



Growing a Greater Nashville: Cheekwood Estate & Gardens

2024 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



Cheekwood
ESTATE & GARDENS



Cheekwood is committed to ensuring everyone in our community has the opportunity to enjoy, learn, grow and celebrate this natural haven rich with history and art and abounding in beauty.

Each year, we work diligently to increase access and expand awareness, intentional in our efforts to reach an ever increasing and broader and diverse audience. We are proud of what we have achieved in 2024 through innovation, collaboration and an unwavering commitment. We are strengthening our impact and deepening our connections with those who live and visit here. Last year we welcomed 13,000 students free-of-charge from 177 schools through educational field trips, and 14,000 guests attended our four multicultural festivals, generating some of our highest attended days of the year. Our team has worked tirelessly to impact our region through culture, education, environmental initiatives and community outreach.

With this year’s report, we celebrate our programs and achievements while holding ourselves accountable for the road ahead. We will continue to advance and adapt to be an even more inclusive space by generating multiple opportunities to enrich and enlighten. We are sincerely grateful to all those who help us fulfill our mission and vision, and to all those who have and will come to Cheekwood to enjoy this incomparably beautiful estate and the soul-enriching experience it is.

Sincerely,



Jane A. MacLeod

JANE MACLEOD
President/CEO
Cheekwood



Ronald Roberts

RONALD ROBERTS
Chair, Board of Trustees
Cheekwood

ABOUT CHEEKWOOD

Cheekwood Estate & Gardens boasts 55 acres of natural space. Its beauty and tranquility inspire a passion and determination to enhance the community around it, one that is rich with culture, natural beauty, artistic talent and educational innovation.

Cheekwood measures its impact on the greater Nashville community, not simply in numbers, but also in opportunities created and lives touched. This report is a snapshot of that impact during the twelve months of 2024.

IDEA STATEMENT

Cheekwood is committed to embracing, pursuing and celebrating inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility among our board, staff, leadership, partners, vendors, volunteers, members, supporters and visitors. We will be steadfast in our efforts to welcome people of all races, nationalities, genders, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions, political affiliations, ages and abilities. We recognize we have room for growth and pledge to pursue new and previously underrepresented ideas, artists, advisors, partners, instructors, innovators and audiences so that all voices can be heard, respected and supported.



Mission

Celebrate and preserve Cheekwood as an historical landmark where beauty and excellence in art and horticulture nurture the spirit and serve as inspiration for a diverse and broad audience.



Vision

Cheekwood will be a locally celebrated and nationally recognized destination renowned for its distinctive beauty, historical significance, and excellence in art and horticulture.



Principles

BEAUTY
that nurtures the spirit

PRESERVATION
for future generations

EDUCATION
that enriches and inspires

COLLABORATION
that embraces a broad community

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
in stewarding our resources

Impact in Numbers

380,000
VISITORS

17,000
MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS

VISITORS FROM

504 50 19
TN ZIP CODES STATES COUNTRIES

CHEEKWOOD’S ANNUAL INVESTMENT
IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH

\$1.5M

Salaries
Programming
Materials & Supplies
Scholarships
Translation Services
Complimentary Admissions, Transportation, Memberships
& More

Community Partners

Cheekwood is proud to partner with more than 60 organizations to ensure its programs span the breadth of Nashville’s diversity, focus areas, priorities, abilities and more. Their resource-sharing, creativity and knowledge enrich Cheekwood’s operations, projects, programs, exhibitions and events.

