

Vital at Every Age

Final Report on Seeding Vitality Arts MN

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April 16, 2020

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SVA MN final report, final -DS

Vital at Every Age

Final Evaluation Report on Seeding *Vitality Arts* MN

Touchstone Center for Collaborative Inquiry
April 2020

Executive Summary

Seeding Vitality Arts MN is a demonstration initiative developed and funded by Aroha Philanthropies that ran from mid-2016 through early 2020. Its goals were to:

- Demonstrate the power and impact of creative aging programs to a national audience.
- Encourage arts and cultural organizations to develop participatory arts education programs for older adults.
- Encourage organizations that serve older adults to develop arts education programming.
- Refine and disseminate effective program models.

Through Vitality Arts programming, Aroha seeks to replace the ageist cultural narrative that views aging as decline and older adults as burdensome with one that recognizes older age as a season of learning, creativity and vitality. These programs are designed to increase artistic mastery and social engagement for people ages 55 and up, using the model developed by Lifetime Arts, Inc.

SVA MN provided two years of grants plus other forms of training and assistance to 13 nonprofit organizations in Minnesota to plan, implement and evaluate Vitality Arts programs.¹ Grantees included nine arts organizations and four senior housing organizations. Ten of these were in the Twin Cities metro area; the others were in Winona, Little Falls and Dawson. Each conducted three to six programs in 2018 and also in 2019, for a total of 107 programs over two years. Annual grants ranged from \$12,500 to conduct three programs up to \$25,000 for six programs, for an average of \$4,200 per program. Lifetime Arts provided program coaching, and the Touchstone Center for Collaborative Inquiry provided evaluation support and coaching.

SVA MN was a companion initiative to Seeding Vitality Arts U.S., which Aroha sponsored 2016-2019. SVA U.S. involved a nationwide set of 15 arts, cultural, and elder-serving organizations that conducted a total of 166 programs in 2017 and 2018. Each organization conducted three to 13 programs per year, supported by annual grants ranging from \$17,000 to \$49,250 for an average of \$6,600 per program. SVA U.S. sought to test and spread the Vitality Arts model nationally and to learn about challenges and opportunities in diverse parts of the country. The MN initiative sought to build on those lessons and to explore possible benefits from investing in a higher density of Vitality Arts organizations in one state.

Key results from SVA MN 2017-2020 and SVA U.S. 2016-2019

Outcomes for participating older adults

These Vitality Arts programs were highly effective at helping older adults grow artistically, mentally and socially. Very large majorities of program participants across all four rounds of programming in these two cohorts² reported growth in multiple areas:

¹ Two other grantee organizations participated through 2018 then opted not to continue.

² Based on post-program surveys of 2,187 participants across 220 programs in the two cohorts.

- 83% reported improved creative expression
- 79% said they increased their skills in the art form
- 75% reported increased mental engagement
- 68% said they formed new or stronger relationships
- 55% said the experience encouraged them to participate in other community activities
- 35% reported increased physical activity

Interviews with participants, teaching artists and program coordinators fleshed out this picture. In 2019 interviews and coordinator reports, recurrent themes included the renewal of a creative spirit, new energy generated through friendships, and the power of using personal stories in artmaking.

The organizations in these two SVA cohorts delivered top-quality programs that achieved high levels of participant satisfaction:

- 84% of participants rated the overall quality of their program as “excellent”
- 81% strongly agreed that “our teaching artist was an excellent teacher”

Demographically, these programs attracted participants across the age spectrum of older life: 40% were aged 65-74, while 21% were aged 55-64, 25% were 75-84, and 12% were 85 years or older (and 2% were younger than 55). Five out of six (85%) were women. Most reported no mobility issues or disabilities, while about one fourth (24%) reported some such issues (and nearly one in five (19%) declined to give information on their mobility/ disability status).

A large majority (85%) said they were White or Caucasian, with 5% identifying as Black or African American, another 5% as Hispanic or Latino, and smaller numbers identifying racially as Asian/ Pacific Islanders, Native American/ American Indian/ Alaska Native, or Other.

Results were similar in all regions of the country, in both arts and senior-serving organizations, for all demographic groups.

