



AN ORGANIZATION WITH A MISSION TO TRANSFORM
COMMUNITIES WITH THE ARTS

Concept & *Focus*

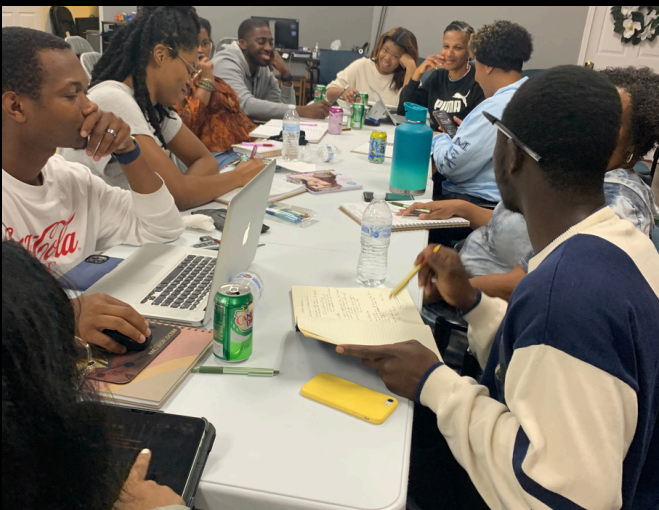


EVIDENCE & THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT

We welcome youth of all backgrounds, with intentional outreach to young people who are too often excluded from enrichment opportunities. Our programs prioritize those who face barriers to access and deserve spaces where their voices, stories, and creativity can thrive. Program awareness is built through trusted community partnerships with high-need public schools and community organizations, ensuring that youth who need us most know they belong here.

Northern Virginia's reputation for affluence masks deep inequality. The Community Foundation of Northern Virginia reports that 29% of families in the region do not earn enough to cover basic needs. For these families, enrichment programming is not a budget line — it is a luxury they cannot access. Evidence closes this arts access gap by removing every barrier: tuition, materials, and even snacks are provided at no cost to participants.

Evidence is one of two youth theater programs operating in Northern Virginia. Its companion program, **The Butterfly Effect**, uses theater as a diversion and intervention tool for justice-involved youth referred through the juvenile justice system. While both programs share a conviction the stage is a place where every young person can discover their voice, they serve distinct populations and operate independently. The Butterfly Effect works with youth at imminent risk of deeper justice system involvement; Evidence serves young people whose primary barrier is economic — families who want access to arts enrichment but cannot afford it. Together, the two programs ensure that theater is available to young people across a wide spectrum of need.



While apart of these programs participants engage in every dimension of theater-making:

- Script reading and literary analysis
- Original writing workshops
- Ensemble rehearsals and stagecraft
- Culminating public performance

The Program **Evidence**

A Youth Theatre Enrichment Program

In Northern Virginia, one of the wealthiest regions in the United States, thousands of young people have never set foot on a stage — not because they lack talent or desire, but because their families cannot afford the \$400 to \$800 price tag of a youth theater program. Evidence exists to change that. We are a tuition-free youth theater enrichment program designed for underserved middle school and high school students across Fairfax, Arlington, Loudoun, and Prince William counties. Our mission is simple: every young person who wants access to the transformative power of theater should have it, regardless of what their family can pay.

Evidence is not a drop-in activity. It is a rigorous, commitment-based production experience built around a 12-week cycle that culminates in a public performance.



The Program **The Butterfly Effect**

A Youth Enrichment Diversion Program

The Butterfly Effect is a 12 week theater production diversion program designed for young people ages 11 to 18 in Northern Virginia who are court-referred, currently suspended, or standing at the edge of the juvenile justice system. These are young people who have been told, in one way or another, that they are a problem to be managed. The Butterfly Effect tells them something different: that they are the lead.



The program takes its name from a powerful and deliberate metaphor. In chaos theory, the butterfly effect describes how one small event can set off a chain of consequences that reshapes everything that follows. We believe the same is true for young people. One audition. One rehearsal. One moment of being seen and trusted with a role — that one small opportunity can set off a chain of events that entirely changes the trajectory of a young person's life. That is the work of this program.



2 Tracks

The Butterfly Effect

PREVENTION TRACK (Before Court Involvement)

Who it serves: Boys and girls ages 11-17 who are showing early signs of risk, including:

- Multiple suspensions
- Chronic absenteeism
- Low school connectedness
- ACEs / trauma exposure
- Anxiety, anger, or emotional dysregulation
- Bullying involvement (as target or aggressor)
- Early SRO contact (no charges)
- Alternative school placement

Goal: Stop the pipeline before the system labels them. Build emotional regulation, connection, confidence, and belonging.



DIVERSION TRACK (Court-Involved Youth)

Who it serves: Youth who are already:

- On probation
- Facing petitions
- Court-referred
- At risk of detention
- Involved with intake officers

Goal: Interrupt the pipeline before detention. Provide a trauma-responsive, arts-based alternative to punitive consequences.