- Alignment Nashville
Alliance for Young Artists & Writers
Aventura Community School
Barbershop Harmony Society
Barnard-Seyfert Astronomical Society
Belmont University Spanish Department
Black Opry
Blackbird Academy
Casa Azafran
Casa Mexico
Community Achieves
Communities in School
Conexion Americas
Consulate General of Japan in Nashville
Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum
Cumberland River Compact
Daffodil Society of Nashville
ECON Club
Equal Chance for Education
Fisk University
FUTURO, Inc.
Garden Club of Nashville
Governors Early Literacy Foundation
Gujarat Cultural Association of Nashville
H.G. Hill Middle School
Habitat for Humanity
James Lawson High School
Japan-America Society of Tennessee
Jewish Federation of Nashville & Middle Tennessee
La Misión ConArte
Lane Motor Museum
Martin Luther King, Jr. Magnet High School
Master Gardeners of Davidson County
- Master Gardeners of Williamson County
Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation
Metro Nashville Police Department
Metro Nashville Public Schools STEAM Expeditions
Metro Water Services
Music for Seniors
Nashville Bonsai Society
Nashville Herb Society
Nashville Jazz Workshop
Nashville Musician’s Union
Nashville Public Library
Nashville Rose Society
Nature Conservancy
Paragon Mills Elementary
PENCIL Foundation
Robert Churchwell Museum Magnet Elementary School
Root Nashville
Song Suffragettes
Southern Word
Tennessee Craft
Tennessee Language Center
Tennessee Urban Forestry Council
Turnip Green Creative Reuse
University School of Nashville
Vanderbilt Blair School of Music
Vanderbilt Treatment & Research Institute for Autism-Related Disorders (TRIAD)
Vanderbilt University Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies
Vanderbilt University

Cultural Impact

AWARENESS & ACCEPTANCE THROUGH CELEBRATION

Cheekwood is committed to embracing and celebrating cultures from around the world, especially those with a profound impact on the Middle Tennessee region. In addition to offering culturally themed activities throughout the year, Cheekwood hosts four major celebrations annually. Each festival highlights the traditions, music, dance, art and cuisine of a culture, welcoming thousands to celebrate amid the beauty and wonder of the estate and gardens.



Holi

The Holi Festival, or festival of colors, is a Hindu celebration symbolizing a fresh start and new commitments, much like spring itself. Holi aligns perfectly with the seasonal *Cheekwood in Bloom* festival, adding even more vibrant colors to Cheekwood’s spring roster.

Through collaboration with its Indian Advisory Council, Cheekwood crafts an authentic festival complete with Indian food, traditional music and vendors. Choreographed dances with performers from school age to adult are interspersed with a DJ playing music for impromptu dance parties. Art activities include Holi cards made with liquid watercolor, designing a sari or kurta pajama, temporary henna tattoos, and bonfires created with construction paper.

Among Holi’s highlights is the distribution of vibrant colored powder, or *gulal*, for attendees to toss in the air, on one another and on oneself. Cheekwood’s Holi celebration features multiple well-attended color-throwing sessions. Each color is said to hold a different meaning, which is washed off following the festival, both literally and metaphorically.



INDIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Suruchi Jaju, Music and Dance Coordinator
- Roochita Mathur, Cheekwood Volunteer
- Asha Nivison, Cumberland Trust
- Sam Patel, Cheekwood Volunteer
- Sheila Patel, Cheekwood Volunteer
- Rebecca Shah, Cheekwood Volunteer

Black Arts Bash

Black Arts Bash has become one of the most anticipated events of *Summertime at Cheekwood*. It pays tribute to Black history’s deep roots in Nashville by highlighting Black artists in the visual and performing arts. These artists are influential within our city’s many spheres, including the entertainment, food and art scenes. Black Arts Bash is an opportunity to spotlight and celebrate both emerging and established artists across all mediums.

During Black Arts Bash, Cheekwood’s grounds are filled with art and food, which are enriched by performances featuring Black artists, musicians, dancers and poets. The guidance and support of Cheekwood’s African American Advisory Council and other partner organizations ensures that the experience is authentic, educational and inspiring.

In recent years, attendees have sampled food from Black chefs, learned about the colors and symbols in African textiles, heard from historians, authors and artists, and enjoyed spoken word poetry. They have also participated directly in the artistic endeavors by crafting their own textile design as part of a larger “community quilt” display and painting a square in a mural filled with the names of Nashville-based Black musicians. In 2024, Nashville artists DaShawn Lewis and XPayne led a community art activity, which challenged visitors to think about how they define or create “home.”