Results for organizations and communities

Participating organizations enlarged their capacity – including knowledge, skills, structures and networks – to plan, implement, evaluate and sustain Vitality Arts programs. Many shifted their identity as they became better known for offering participatory arts learning for older adults. Several reported that witnessing the growth and enthusiasm among their Vitality Arts participants energized their staff and deepened their sense of mission. At the completion of their two years of Aroha-funded programming, 27 of the 28 organizations said they intended to continue offering Vitality Arts programs.

These programs and their public culminating events appeared to be having some impact on community attitudes toward older adults: over two-thirds of culminating event audience survey respondents agreed that the event expanded their view of older adults’ capabilities. This was particularly true among audience respondents younger than 55, 79% of whom agreed with that statement.

Key features of the Vitality Arts program model

The model of programming that delivers these outstanding results is taught by Lifetime Arts and has these primary features:

- Sequential learning curriculum
- Taught by a professional teaching artist prepared to work with this age group
- Intentional social engagement as well as artistic development
- Minimum of 8 sessions of at least 90 minutes, with public culminating event

Important secondary features include: quality materials and supplies (e.g. visual and textile arts supplies and equipment, and musical instruments); suitable space/facility for learning and for culminating events, tailored as necessary to the physical limitations of participating older adults; and offered free or at an affordable price for the spectrum of local older adults.

Lessons from the Seeding Vitality Arts initiative model

- Two years of program support proved highly valuable.
- The training, support and convening provided to grantees along with their grants contributed to their success.
- A kickoff meeting of cohort members is a strong way to launch a cohort.
- The scale of funding provided in SVA MN was sufficient to equip most grantee organizations to continue beyond their Aroha funding support, even though this was much less than in SVA U.S.
- Conducting a cohort in a single state provided some advantages, notably travel cost savings for convenings and site visits. But it did not appear that SVA MN cohort members engaged in more peer learning or joint action than did the more dispersed members of the U.S. cohort. Perhaps to achieve greater collective impact, a cohort initiative must include more features to develop collective leadership.

Lessons for program excellence and sustainability

Lessons for teaching artists:

- Expand participants' use of the art form's language.
- Balance structure with freedom to explore.
- Teach a framework for constructive conversation and critique.
- Develop an inclusive community of artists.
- Use culminating events as a developmental opportunity.

Lessons for effective program management:

- Ensure effective communication among teaching artists, participants, organizational staff and partners, and other key stakeholders.
- Tailor program structure to fit the circumstances of participants, teaching artists, and the organization.
- Build visibility within the organization and the broader community.
- Build a leadership structure to steward Vitality Arts programming.
- Incorporate Vitality Arts into the organization's strategic vision and plan.

Lessons for effective partnership:

- Recruit partner organizations with complementary strengths.
- Consider the “fit” with both organizations’ mission and strategic goals.
- Be realistic about partners’ strengths and limitations.
- Successful partnerships require time, trust, and effective communication.
- Partnering for off-site programs presents challenges as well as rewards.
- Working partnerships can become funding partnerships.

Lessons for building financial sustainability:

- Program excellence and visibility lay the groundwork for attracting financial resources.
- Visual and narrative documentation, along with evaluation, help to tell the story and attract support.
- Financial support can come from many sources.
- Vitality Arts program participants can be an important part of the revenue solution.

Recommendations

For further impact through SVA MN organizations:

- Experiment with more virtual convening and peer networking to help SVA organization leaders grow into creative aging field leaders.
- Provide support for field leadership ventures.
- Continue to develop and share videos, tools and other resources that MN organizations can use internally and externally.
- Continue to make Lifetime Arts coaching available to these organizations.
- Provide training and resource materials on adapting the Vitality Arts model to the coronavirus pandemic era.
- Consider offering matching funds to SVA MN grantees for up to two more years.

For possible new philanthropic initiatives:

- Offer a combination of grants, training, consulting assistance and evaluation support as in SVA MN – including a kickoff convening of cohort organizations once they are selected.
- In recruiting and screening potential grantee organizations (a) give priority to those that see creative aging programming as a strategic institutional effort; (b) consider an organization’s stage of development; and (c) consider an organization’s history and potential for networking.
- For greater collective impact, consider expanding the initiative timeline, with match funding expectations; and do more convening and coaching to foster leadership growth and joint action.

