

# Arts + Social Impact Explorer Fact Sheet

## OVERVIEW

The arts make every phase of life better and more fulfilling. Learning through the arts has proven benefits for participants at all stages of life.

Children, teens, adults, and seniors all gain from participation, and the whole community is positively impacted when arts participation rises. In addition to personal benefits to everyone from the very young to the elderly, the development of fuller and more empathetic perspectives on other cultures, other viewpoints, and the civic identity moves communities toward health, vibrancy, and equity.

In early childhood, the arts can boost IQ and get kids school-ready. As young people move toward adolescence, participating in arts programs shows significant improvement in conflict resolution, future orientation, critical response, and career readiness. Arts participation also correlates with higher rates of tolerance and lower rates of juvenile delinquency and truancy. For older adults, arts participation also leads to better physical and mental health, higher morale, lower risk of dementia, and better quality of life.

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**ARTS**

## ARTS + LIFELONG LEARNING

## IMPACT POINTS

### 9 OUT OF 10 SAY ARTS INCREASE CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

Arts participants report meeting new people and making new friends through their arts experiences, helping reduce social isolations. In the UK, 91 percent of participants reported making new friends by participating in arts activities.<sup>1</sup>

### 40% MORE LIKELY TO HAVE FRIENDS FROM DIFFERENT RACIAL GROUPS

Participation in arts activities increases tolerance. Twelfth graders who participated in the arts are 40 percent more likely to have friends from different racial groups and 29 percent less likely to feel that it is “okay” to make a racist remark.<sup>2</sup>

### 50% MORE ACTIVE IN COMMUNITIES

Cultural participation leads to wider community participation. Participants most involved in cultural activities are 50 percent more likely to be involved in other (non-arts) community activities and are more than twice as likely to volunteer.<sup>3</sup>

### IQ INCREASED BY MUSIC TRAINING IN 3-5-YEAR OLDS

In early childhood, the arts have been implicated in improved IQ, spatial cognition, and numeracy compared to kids without the music training.<sup>4</sup>

### 2X AS LIKELY TO GRADUATE COLLEGE

The arts help people succeed. Low-income students who are highly engaged in the arts are more than twice as likely to graduate college than their peers with no arts education.<sup>5</sup>

### 63% REDUCTION IN RISK OF DEMENTIA

Activities like dancing, playing an instrument, and reading lower the risk of dementia. Older adults who do at least 11 cognitive or physical activities per month are 63 percent less likely to have dementia.<sup>6</sup>

# EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

## Steppenwolf Education, Chicago, IL



Steppenwolf Education creates productions and programs that are specifically geared to teachers, young adults, and families. The City Connection model brings Steppenwolf programming outside the theater wall and into the communities providing no-cost, barrier-free programming working to empower Chicagoland youth.

[steppenwolf.org/education](http://steppenwolf.org/education)  
[mlong@steppenwolf.org](mailto:mlong@steppenwolf.org)

**image:** Young people working with Steppenwolf City Connection. Copyright Steppenwolf Theater

## Elders Share the Arts (ESTA), New York, NY



ESTA offers arts programming that ignites creative expression, cultivates elders' roles as bearers of history and culture, and connects them to their communities. It integrates reminiscence, oral history, and artmaking, and its residencies lead to developing and researching replicable programs.

[estanyc.org](http://estanyc.org)  
[programs@estanyc.org](mailto:programs@estanyc.org)

**image:** copyright courtesy of Elders Share the Arts

## Stagebridge, Oakland, CA



Stagebridge, the nation's oldest theater company of older adults, provides professionally taught classes for adults over 50, entertainment and hands-on classes brought to community venues that serve both active and frail elders, and performance-based staff training to healthcare workers and senior services providers.

<http://www.stagebridge.org>  
[info@stagebridge.org](mailto:info@stagebridge.org)

**image:** Student Showcase, Copyright Stagebridge, Stuart Kandell



## Youth Speaks, San Francisco, CA



Youth Speaks produces youth poetry slams, festivals, and reading series, alongside arts-in-education programs and theater and digital programming. It also has helped launch a national network of more than 70 programs addressing the power of youth.'