AFRICAN AMERICAN ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Christiana Afotey, Threads by Dreads
- Charles Brown, Charles Lord Style
- Brenda Corbin, Cheekwood Volunteer
- Ashley Currie, Urbaanite
- DaShawn Lewis, Artist
- Kimberly Manson, Artist
- Rita Mitchell, Author and Entrepreneur
- Nekasha Pratt, Bright Advisory Group & HarperCollins
- Michelle Steele, Meharry Medical College
- David Swett III, Swett’s Restaurant
- LoLita Toney, Dismas House
- Destiny Whitmore, YMCA of Middle Tennessee
- XPayne, Artist



Otsukimi

Nashville is home to over 8,000 Japanese citizens and 300 businesses, including Bridgestone-Americas and Nissan. Partnering with the Consulate General of Japan and the Japan American Society of Tennessee, Cheekwood hosts *Otsukimi*, or the Japanese Moon Viewing, each year. Completing its 10th year in 2024, Cheekwood ensures the celebration's authenticity by bringing in vendors and entertainers from the surrounding Japanese community.

Otsukimi features Japanese tea ceremonies, mochi pounding, a Haiku competition, Japanese calligraphy and bilingual lantern-lit tours of the Blevins Japanese Garden. The Nashville Bonsai Society contributes stunning bonsai, adding a layer of horticultural depth to the event. Between 2022 and 2024, the event has averaged more than 2,000 attendees each year.



El Día de los Muertos

In 2024, Cheekwood celebrated 25 years of hosting El Día de los Muertos, a two-day event in which family and friends honor loved ones who have passed. The El Día de los Muertos Advisory Committee in collaboration with partner organizations and schools contribute to the celebration as Cheekwood's Massey Auditorium is filled with vibrant altars, one of the most important aspects of El Día de los Muertos. Across Mexico and beyond, families honor their ancestors by creating altars decorated with items that the deceased enjoyed in life.

In addition to enjoying the altars, attendees can make crafts that are essential elements of Day of the Dead celebrations, including marigold flower crowns, which symbolize the brevity of life, and sugar skulls, which represent departed loved ones. They can also shop local vendors selling art and jewelry, while viewing murals depicting Day of the Dead. Visitors can also write the name or memory of a loved one on a colorful slip of paper and add it to the memory tree. Or best of all, they can simply enjoy the traditional music, Aztec dancing and authentic food that make El Día de los Muertos such an engaging and festive event.



EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Yuri Cunza, Nashville Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Maricruz Flores, Cheekwood Volunteer

David Julseth, Belmont University

Luisa Mattos da Costa, Vanderbilt University Center for Latin American, Caribbean, & Latinx Studies

Rachel Rodriguez, Performer and Entrepreneur

Arcelia Vasquez, University School of Nashville

Jose Vera, Artist

Suzy Vera, Cheekwood Volunteer

Tomas Yan, Conexion Americas

Educational Impact

AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM FOR ALL

Destination Cheekwood

Student Field Trips

Cheekwood offers a unique and completely free field trip program with guided and self-guided options that take advantage of Cheekwood as the best outdoor classroom in Nashville. Students can learn about pollinators and eco-systems, understand how trees communicate, explore multiculturalism in the Blevins Japanese Garden, and more.

Family Field Trips

Families from Title I schools are invited to visit on weekends during peak festivals to enjoy a multi-generational experience at Cheekwood. In addition to complimentary admission, families receive an orientation with translation if needed, a complimentary meal or snack and a one-year family membership, encouraging return visits throughout the year.

Agency Field Trips

As Destination Cheekwood expands, organizations serving audiences with a diverse set of needs are also welcome to participate and experience Cheekwood to enjoy the beauty, solace, and joy of the estate, museum and garden. In 2022 and 2024, Cheekwood welcomed families from the Renewal House to *Holiday LIGHTS*, and in 2023, families from Nashville Freedom Schools enjoyed *Holiday LIGHTS*. Moves and Grooves families experienced *Cheekwood Harvest* in 2023, enjoying the pumpkin houses and mums.