Introduction

Seeding Vitality Arts MN: an overview

Seeding Vitality Arts MN is a demonstration initiative that aims to make high-quality, instructional Vitality Arts programs more widely available to older adults across Minnesota. Developed and funded by Aroha Philanthropies, it began in mid-2017 and continued through early 2020.

Vitality Arts programs are a subset of the broader creative aging field, which seeks to replace the ageist cultural narrative that views aging as decline and older adults as burdensome with one that recognizes older age as a season of learning, creativity and vitality. They use a model developed by Lifetime Arts, Inc., a nonprofit organization promoting in-depth participatory arts learning for older adults in a social group setting. These programs are led by professional teaching artists and offer sequential instruction to build skills in a specific art form or forms. Their twin goals are to increase artistic mastery and social connection among participants ages 55 and up. Each program includes at least eight sessions of at least 90 minutes in length, plus a culminating public event where students exhibit or perform their work. Programs must also intentionally facilitate social interaction among participants. Vitality Arts programs are intended to “inspire and enable older adults to learn, make and share the arts in ways that are novel, complex and socially engaging” and to “bring connection, improved health and well-being, and a renewed sense of purpose to older adults in community and residential settings.”³

Seeding Vitality Arts MN is a companion initiative to Seeding Vitality Arts U.S., which Aroha sponsored from 2016 to 2019. Each initiative supported a mix of arts, cultural, and elder-serving organizations to begin offering and evaluating Vitality Arts programming over a two-year period. Both initiatives sought to demonstrate and to learn how creative aging programming can be implemented and achieve positive impacts in diverse organizational settings with older adults in diverse community settings. The U.S. initiative sought to spread the Vitality Arts model nationally and to learn about challenges and opportunities in diverse parts of the country. The MN initiative sought to build on and refine lessons from the U.S. cohort, and to explore possible benefits from investing in a higher density of Vitality Arts organizations in one state.

Goals for both SVA U.S. and SVA MN were to:

- Demonstrate the power and impact of creative aging programs to a broad national audience.
- Encourage arts and cultural organizations to develop participatory arts education programs for older adults.
- Encourage organizations that serve older adults to develop arts education programming.
- Refine and disseminate effective program models.

Aroha provided grants to organizations to begin Vitality Arts programming. Lifetime Arts provided training and technical assistance to both cohorts on program planning, implementation, and sustainability. Touchstone Center for Collaborative Inquiry provided learning and evaluation support. Assistance to organizations included tools, templates and resource materials, available online and in

³ <https://vitalityarts.org/about-aroha>, accessed 3/23/18.

print; online platforms for peer interactions and sharing; and individualized coaching and consulting. Aroha also convened leaders of each cohort along with Lifetime Arts and Touchstone at the completion of Year One and again after Year Two (for U.S., in 2018 and 2019; for MN, in 2019 and a final convening tentatively planned for spring 2020). These convenings explored evaluation results and lessons from the previous year's work, offered advanced training, and provided space for peer sharing and mutual support.

SVA MN in 2019 included 13 organizations (two others opted to exit after 2018), listed in Figure 1. They included nine arts organizations and four senior housing organizations (including one health care facility/senior residence).