[youthspeaks.org](http://youthspeaks.org)  
[info@youthspeaks.org](mailto:info@youthspeaks.org)

**image:** 20 Annual Brave New Voices, San Francisco. Photo by Rebekkah Lablue.

## PALETTE, Richmond, VA



PALETTE, a program of Virginia Commonwealth University, connects students and senior adults through creative arts to promote positive aging and foster intergenerational relationships.

<http://www.paletteprogram.org/>

**image:** Collaboration on painting project at Virginia Commonwealth University's PALETTE program

**top image:** copyright courtesy of Elders Share the Arts

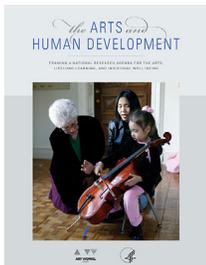
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3. National Endowment for the Arts. (2007). The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life [Electronic version]. Retrieved 16 February 2018 from <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CivicEngagement.pdf>
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6. Verghese, J. (2006). Cognitive and Mobility Profile of Older Social Dancers. Journal of the American Geriatrics Society 54(8), 1241.



# READING LIST

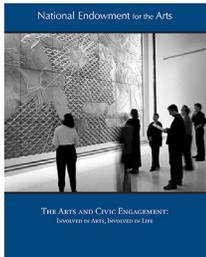
## The Arts and Human Development: Framing a National Research Agenda for the Arts, Lifelong Learning, and Individual Well-Being



This co-commissioned report from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Department of Health and Human Services presents a variety of evidence-based claims and future agenda items.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100647>

## The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life



This National Endowment for the Arts study looks at the relationship between arts and civic engagement demonstrated by data from the Public Participation in the Arts survey.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/85500>

## The Creativity and Aging Study



This longitudinal study demonstrated strikingly positive differences in the intervention group (those involved in intensive participatory arts programs), as compared to a control group not so involved. No previous study of this nature using an experimental design and a control group had been carried out.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100548>

## Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts



The study looks at what teens want and compares that to what the experts think teens need. The report includes exemplar projects, key research finding, and principles for effective after-school arts programs.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/95423>



# ORGANIZATIONS

## American Alliance for Theatre & Education (AATE)

AATE works to ensure that youth experience theater provided by talented artists and educators. Through its membership of theater artists, teachers, professors, directors, scholars, and playwrights, AATE provides services in 48 U.S. states and 19 countries.

[aate.com](http://aate.com)

## National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA)

The National Center for Creative Aging is dedicated to fostering an understanding of the vital relationship between creative expression and healthy aging and to developing programs that build on this understanding.

[creativeaging.org](http://creativeaging.org)

## National Guild for Community Arts Education

The National Guild works to ensure that everyone can maximize their creative potential. In the past decade, it has increased its focus on creative aging and lifelong

learning and now hosts a number of programs in this area.

[nationalguild.org](http://nationalguild.org)

## Vitality Arts/Aroha Philanthropies

This program of Aroha Philanthropies compiles information on artful aging and funds projects centered on creative processes that bring connection, improve health and well-being, and provide a renewed sense of purpose to older adults in community and residential settings.

<https://www.vitalityarts.org/>

## Creative Youth Development National Partnership

A partnership of organizations working in concert with the broader field to drive collective action in three strategic priorities to advance creative youth development.

<http://creativeyouthdevelopment.org/>

top image: Dorothy Schoeneman, 80, dances down the soul train line with dance major Nicole Anderson at Virginia Commonwealth University's PALETTE program. Photos by Steven Casanova, University Marketing

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



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[AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG/SOCIALIMPACT](http://AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG/SOCIALIMPACT)

Americans for the Arts developed this Fact Sheet as part of the Arts + Social Impact Explorer.