Why It Matters

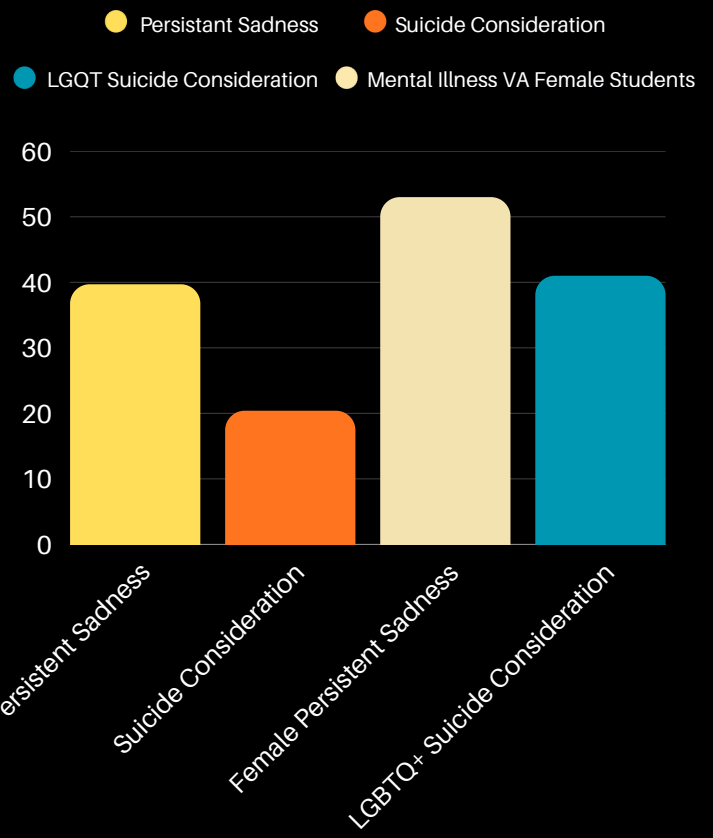
Youth Mental Health Crisis

America's young people are facing a growing mental health crisis. According to the CDC's 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey:

- 39.7% of high school students reported persistent sadness or hopelessness
- 20.4% seriously considered suicide
- 53% of female students reported persistent sadness
- 41% of LGBTQ+ students seriously considered suicide

These numbers highlight the urgent need for safe, supportive spaces where youth can build confidence, connection, emotional expression, and belonging.

Programs like Evidence and The Butterfly Effect provide protective factors through mentorship, creative expression, peer connection, structured engagement, and access to trusted adults



Stats

Barriers in Northern Virginia

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia reported that 29% of families in the region do not earn enough to meet basic needs.

With theater programs often costing between \$400-\$800 per session, many students are excluded from arts opportunities due to financial hardship. Evidence and The Butterfly Effect were created to provide accessible creative programs for underserved youth who otherwise would not have access to performing arts experiences. These programs ensure access to the arts is not determined by income but by opportunity belonging and support.

Barrier's And Data

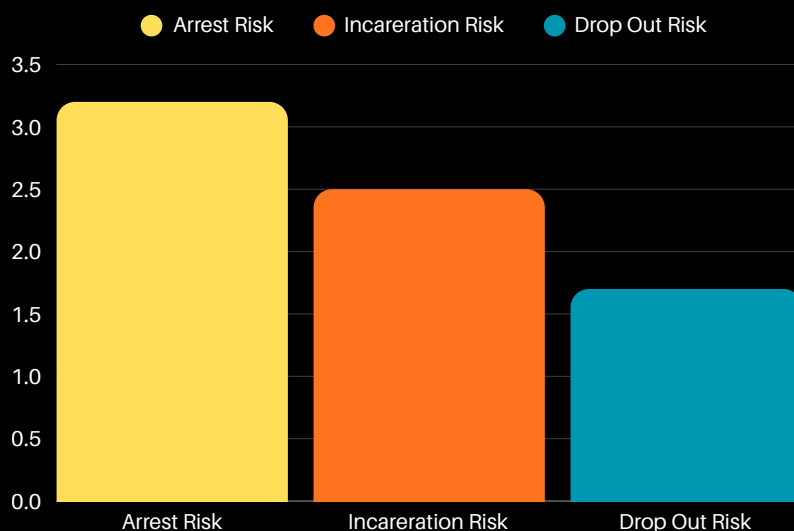
Children in Northern Virginia: 631,104

NOVA Families Struggling Financially: 29%

Average Theater Program Cost: \$400-\$800



School to Prison Pipeline Data



- Students suspended or expelled are nearly 3 times more likely to enter the juvenile justice system the following year.
- Students attending stricter schools are:
 - 3.2 percentage points more likely to be arrested
 - 2.5 percentage points more likely to be incarcerated
 - 1.7 percentage points more likely to drop out
- Black and Hispanic male students experience the strongest negative outcomes from exclusionary discipline policies.



COMMUNITY IMPACT



I left changed and feeling like there was hope after this
—CAST MEMBER

This production made me feel more empowered, connected and encouraged
—AUDIENCE MEMBER

“For the first time I was able to let my guard down and step out of my comfort zone”
—CAST MEMBER



“The scene about mental health stayers with me long after the show ended”
—AUDIENCE MEMBER

Through theatre, music, dance, - story telling, Deborah and Company’s
“Power of Three ”Production created space for healing,
courage, and authentic connection.







Be Our **Partner**

Partnering with Deborah and Company allows you to directly impact youth who need support, structure, and creative outlets. Your partnership helps remove barriers to arts access, strengthens diversion and enrichment pathways, and provides safe spaces where young people can grow, heal, and discover their potential. Together, we can build stronger communities by investing in the next generation.



Contact Information



-  703.957.0042
-  deborahandcompany.org
-  admin@deborahandcompany.org
-  Northern Virginia 22191