



YEAR IN 20 REVIEW 24



ECAT

ERIE CENTER FOR
ARTS & TECHNOLOGY

MISSION

Erie Center for Arts & Technology (ECAT) is a community-based educational arts and career training facility that inspires, educates, and empowers people of all ages with adult job training and creative youth programs.

VISION

Transforming minds and launching careers, ECAT strives to realize the genius in everyone and enables youth and adults alike to become productive and successful members of society.

PROGRAMS

Workforce Programs

Our tuition-free training programs are informed by industry needs.

- Construction Trades Training
- Clinical Medical Assistant
- Freedom House Foundations
- Sterile Processing

Upcoming in 2025

- Lead Abatement Training
- New VR Technology
- Asbestos Abatement Training

Arts Programs

Our no-cost programs provide a safe, welcoming environment for students to explore the arts.

- Teen Arts Club
- Teen Arts Career
- Art Shows

Upcoming in 2025

- Big Art Summer Camp
- Daytime Classes
- Adult Art Classes

Hear from our ED



As I begin my second year as Executive Director at Erie Center for Arts & Technology and reflect on 2024, one word keeps coming to mind: **growth**.

This past year, we launched two new no-cost workforce training programs and expanded our cohorts to welcome more students. Additionally, we introduced a new food initiative in the Teen Arts program. That simple change led to more young people walking through our doors—and staying to make awesome art. Seeing that impact, we began expanding our food program even further to better support our adult students, as well.

This work is only possible with the incredible team we have here at ECAT. I am truly honored to work with people who care so deeply about others and are so committed to making our Erie community a better place, one person at a time. One of the guiding principles of ECAT is “All people are assets” and our team proves it to be true every single day.

And finally, this work is possible because of the students of all ages who come through our doors. Our adult students are often balancing families, jobs, and the many challenges life throws their way, yet they show up each day with determination. They commit to learning, to growing, and to building a path toward a new career. Our teen students bring joy, curiosity, and creativity into our space, returning day after day to make art and explore their potential. Their dedication is nothing short of inspiring—and it’s at the heart of everything we do at ECAT.

All of this is why I know Erie Center for Arts & Technology is only just beginning to, in the words of Bill Strickland,

“Make the impossible possible.”

Thank you for joining us on the journey.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kate Neubert-Lechner".

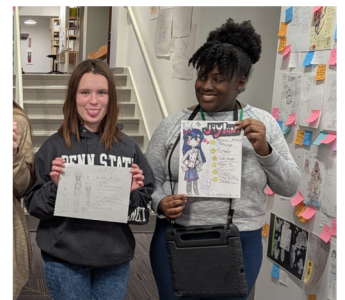
Kate Neubert-Lechner
Executive Director



ARTS PROGRAM UPDATE

Growth & Innovation

In 2024, ECAT's Teen Arts Program saw record participation, driven by a new open studio model. This youth-led approach lets teens choose instructors, artistic mediums, and projects, fostering creativity, problem-solving, and a strong sense of independence.



95% students identify ECAT as a safe, supportive space

Art isn't just about creating—it's about building confidence, problem-solving, and finding your voice. Watching students take ownership of their work, sell their first pieces, and grow into independent artists is what makes this program so special.

-Jude Shingle, Deputy & Arts Program Director

CLINICAL MEDICAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM UPDATE

Key Achievements

In 2024, the Clinical Medical Assistant (CMA) program focused on empowering students to secure gainful employment with self-sustaining wages in careers that directly support the Erie community. Through hands-on training and a focus on both technical skills and professional development, students were equipped to make a meaningful impact in the healthcare field.



Student Growth & Success Stories

Under the expert guidance of Ms. Danielle, our dedicated Medical Instructor, students learned that success as a Clinical Medical Assistant requires more than just knowledge—it demands professionalism. One standout student, Tamyia, exemplified this growth. Throughout her time in the program, Tamyia honed her professionalism, leading to glowing feedback during her externship. Her hard work paid off when the site immediately offered her a position! Listen to Tamyia herself by watching the video above.

Challenges & Looking Ahead:

One of the ongoing challenges in 2024 was addressing mental health concerns that impacted student success. Recognizing this need, we continue to strengthen partnerships with local behavioral health agencies to ensure students have access to the support they need. By fostering these community connections, ECAT remains committed to helping students overcome barriers and achieve long-term career success.

CONSTRUCTION TRADES PROGRAM UPDATE

Key Achievements & Highlights

In 2024, the Construction Trades training program provided valuable hands-on skills and real-world experience at both the Erie Center for Arts & Technology and Erie High locations. The first cohort received 75 applications, enrolled 22 students, and graduated 13. The second cohort, which began in September, saw an overwhelming response with nearly 185 applications. Recognizing the growing demand for the program and the need for more resources and staff support, we made the decision to move all classes to our facility and increase enrollment, allowing us to accept 35 students.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

As Erie Center for Arts & Technology continues to grow, the focus remains on aligning training with both industry demands and community needs. The key to long-term success is listening to students and partners, ensuring that the program evolves to meet the changing landscape of skilled trades and workforce development.



Our goal is to create a training environment where students don't just learn a trade—they gain the confidence and hands-on experience needed to build real careers. Seeing our students thrive in these community projects is the best reward.

