

Look what we accomplished in 2009! Read our feature story and more in the [Fall Newsletter](#) .

- 613 Shows in a Single Year!
- 27,776 Audience Members
- 118 Facilities Served

More shows, larger audiences, greater outreach to youth audiences and more service in the East Bay – all in an era of shrinking resources and difficult financial times. This is the Bread & Roses story to date in 2009.

We're proud to announce that Bread & Roses has attained a goal many thought unreachable – 613 shows in the year ending June 30, 2009. That's almost two shows for every day of the year!

"We are so proud of each and every volunteer performer and host, our energetic and supportive Board of Directors and our dedicated staff for making it possible for us to break the sound barrier – over 600 shows in one year," said Cassandra Flipper, Executive Director.

The audience reached soared as well – to 27,776 this year compared to 23,849 the year before.

"These record numbers are an outgrowth of our decision to commit resources toward making our operation even more effective and efficient," Cassandra added.

Bread & Roses took many steps to achieve these results, among them increasing the number of volunteers who serve as hosts at the shows we present. Each appearance by a volunteer host, (who introduces the volunteer performer and makes sure the show runs smoothly), frees up a staff member to focus on community building -- working more closely with our Bay Area venues as well as recruiting and coaching new volunteers.

"Presenting a record number of shows is a very big deal," said Carolyn Gauthier, Bread &

Roses Program Director. “This is especially true during the economic downturn.”

The increased productivity by Bread & Roses staff, volunteers and the Board “has everyone excited,” added Gauthier. “People ask how we can do so many shows.”

Two More Successes – Youth Outreach and East Bay Initiative

An expanded focus on young people, both as performers and as audience members, is also part of the story.

In the year ended June 30, Bread & Roses performers entertained at 179 shows for youth audiences, an increase of 9.2 percent over the previous year. The Bread & Roses commitment to better serving the East Bay is also paying big dividends, Flipper said. “There are many factors that together have helped us achieve this success.”

Almost two years ago, singer and choir director Carmen Coleman was hired as a part-time program associate in the East Bay. “Carmen has been a wonderful asset to us, helping us to serve more institutions and present more shows there — a total of 125 this year up from 99 the year before,” Flipper said.

We’ve also generated a great deal of support from four new Board members who live and work in the East Bay. Finally, we recruited eight new solo and group performers in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, including: Destiny, Harpist from the Hood; Creole Belles, a four-piece all-women Cajun/Zydeco band; Global Gumbo, a female African American vocalist-percussion ensemble, S.O.U.L.S., specializing in jazz, funk and “Hip HoPoetry” and Girlfriendz, a nine-member a cappella ensemble.

Following a recent harp performance by Destiny at Crossroads, an East Oakland homeless shelter (and one of several new facilities added this past year to the Bread & Roses client list), a resident said, “This is a scary time for me being homeless and all. I’ve never even bothered to listen to music played on a harp before, but this peaceful music is exactly what I needed to hear and to learn from, especially at this time. This has to be what serenity is.”

Responds Gauthier, “Our goal is make sure our neighbors in need know that we care and that they are not forgotten. We are gratified to be meeting that goal with skill and heart.”