Figure 1: Organizations participating in Seeding Vitality Arts MN 2019

| Organization | City | Project Name | Year 2 Grant Amount | Number of Programs in 2019 |
|---|-------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------------------|
| CommonBond Communities | Golden Valley, Plymouth | Engaged Aging at CommonBond Communities | \$25,000 | 6 |
| Episcopal Homes | St. Paul | Artistically Unpacking 125 Years of History | \$12,500 | 3 |
| FilmNorth | St. Paul | Stories 55 | \$17,500 | 4 |
| Johnson Memorial Health Services Fdn | Dawson | Releasing Your Inner Artist in Rural Minnesota | \$12,500 | 3 |
| Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA) | Minneapolis | Hands-on Art | \$12,500 | 3 |
| Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts (MCA) | Winona | Seeding Vitality Arts | \$12,500 | 3 |
| Park Square Theatre | St. Paul | Park Square Theatre | \$25,000 | 6 |
| Pillsbury House + Theatre | Minneapolis | CenterStAGE | \$12,500 | 3 |
| Rumriver Art Center | Anoka | Vitality Art-reach Classes | \$25,000 | 6 |
| St. Francis Music Center | Little Falls | Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls (St. Francis Music Center) | \$12,500 | 3 |
| Textile Center | Minneapolis | Interlace | \$25,000 | 6 |
| TU Dance | St. Paul | Dance-Writing Workshops for Older Adults: Dancing Your Story | \$12,500 | 3 |
| Walker Methodist Foundation | Lakeville | Transforming Arts at Highview Hills | \$17,500 | 4 |
| Totals | | | \$222,500 | 53 |

Geographically, the 13 organizations included seven that offered programs in Minneapolis or St. Paul, three in the Twin Cities suburbs, and three in Greater Minnesota ranging from Winona, population 27,000, to Dawson, population 1,600.

Organizations were diverse in size with the arts organizations generally smaller than the senior housing organizations. Seven of the nine arts organizations had eight or fewer full-time staff, with annual budgets between \$150,000 and \$1.2 million. One arts organization, Minneapolis Institute of Art, was much larger with about 180 full-time-equivalent staff and an annual budget of \$33 million. In contrast,

the four elder housing grantees each had 71-610 full-time staff, and budgets between \$15 million and \$71 million. Three of them operated nine or more facilities.

SVA U.S. included 15 grantees including 10 arts or cultural organizations, three elder-focused organizations, a high school and a YMCA. They are listed in Appendix A.

The MN and U.S. initiatives differed in two features:

- 1) SVA MN was more modestly scaled with fewer programs and less funding. Its grantees conducted three to six programs per year (107 total programs over two years). Annual grants were between \$12,500 and \$25,000 for an average of \$4,200 per program. SVA U.S. grantees conducted three to 13 programs per year (166 total programs over two years). Annual grants were between \$17,000 and \$49,250 for an average of \$6,600 per program. To some extent, SVA MN was an experiment to see if this programming could take root with fewer seeds and less fertilizer.
- 2) The initiatives launched differently. SVA U.S. focused more on the 15 organizations in its grantee cohort, while SVA MN provided professional development workshops for a broader range of Minnesota nonprofit organization leaders and teaching artists.

SVA U.S. began with a pre-application webinar open to anyone interested, followed by an open application process that drew over 200 applications. Once the 15 grantees were selected, each organization sent two leaders to Minneapolis for a two-day convening with training on Lifetime Arts' program model, research findings on older adults and arts engagement, and orientation to the initiative's goals, supports and requirements. It also allowed cohort members to meet and interact with each other and with Aroha, Lifetime Arts and Touchstone staff.

SVA MN began by inviting Minnesota nonprofit organizations to a free, one-day workshop on creative aging and the new Seeding Vitality Arts MN opportunity, led by Aroha, Lifetime Arts and Touchstone. Sixty organizations attended, which made them eligible to apply for up to two years of SVA MN support. From this pool, about 50 applied and 15 were chosen. Then the initiative provided a two-day training for grantees' teaching artists (two per organization). Aroha and Lifetime Arts also presented another training for teaching artists (whether affiliated with these grantees or independent) in the summer of 2019 as a further investment to strengthen the pool of teaching artists in Minnesota.

Learning and evaluation within Seeding Vitality Arts MN

Evaluation in Seeding Vitality Arts MN served multiple purposes. These included to:

- Help demonstrate the power and impact of creative aging programs by generating evidence of impact and surfacing lessons for effectiveness.
- Build the capacity of participating organizations to document their work, improve their programs, and tell their story powerfully.
- Generate guidance for improvements at the initiative level and for individual participating organizations.
- Help crystallize results and lessons from the initiative overall, integrated with those from the Seeding Vitality Arts U.S. initiative, to inform future efforts of this kind by Aroha, Lifetime Arts and others.

