

Arts + Social Impact Explorer Fact Sheet

ARTS + PUBLIC WELFARE

OVERVIEW

Public welfare addresses the stability and financial viability of families and individuals and the support services in place for them. Arts and culture can help meet public safety goals by improving neighborhood livability and reducing violence and criminal activity. The arts also provide a pathway for communities to articulate needs and organize for change.

Neighborhood arts projects help to build community trust and cohesion and also make it more likely that residents will participate in the community in other ways. People feel safer in communities with art and have more community pride.

Arts participation correlates with lower rates of juvenile delinquency and truancy, and cultural resources are linked to better health, schooling, and security. Arts also help maintain racial and economic diversity and lower rates of racial harassment.

AMERICANS
for the
ARTS

IMPACT POINTS

ARTS PARTICIPATION INCREASES NEIGHBORHOODS SAFETY

Arts participation correlates with lower rates of juvenile delinquency and truancy. Disadvantaged neighborhoods that have the highest rates of arts participation are in the top 25 percent of area that consistently have among the lowest rates of juvenile delinquency incidents.¹

THE ARTS INSTILL COMMUNITY TRUST AND COHESION

Arts participation in neighborhood arts projects helps to build trust, a key measurement of social capital and civic engagement. A Philadelphia study of the Porchlight project shows a substantial increase in social cohesion and trust in neighborhoods where murals were installed.²

CULTURAL PARTICIPANTS 50% MORE LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Cultural participation leads to wider community participation. One study showed that participants most involved in cultural activities were 50 percent more likely to be involved in other (non-arts) community activities.³

ARTS-RICH COMMUNITIES HAVE 18% LESS SERIOUS CRIME AND 14% FEWER REPORTS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

A New York study shows that lower-income neighborhoods with higher cultural assets show less child abuse and neglect investigations (14 percent), obesity (5 percent), and serious crime (18 percent). Kids from those communities also scored 18 percent higher in English Language Arts and Math exams than their peers.⁴

CULTURAL PARTICIPANTS ARE 2X AS LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER

Volunteerism within a community is a sure sign of civic pride and engagement, which are crucial to livability. Research shows that arts participants are more than twice as likely to volunteer as those who do not participate in the arts—a trend that holds across artforms and regardless of demographics.⁵

THE ARTS ENCOURAGE EMPATHY AND DECREASE DISTRUST OF OTHERS

Research has shown that exposure to stories of other cultural experiences, such as through literary fiction, significantly increases empathy and the ability to see another person's point of view.⁶



EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

New Orleans Arts Council Youth Solutions (YS), New Orleans, LA



Youth Solutions is a collaborative youth development initiative that addresses youth trauma and disconnect, neighborhood blight, and under-investment. It uses local artists as change agents to implement neighborhood projects.

artsneworleans.org/homepage/youth-solutions-2
jose@artsneworleans.org

image: Youth Solutions design interns present a concept for a bus stop shelter to design instructor Jebney Lewis. Courtesy of Arts Council New Orleans.

Youth Resiliency Institute (YRI), Baltimore, MD



YRI offers mentoring, training, and development services to create civically engaged, cross-generational teams of community-based advocates

who work toward forming stronger communities in Baltimore. One goal is to build the foundation for activism, community regeneration, and grassroots public policy development.

youthresiliencyinstitute.org
info@youthresiliencyinstitute.org

image: Courtesy of Youth Resiliency Institute.

Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light, Spartanburg, SC



Seeing Spartanburg is a public art project that uses light installations in nine neighborhoods to improve safety and community pride. It is a

collaboration between an installation artist, community groups, city government, and a wide range of residents.

seeingspartanburg.com
info@seeingspartanburg.com

image: *Islands of Light* by artist Erwin Redl. Photo courtesy of Chapman Cultural Center.

Porch Light, Philadelphia, PA



This joint collaboration between Mural Arts, the City of Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health, and Intellectual Disability Services focuses

on achieving universal health and wellness among Philadelphians through meaningful works of public art.

<https://www.muralarts.org/program/porch-light/>
info@muralarts.org

image: Sanctuary © 2016 Mural Arts Philadelphia / James Burns. Photo by Steve Weinik.