**FAMILY
FIELD TRIPS
IN 2024**

818
STUDENTS
AND FAMILY
MEMBERS

15
SCHOOLS &
ORGANIZATIONS



**STUDENT
FIELD TRIPS
IN 2024**

13,008
STUDENTS

177
SCHOOLS

25
METRO COUNCIL
DISTRICTS



Cheekwood GROWS

Cheekwood GROWS is a free, immersive, and multi-faceted program for third-grade students, designed to teach gardening, healthy eating, and cooking skills. Based in the Cheekwood GROWS kitchen and cutting garden, the program strengthens observation and critical thinking skills, challenges students to move beyond their comfort zone, and helps them connect the seeds they plant to the food they eat.

In 2024, the Cheekwood GROWS Garden engaged 3rd graders from four MNPS schools, as well as summer campers and participants in the drop-in TOTS program. During the spring semester, students from Tusculum Elementary and Inglewood Elementary planted carrots, snap peas, and broccoli raab during their initial field trip. They returned a month later with their families to see the progress of their garden beds and prepare kale pesto and broccoli raab pasta. Fall brought Smith Springs Elementary and Stratton Elementary to the garden. The students planted radishes, lettuce, and snap peas in their beds.

Summertime in the garden was a place of exploration for summer campers, who tended to the garden, cooked with fresh summer produce, and hosted Cheekwood’s second youth-run “farmer’s market.” During the last week of camp, campers opened their own restaurant and invited family members to enjoy dishes they cooked themselves. The weekly drop-in TOTS gardening activity provided opportunities for little ones to explore compost, plant seeds, pick flowers, taste veggies, and paint with natural dyes made from beets and marigolds.

FLOWERS IN THE GARDEN

- CELOSIA
- COSMOS
- MARIGOLDS
- AMARANTH
- HIBISCUS
- ZINNIAS
- SUNFLOWERS
- SCARLET RUNNER BEAN
- NASTURTIUM

HERBS IN THE GARDEN

- BASIL
- ROSEMARY
- LAVENDER
- MINT
- LEMON BALM
- PINEAPPLE SAGE
- SAGE
- THYME
- DILL
- PARSLEY
- CILANTRO

VEGETABLES & FRUITS IN THE GARDEN

- KALE
- BROCCOLI RAAB
- RAINBOW CHARD
- SPINACH
- TURNIPS
- EGGPLANT
- PEPPERS
- TOMATOES
- RADISHES
- GREEN ONIONS
- SUGAR SNAP PEAS
- WATERMELON
- CANTALOUPE
- CUCUMBERS
- BEETS
- EDAMAME
- SUMMER SQUASH
- ZUCCHINI
- OKRA
- PUMPKINS