The approach to learning and evaluation was collaborative between the Touchstone Center for Collaborative Inquiry, Aroha, Lifetime Arts and participating organizations. It was conducted in a spirit of inquiry and discovery. Each grantee's team involved in designing and implementing programs played an active role by collecting and interpreting evaluative information from program participants and culminating event audience members, using tools provided by Touchstone (which were refined over the course of the initiative based on organizations' feedback).

These tools included:

- Post-Program Participant Survey, filled out by participants at the end of each workshop series.
- Culminating Event Audience Survey, filled out by people attending culminating public events.
- Coordinator Post-Program Report, completed by the coordinator after each program.
- Evaluation Toolkit with templates and guidance for conducting interviews and focus groups, analyzing collected information, and using evaluation findings to tell one's story.

In 2019, surveys were collected from 489 participants and 570 culminating event audience members across the 53 SVA MN programs, and Coordinator Post Program Reports were filed on 52 of the programs. Responses were logged into [www.SurveyMonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) using templates created by Touchstone. Survey data analyses and spreadsheets were shared with each organization for each program. Coordinators were encouraged to use these in their reports, along with their own records and observations, as a way to build their skill at using evaluation evidence.

Interviews and observations conducted by Touchstone

Evaluation data generated by grantees with these tools were supplemented by information collected by Touchstone consultants through interviews and site visits. Between July 2018 and January 2019, we conducted site visits to nine SVA MN organizations that typically included interviews with one or several staff (usually a program coordinator and a senior administrator) and a teaching artist, interviews or a focus group with some program participants, and observation of a class session. In some cases, we also observed a program culminating event. At six other organizations we conducted two interviews on-site, one with staff and one with a teaching artist. From November 2019 through January 2020 we conducted a final on-site interview with the lead staff responsible for Vitality Arts at each of the 13 grantee organizations.

Appendix E contains the two survey instruments, the Coordinator Post-Program Report form, and the final interview guide used by Touchstone consultants with program coordinators and organization administrators in 2019.

Evaluation reports

This is the final evaluation report from the Seeding Vitality Arts U.S. and MN initiatives. It is based on the information collected during SVA MN Year Two, from spring 2019 into winter 2020. We also present findings from an aggregate analysis of all participant and audience surveys collected in both rounds of the U.S. and MN cohorts: 2017-18 for the U.S. grantees and 2018-19 for the MN grantees. These data sets include 2,187 post-program participant surveys and 3,038 culminating event audience surveys from 220 programs. Our concluding lessons and recommendations are based on what we learned across the lifespan of the two cohorts.

Earlier reports include a baseline and midterm reports for SVA U.S. (February 2017 and March 2018), a baseline report for SVA MN (April 2018), a midterm evaluation report on SVA U.S. (March 2018), and an interim evaluation report on both cohorts (June 2019). These are available on request from Aroha Philanthropies and from the Touchstone Center.

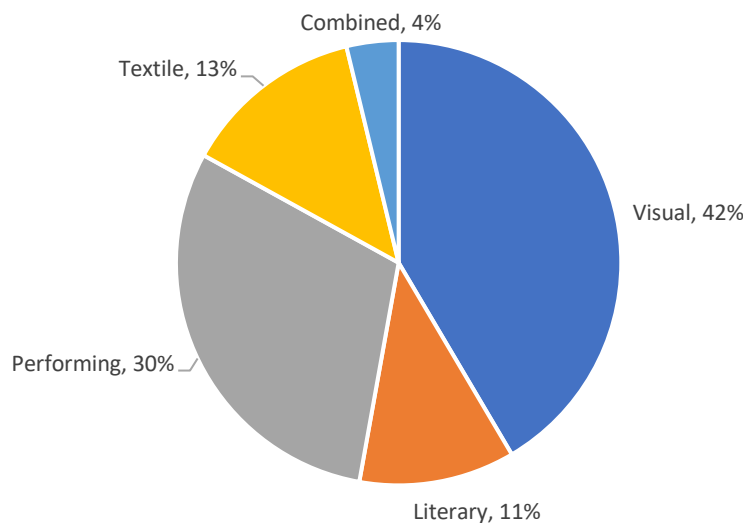
Seeding Vitality Arts MN – Year Two

Description of programs and participants

The 53 programs presented in SVA MN Year Two included many art forms. As in 2018, visual and performing arts were most common. However, there were fewer visual art classes than in 2018 and slightly more in the other artistic disciplines.

