CASITA CENTER FOR ARTS & EDUCATION

THE HEART OF CREATIVITY. THE HOME OF SUCCESS.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK & 2019 – 2024 STRATEGIC GOALS
For the past two years, the staff and board of Casita Maria, supported by consultants and volunteers, have worked to strengthen our organization and to envision the future for ourselves and the children and communities we serve.

We take great pride in the history of Casita Maria, from its early days in a tenement apartment in East Harlem to our present 90,000 square feet building in the heart of the South Bronx.

As we imagine what the future might look like, we honor the vision and commitment of those who created Casita Maria in 1934, and those who had the wisdom to adapt throughout the years according to the strengths and needs of young people, their families, their communities and the city as a whole.
This Strategic Framework builds on exciting work that has been done recently, in particular the integration of the Creative Youth Development approach into afterschool and summer camp programming and the expansion of our arts programming through the Gallery and the South Bronx Culture Trail. It expresses our commitment to the pursuit of excellence in the South Bronx and East Harlem, and our aspiration to be a model for arts and education programs in similar communities throughout the United States.
OUR MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

OUR MISSION

Casita Maria creates a safe and welcoming community, enriching and uplifting youth and families toward success through shared cultural, art and educational experiences and programs.

OUR VISION

A dynamic and thriving community, celebrating arts and culture as integral to its vitality and success.
Casita Maria is committed to a set of values and standards that reflect our vision for our community and the world that we want to see.

**COLLABORATION.** We work together as a team. We appreciate cooperation, respect, and the ability to compromise.

**COMMITMENT.** We are a team of professionals committed to the intellectual, creative, physical, and emotional growth of everyone we serve.

**EMPATHY.** We listen to each other. We strive to demonstrate understanding and compassion without judgment.

**EXCELLENCE.** We aspire to set the gold standard as a non-profit of choice for outstanding scholars and artists.

**INNOVATION.** We boldly achieve our mission in partnership with loyal donors, parents/guardians and families, committed staff, community partners, elected officials, and a growing community of caring adults.
**LEADERSHIP.** We strive to reach our fullest potential as leaders and teachers in an environment that enriches young people, their families, and the community through multidisciplinary art.

**LEARNING.** We create opportunities for everyone to discover their intellectual and creative gifts-- and for the intellectually and creatively ambitious to leave their mark on the world.

**NURTURING.** Casita Maria is a safe space where everyone values each other and the community as we aspire to greatness.

**OPENNESS.** We embrace curiosity and transparency. We believe in a willingness to experiment and a commitment to honesty.

**TEACHING.** We seek to provide rigorous and creative youth development programs that exist within a supportive environment and result in a community of globally-conscious, lifelong learners.
DIVERSITY STATEMENT

At Casita Maria, we view diversity of culture, backgrounds, identities and perspectives as a source of collective strength. In pursuit of our mission to cultivate thoughtful individuals who engage the world meaningfully, we value every young person, parent/guardian, caring adult, neighborhood resident, and staff member, regardless of race, religion, gender or beliefs, as an integral part of our community.
CORE STRATEGIES

CORE STRATEGY #1

WE INVEST ARTS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING and other services for young people (K-12). We believe that the overall community is improved by young people who are happy, whole and creative.
**CORE STRATEGY #2**

**WE BUILD RELATIONSHIPS** with parents, caregivers, and others in the community ecosystem in order to better understand and meet the needs of the young people we serve and hope to serve.

**CORE STRATEGY #3**

**WE ARE COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING AND BUILDING ON THE LEGACY OF ARTS AND CULTURE** that have always been a source of resilience, pride, and unity in our community.
OUR PROGRAMMING PREPARES YOUNG PEOPLE for college and career readiness, and encourages positive youth development and engagement.
WE USE A CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH as the foundation for all our work.

WE PROMOTE THE ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES AND PRACTICES that foster work-life balance and professional development in support of a workforce that positively and enthusiastically delivers on Casita Maria’s mission.
STRATEGIC GOALS

**STRATEGIC GOAL #1**

**BUILD** recognition of Casita Maria as a historical organization, leveraging its assets and resources to prepare for growth and innovation in advance of its centennial.

**STRATEGIC GOAL #2**

**SUPPORT** the recruitment, development and engagement of a growing and diverse board of directors who are passionate about Casita Maria’s mission, and committed to furthering our goals.

**STRATEGIC GOAL #3**

**ESTABLISH** Casita Maria as a leader in arts and education, advancing and championing a proven model that builds educational and life skills, and increases career and college attainment for all youth.

**STRATEGIC GOAL #4**

**ADVANCE** Casita Maria’s organizational infrastructure, support base and professional workforce to ensure the stability and capacity necessary to accomplish our goals.

**STRATEGIC GOAL #5**

**ENRICH, DEEPEN AND EXPAND** culturally relevant programming and practices that promote mastery and build leadership among young people, families and the community.

**STRATEGIC GOAL #6**

**INVEST** in the development of and access to new and emerging technologies, special initiatives, and opportunities for youth and families through strong partnerships that support 21st Century innovation and collaboration.
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EL CORAZÓN DE LA CREATIVIDAD.
EL HOGAR DEL ÉXITO.