CHEEKWOOD
GROWS
IN 2024

420
STUDENTS

4
SCHOOLS



TOTS GROWS
ATTENDANCE

390

SUMMER
CAMPS

4
WEEKS OF
COOKING AND
GARDENING
CAMPS

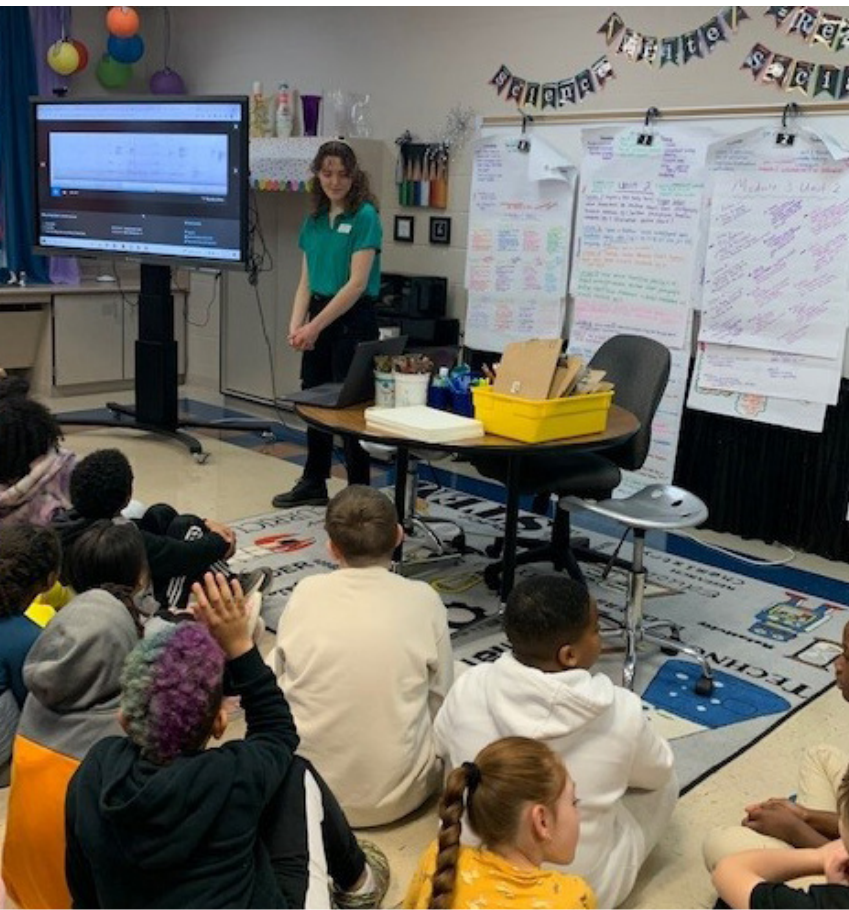
58
CAMPERs

AGES
5-10



Cheekwood on the Road

This outbound program takes the Cheekwood experience beyond the estate to third through fifth grade students in Title I schools and to pre-kindergarten students in area Head Start programs. Elementary students explore Cheekwood’s history, art collections and seasonal garden displays through educator and artist-led stations. Head Start toddlers enjoy story time and arts and garden crafts inspired by the PNC Grow Up Great curriculum, and all books and materials remain in the classroom following the program.



**CHEEKWOOD
ON THE ROAD
IN 2024**

1,703
PRE-SCHOOLERS

809
3RD - 5TH
GRADE STUDENTS

Middle Tennessee Scholastic Art Awards

For 34 years, Cheekwood has served as the Middle Tennessee host of this nationally recognized competition that recognizes the talent of young artists and writers. Each year, more than 700 students from 60 schools participate in this very popular program.



TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Courtney Haley, Park Avenue Elementary School
- Rosilyn Harrington, Haywood Elementary School
- Jan Hatleberg, Meigs Magnet Middle School
- Doris Jones, Born Again Christian Academy and Preschool
- Janet Malone, Norman Binkley Elementary School
- Marquitta Nesmith, Thomas A. Edison Elementary School
- Joyce Platz, Sumner Academy

- DeeDee Potter, Hobgood Elementary School
- Iris Reyes, McMurray Middle School
- Shayna Snider, Hume-Fogg High School
- Vanessa Thomas, Thomas A. Edison Elementary School
- Pauli Wear, New Hope Academy
- Lina Wellborn, Episcopal School of Nashville

Environmental Impact

CREATING A BETTER TOMORROW, TODAY

As a botanical garden and arboretum, Cheekwood plays a critical role in conservation and environmental initiatives, both on its own grounds and throughout the region. Its Trees for Tomorrow program encompasses preservation and plantings, education and public programming to foster an appreciation and understanding of the importance of trees to our environment.



Root Nashville

Partnership with Cumberland River Compact

As a partner with Root Nashville, Cheekwood is committed to the mission to plant 500,000 trees in Nashville by 2050, serving as a communications portal to share Root Nashville's offer of free trees for Nashvillians to Cheekwood's 20,000+ membership and 100,000+ social media followers.

If Trees Could Sing

Partnership with The Nature Conservancy

Nashville's iconic musicians serve as advocates for trees in this self-guided tour through the Arboretum that celebrates and informs visitors about the musicians' favorite trees, and why trees are so important for sustainable communities.

Tu B'Shevat

This Jewish celebration of the New Year of Trees is offered annually in January as an extension of Cheekwood's youth education programs and in collaboration with the Jewish Federation of Nashville.



