**Infinity Visual and Performing Arts’ INSTILL Program** opens doors to Infinity

students that can truly change the trajectory of their lives. Group classes and

mentorship support combined, hands-on learning opportunities to provide real-world

experiences and engaging activities.

Due to economic challenges, music and arts education can be cost-prohibitive for many

local families. Other families may have to choose between private lessons or group

experiences as both are not possible. Thanks to **United Way of Southern Chautauqua**

**County’s** support for this initiative, Infinity is able to expand our unique group class and

workshop experiences without placing a burden on struggling families’ financial

situations.

One of our students has had his share of rough trials handed to him in his young life. He

has been a student for many years, and is currently a teenager who has changed

schools’ multiple times during his time with us due to a variety of reasons. Through all

his difficulties, music has been a constant. He works very hard at his technique, and has

taken advantage of a wide array of Infinity opportunities and trainings during his years

with us. His musicianship, confidence, and comfort level on stage have developed to the

point that he has helped MC Infinity events, performed at large events, and is training to

assist with stage activities during performances. His bonds with the instructors he works

with are strong and he has remained with the same instructors for multiple program

years. His weekly classes and lessons ensure that consistent and regular adult

mentorship is always available through his instructors, and through the program

staff who welcome and assist students during our program hours.

Without steady mentorship and an outlet like Infinity, students in situations like this often

find it easy to follow a very different, more negative path. Infinity’s ability to tailor

instruction to the student, provide levels of accountability and opportunity, and offer

multiple class and performance options for one monthly fee (with scholarship options)

assures that students at risk don’t have to miss out on individualized music and arts

instruction and mentorship. Students can participate at a high level, and receive equal

opportunity for advanced experiences that can change their lives in amazing ways.

A creative outlet, growth, and mentorship is important for all people; but it is critically

important for young people who may not fit the mold of the ‘in crowd’ in their lives. Music

and the arts and Infinity’s equalizing array of options provides a shining path for

students to reinvent themselves, to reimagine their futures, and to reconnect with

community in a healthy, progressive, and inspiring way. **United Way of Southern**

**Chautauqua** funding helps us to provide this exciting and important path for area

students. We are thrilled to be a part of such a positive catalyst of community change!

UWAYSCC 100 Years, 100 Stories blog submission by Shane Hawkins, Executive Director of the Infinity Visual & Performing Arts. The INSTILL Program (Infinity Network of Students Training for Independent Leadership Level) was created for students who are interested in increasing the amount of time they spend at the Infinity Center outside of regular lesson times. Instill training allows responsible, serious students to achieve “independent” status, enabling them to utilize practice rooms, rehearsal spaces and Infinity spaces during hours that the Center is open, but independent of an Infinity instructor or staff member. Staff members are always be available for assistance and for general supervision.

INSTILL students also participate in an advisory panel with Infinity’s administrative staff, and assist with designing classes and relevant programming, organizing performances and events, and generating ideas for the future of Infinity. Students also serve as role models and helpers to other students, and are designated as leaders within the program. For more about Infinity, visit www.infinityperformingarts.org