Tamms Year Ten, Chicago, IL



Tamms Year Ten—a coalition of current and former inmates, families, artists, and others—was created to protest the policies at Tamms C-MAX

prison and to call for an end to psychological torture. It initiated cultural, educational, and political events that called attention to abuses and led to the closing of the prison.

tammsyearten.org
TammsYearTen@gmail.com

image: *Visions from Solitary: Prisoners' Imaginations Made Real By Activists' Photographs*. Courtesy of Prison Photography.

top image: Youth Solutions co-instructor Jebney Lewis demonstrates proper methods to use tools for metal fabrication. Courtesy of Arts Council New Orleans.

REFERENCES

1. Stern, M. & Seifert, S. (2002, January). Culture Builds Community Evaluation: Summary Report [Electronic version]. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Social Impact of the Arts Project. Retrieved 27 February 2018 from
2. Tebes, J., Matlin, S., Hunter, B., Thompson, A., Prince, D., & Mohatt, N. (2016). Porch Light Program: Final Evaluation Report [Electronic version]. New Haven, CT: Yale University School of Medicine. Retrieved 28 February 2018 from <https://www.muralarts.org/program/porch-light/>
3. *ibid.*
4. Social Impact of the Arts Project. (2017, February). Culture and Social Wellbeing in New York City: Highlights of a two-year research project [Electronic version]. University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved 27 February 2018 from repository.upenn.edu/siap_culture_nyc
5. 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>
6. Kidd, David & Castano, Emanuele. (2013). Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind. *Science* (New York, N.Y.). 342. Retrieved 18 May 2018 from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Emanuele_Castano/publication/257349728_Reading_Literary_Fiction_Improves_Theory_of_Mind/links/02e7e52c108e202f5b000000/Reading-Literary-Fiction-Improves-Theory-of-Mind.pdf



READING LIST

Culture and Social Well-Being in New York City



Understanding the social value of the arts and culture in New York City neighborhoods was the goal of the research undertaken between 2014 and 2017 by Penn's Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) in collaboration with Reinvestment Fund. This brief is a summary of the conceptual framework, data and methodology, findings and implications of the research discussed in the full report--The Social Wellbeing of New York City's Neighborhoods: The Contributions of Culture and the Arts.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100983>

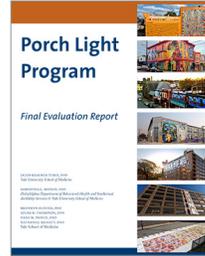
Exploring the Way Arts and Culture Intersect with Public Safety



This report describes the range of activities at the intersection of public safety and arts and culture, outlines a theory of change, and provides recommendations for further consideration. Through interviews with experts in the field, this research found that art in the public safety sector promotes empathy and understanding, influences law and policy, provides career opportunities, supports well-being, and advances the quality of place.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100982>

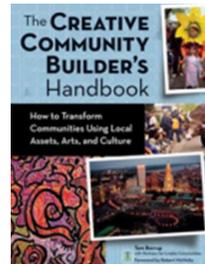
Porch Light Program: Final Evaluation Report



This study report from Yale University's School of Medicine examined Mural Arts' Porch Light Program with a rigorous scientific method and shares the results of that research.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100980>

The Creative Community Builder's Handbook: How to Transform Communities Using Local Assets, Arts and Culture



The Creative Community Builder's Handbook gives you successful strategies, best practices, and "how-to" guidance to turn cultural gems into effective community change. The text delves into key principles of community development and presents 20 case studies from across the U.S. In addition, it lays out five steps to assessing, planning, and implementing creative community building projects.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100979>



ORGANIZATIONS

ArtPlace America

ArtPlace is a creative placemaking hub that includes public safety as one of its key areas of focus.

<http://www.artplaceamerica.org>

Create Justice

An initiative led by Carnegie Hall and the Arts for Incarcerated Youth Network in Los Angeles, Create Justice brings together a diverse group of artists, young people, policymakers, funders, nonprofits, and researchers from across the country to share ideas and work side-by-side to leverage the power of the arts for youth justice and reform.

<https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Social-Impact/Create-Justice>

Urban Institute

The Urban Institute has a variety of focuses, including around arts and culture, all working toward its mission to open minds, shape decisions, and offer solutions through economic and social policy research.

<https://www.urban.org/research-area/arts-and-culture>

Mural Arts Philadelphia

Mural Arts is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. It is the home of the Porch Light project, which centers on improving community health through public art.

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

top image: Courtesy of Youth Resiliency Institute.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



The Arts & Social Impact Explorer was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

LEARN MORE
AMERICANSFORHEARTS.ORG/SOCIALIMPACT

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