Organizations based art form choices on the interests of their target populations, the strengths of their organization, and the skills of the teaching artists available to them. Some choices built on the success of 2018. For example, Episcopal Homes' painting class in Year One was so successful that, as coordinator Kristin Aitchison reported, "we already had 20 [people interested], and the signup hadn't even gone out." Their solution was to run two parallel classes: an advanced group for returning participants and a beginner group for those new in Year Two.

Figure 2: Art forms taught in 2019 SVA MN classes



A more detailed breakdown of the art forms taught in 2019 is shown in Figure 3.

Experimentation with art forms and program structure

Year Two saw more experimentation with art forms and structures – a shift that also occurred in the SVA U.S. cohort in its second year. For example, three MN organizations offered workshops that combined memoir or creative writing with visual art. And TU Dance began two of its three programs with a "sample class," followed by seven more sessions, to encourage participation from people skittish about registering for the full class.

Class sessions were required to be at least 90 minutes, but this year six organizations – three more than in 2018 -- offered longer sessions in at least some programs. Nearly half of all programs were two hours

or longer. FilmNorth, Textile Center, and Rumriver Art Center all ran classes which were three hours in length.

Similar to Year One, median class size was 12 participants. Fewer classes than in Year One utilized a wait list as part of their registration process, less than a quarter. However, for some organizations this seems to have been a product of simply being willing to register more than their “maximum” number of participants. Coordinators reported that 86% of those enrolled, on average, completed the workshop.

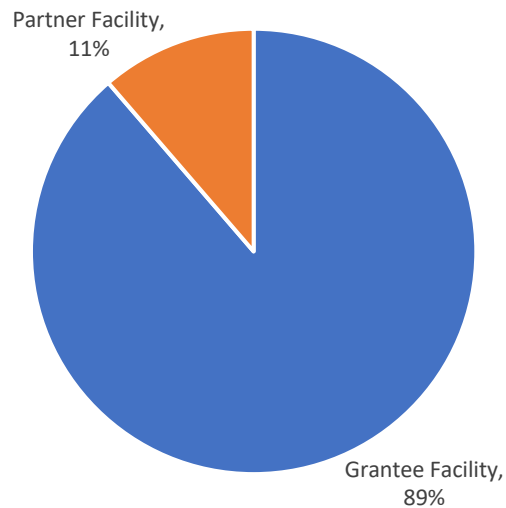
Figure 3: Artistic disciplines in 2019 SVA MN classes

| | <i>Number of workshops</i> |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Visual arts [22 workshop Series at 8 organizations]</i> | |
| Drawing and/or Painting | 15 |
| Filmmaking | 4 |
| Ceramics | 2 |
| Printmaking | 1 |
| <i>Performing arts [12 workshop series at 6 organizations]</i> | |
| Theater or creative drama | 3 |
| Storytelling | 4 |
| Choral music | 5 |
| <i>Literary arts [7 workshop series at 5 organizations]</i> | |
| Memoir | 6 |
| Creative writing | 1 |
| <i>Textile arts [6 workshop series at 1 organization]</i> | |
| Rug-hooking, Embroidery, Felting | 3 |
| Surface Design, Shibori, Wearable Art | 3 |
| <i>Combined Arts [6 workshop series at 4 organizations]</i> | |
| Dance and Storytelling | 3 |
| Visual and Memoir or Creative Writing | 3 |

Program locations

In Year Two, organizations more often chose to hold programs at their own facility rather than at a partner’s site. Only four organizations held a workshop at a partner organization’s facility, down from seven organizations in Year One. As can be seen in Figure 4, in Year Two, nearly nine out of ten programs were held at the grantee’s own facility. This reflected lessons regarding the challenges in partnerships particularly for off-site programming (as discussed later in this report).