Standing Tall at Cheekwood

This free, tree-focused student field trip provides every participating student with a complimentary tree-themed book to take home, and each school with a tree sapling to plant on their campus. This program is offered in partnership with the Governor's Early Literacy Foundation.

Arbor Day

This annual celebration helps raise awareness and appreciation for the importance of trees, highlighting their impact on the environment and the unique opportunities to learn and enjoy trees at Cheekwood.

Emerald Ash Borer Program

Cheekwood is a leader in developing an emerald ash borer (EAB) response program to protect native ash trees, currently treating over 150 trees in Cheekwood's garden and arboretum.

Community Impact

ENLIGHTENING EXPERIENCES FOR ALL NASHVILLIANS

As stated in its Mission, Cheekwood seeks to inspire a “diverse and broad audience.” That inspiration is contingent upon expanding and increasing access for all populations. Cheekwood achieves this through a variety of programs to enhance the mind and body, regardless of background or circumstance.



Ann Carrington (b. 1963), *Bloomstruck & Sparassidae*, 2023, mixed metal. Photography by Sam Angel.

Blue Star Museum Military Access

Cheekwood offers free admission to the nation’s active-duty military personnel and their families, including National Guard and Reserve, from Armed Forces Day through Labor Day. Blue Star Museums is a partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts and Blue Star Families, in collaboration with the Department of Defense and museums across America.

Nashville Public Library Community Passport

Community Passports give NPL cardholders free admission to community attractions and services. The Cheekwood passport provides free general admission for up to two adults and two children, with additional youth available at half price.

Museums for All

Partnership with Vanderbilt Health

For families who participate in SNAP, WIC or TANF, Cheekwood provides admission to Gardens Only or Garden & Mansion for \$3 per person (up to four people). Through Museums for All, Cheekwood is partnering with museums across the country to make sure everyone can experience the best museums have to offer, for an affordable price. Those who have an EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) card can present it on arrival to receive the reduced admission.



BLUE STAR
MUSEUM MILITARY
ADMISSION
IN 2024

840
VISITORS



NASHVILLE
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
PASSPORTS
IN 2024

75
VISITORS



MUSEUMS
FOR ALL
IN 2024

1,163
GUESTS

Additionally...

Summer Camp Scholarships ensure inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility among our camp program; paid internships for university students allow scholars to gain work experience across departments through its **Empower internship program**; Girl Scouts expand their nature knowledge through Cheekwood’s **Badge Basics & Beyond program**; and **Community Scarecrows Exhibition** encourages the wider community to create themed scarecrows, a popular garden feature of the annual *Cheekwood Harvest* festival.



With its intact and picturesque vistas, Cheekwood is distinguished as one of the leading Country Place Era estates in the nation. Formerly the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, the 1930s estate, with its 30,000-square-foot Mansion and 55-acres of gardens, today serves the public as a botanical garden, arboretum, and art museum with furnished period rooms and galleries devoted to American art from the 18th and mid-20th centuries. The property includes 13 distinct gardens including the Blevins Japanese Garden and the Bracken Foundation Children's Garden, as well as a 1.5-mile woodland trail featuring outdoor monumental sculpture. Each year, Cheekwood hosts seasonal festivals including *Cheekwood in Bloom*, *Summertime at Cheekwood*, *Cheekwood Harvest* and *Holiday LIGHTS*. Cheekwood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and nationally as a Level II Arboretum. It is a three-time voted *USA Today Top 10 Botanical Garden* and in 2021 was recognized by *Fodors* as one of the 12 Most Beautiful Gardens in the American South. Cheekwood is located eight miles southwest of downtown Nashville at 1200 Forrest Park Drive.

Support for community programs provided by

Advance Financial
Asurion
Bridgestone
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First Cumberland Properties
HCA Healthcare
LP Foundation
Mitsui
Nissan
Piedmont Natural Gas
PNC Bank
Regions Bank
Ryman Hospitality Properties
Tractor Supply
TVA
TW Frierson



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