—Courtney Wyatt, OJT Program Manager & Construction Trades Supervisor

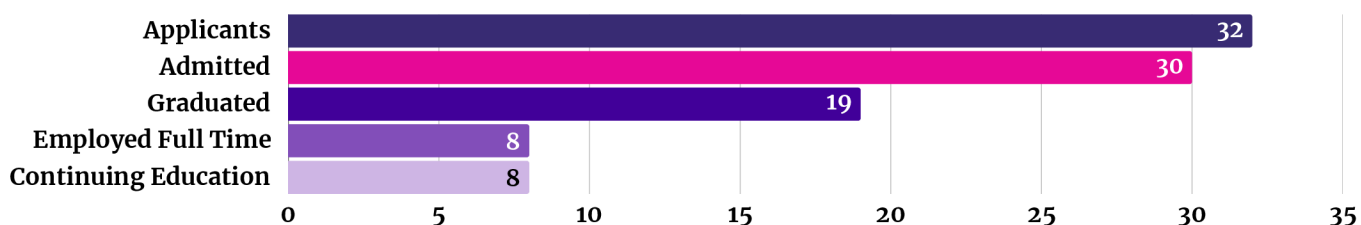
Programs by the Numbers

Arts Programs

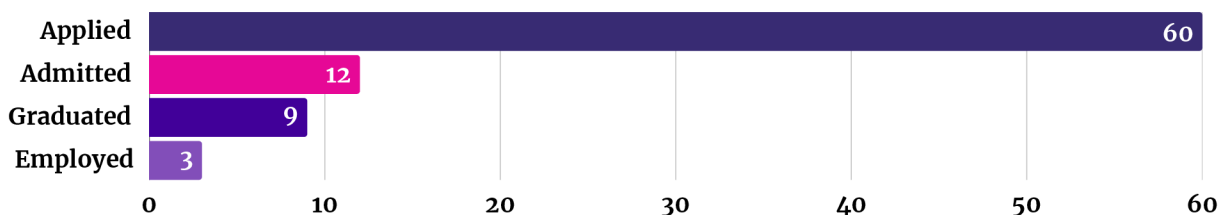


Career Training Programs

Freedom House Foundations



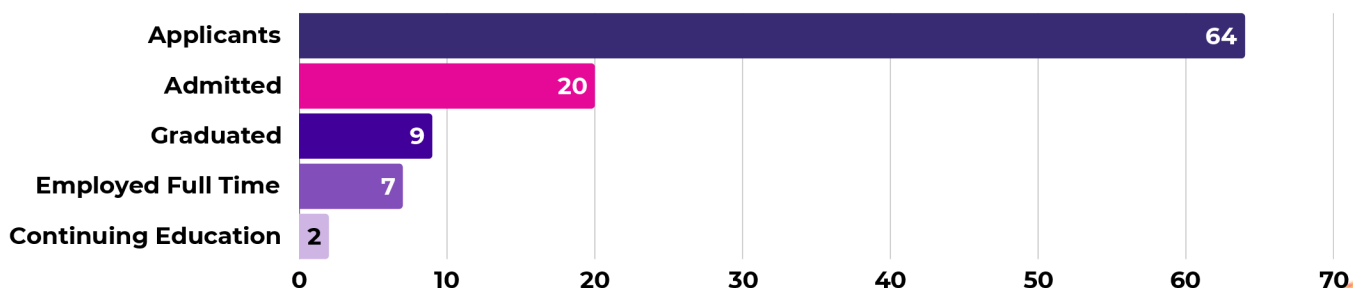
Sterile Processing



Construction Trades Program



Medical Assistant Program



2024 Highlights



Food Program

ECAT piloted a food initiative for our Teen Arts Club, providing nutritious meals during our Spring and Fall sessions. This program addresses food insecurities that are prevalent in our low-income neighborhood, while introducing students to new cuisines and fostering creativity around food.

Launched Freedom House

Freedom House is a 6-week program presented in partnership with UPMC and is designed to provide an introduction to a variety of available career paths in the growing healthcare industry. Students have the opportunity to job shadow, connect with professional mentors, and learn about the basics of providing compassionate care, while working towards employment opportunities in the healthcare industry.



OJT Training

In partnership with BUILD CDC, Erie Center for Arts & Technology expanded our Construction Trades training with an On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program providing students with real-world experience on meaningful community projects, while connecting them with local employers. Students worked on projects for ERIE BANK, Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity, Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network, and Our West Bayfront (OWB), reinforcing their skills while making a tangible difference in the local community.

Arts Career Mural

ECAT'S Teen Arts Career students collaborated with our teaching artists and EMTA staff to design a mural that celebrates EMTA throughout time. The result? An out-of-this-world design that features a space bus to tomorrow!



Meet the Team



Kate Neubert-Lechner
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Courtney Wyatt
OJT Program Manager /
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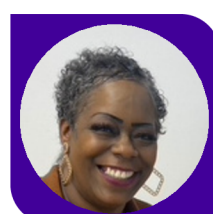
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Ashley Pastore
Teaching Artist



DaShawn Woodard
Building Custodian



Max Blumish
Teaching Artist

ECAT Board

We are grateful to our board members for their dedication and guidance.

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Thank; you!



From the entire ECAT staff, board, and students we serve, thank you for supporting our mission in 2024.



STAY IN TOUCH

Follow our social media to hear the latest news about new programs and partnerships, enrollment opportunities, and events! And join our newsletter at eriecat.org/contact

