Its \$1 Million Fundraising Goal. Over \$400,000 Raised at Annual Gala

*Chicago's leading arts and culture high school enters its 41st year achieving lofty goal two months early.*

CHICAGO, IL, USA, April 10, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Chicago Academy for the Arts \(The Academy\)](#) set a record by raising more than \$1 Million after [Inspire: The Red Carpet Gala](#) at Chicago's Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel on April 1, 2023 - nearly two months ahead of its anticipated goal. The \$1 million dollar mark was reached during the event and announced by The Academy alum and critically-acclaimed songwriter [Justin Tranter](#) (they/them) who, in February, donated \$500,000 - the largest single donation in the school's history - and called for a community-wide challenge to build engagement to raise \$1 million by June 30, 2023.



Visual Arts Students sketch Dance Department models during Cocktail Hour Reception - Artists: Bri Mallick (VA '23) Emily Ross (VA '23) Dancers: Luciana Sandy (DA '24) Grace Hospenthal (DA '25) Christian Ayala (DA '23)

Inspire: The Red Carpet Gala showcased The Academy's diversity with current and former students performing musical numbers, staging theatrical pieces, and live performance art displays. A live auction paddle-raise was hosted by renowned auctioneer Keith Jones of Sayre & Jones Auctioneers. Nationally syndicated columnist Heidi Stevens, James Beard and Michelin Guide-winning restaurateur Rick Bayless were among the more than 200 guests in attendance.

Graduates of The Academy earned more than \$40 million in college scholarships over the past five years and gained admission to the nation's best universities and conservatories. Most students go on to pursue competitive careers in the arts, as well as the sciences, humanities, business, and more. Alumni exemplify the powerful effect of art and arts education as Broadway stars, GRAMMY award winners, engineers, and entrepreneurs. This special evening will highlight students, alumni, and all those that call The Academy "home."

"Not only did this school make me the artist and songwriter I am today but it saved my life in more ways than I can count. Nothing makes me prouder than to be able to support a place that educates brilliant young creatives and more importantly, gives them a foundation of compassion, community and confidence." - Justin Tranter (they/them) - 1998, Musical Theatre

As one of Chicago's leading arts and culture high schools, and one of the most diverse schools in Illinois, The Academy created an unmatched and transformative educational model. Students are inspired to expand their potential through rigorous arts training paired with an esteemed academic curriculum.

"Chicago Academy for the Arts awarded more tuition assistance in the past 12 months than ever before. Justin's generous gift, and the funds raised through the Million Dollar Challenge enables The Academy to make a world-class education accessible to all aspiring young artists. " - Jason Patera, Chicago Academy for the Arts Head of School



Justin Tranter and Rick Bayless

Notable alumni of The Academy include Cecily Strong (Saturday Night Live actor, author, comedian - 2002, Theatre), Lara Flynn Boyle (award-winning actress - 1988, Theatre), Justin Tranter (award-winning musician and music producer - 1998, Musical Theatre), Lalah Hathaway (award-winning singer - 1986, Music), Tom Gold (award-winning choreographer - 1986, Dance), and Kevin Miles (actor and current "Jake from State Farm" - 2008, Theatre).

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1998, Musical Theatre*

The Academy would like to thank the Gala Chair Nadine Mallick, as well as the gala's sponsors:

Justin Tranter  
Michael & Kelly Finnerty

Emily Barr & Scott Kane  
Rusty Hernandez-Sanfilippo & Jeffrey Sanfilippo  
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The Chicago  
Academy for the Arts

# Inspire

The Red Carpet Gala

**April 1, 2023**  
**5:30 PM**  
Radisson Blu  
221 N. Columbus Drive  
Chicago, IL 60601

Chicago Academy for the Arts Inspire: The Red Carpet  
Gala | [ChicagoAcademyForTheArts.org](https://www.ChicagoAcademyForTheArts.org)

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