Figure 4: Location of programs in 2019 SVA MN classes

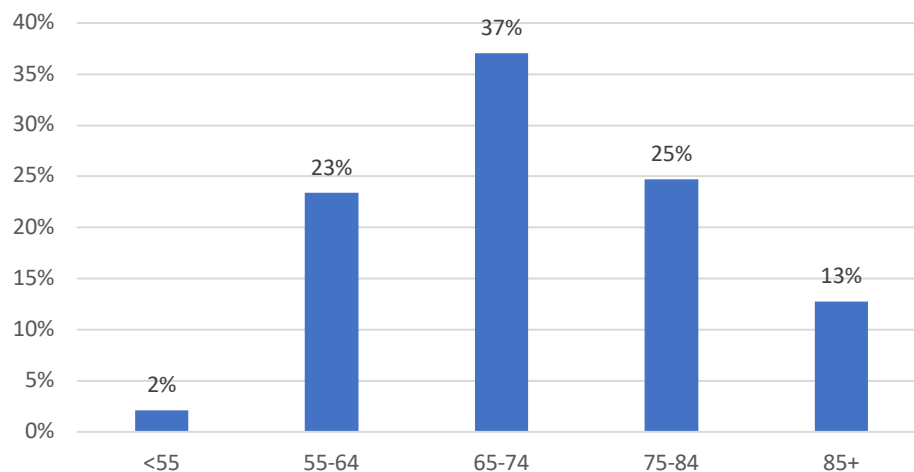


In Year One of SVA MN, as well as both years of the SVA U.S. initiative, arts organizations were more likely to partner with another organization to host some of their programming. This remained true in Year Two of SVA MN. The four organizations which held workshops at a partner facility were all arts organizations: Minneapolis Institute of Art, Park Square Theatre and TU Dance located some programs at senior residences, while Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts presented an intergenerational printmaking course at a nearby school.

Who participated?

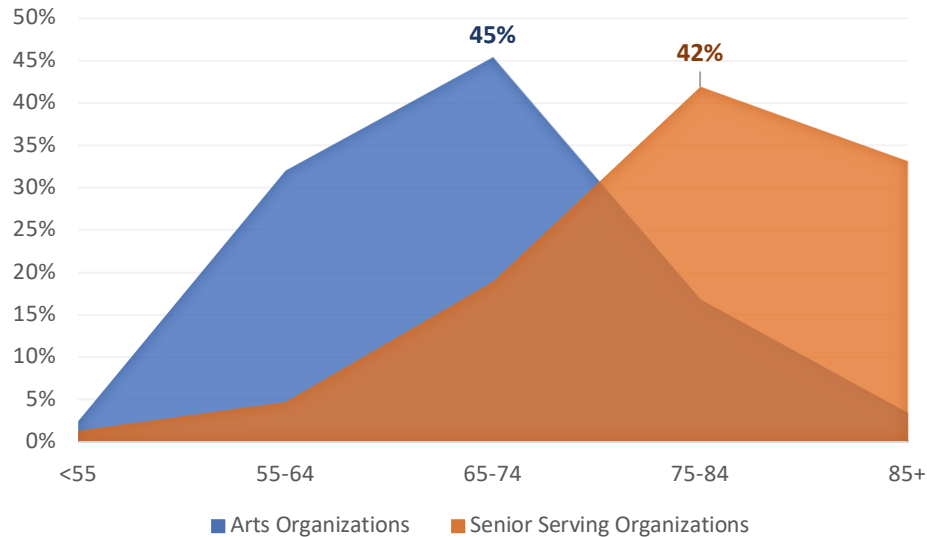
Similar to Year One of SVA MN, the majority (60%) of participants were “younger old” adults, between the ages of 55 and 74. Participants 75 years of age or older made up 38% of participants, a slight increase from Year One of the initiative.

Figure 5: Age ranges of 2019 SVA MN participants



The age of participants also varied with the type of organization presenting the programming. As can be seen in Figure 6 and in keeping with the findings from 2018's SVA MN and SVA U.S. programming, for most arts organizations, the most common age group was 65-74 years-old, with the second most common group 55-64. For senior service organization grantees, however, 94% of participants were over the age of 65, with a third of participants aged 85 years or older.

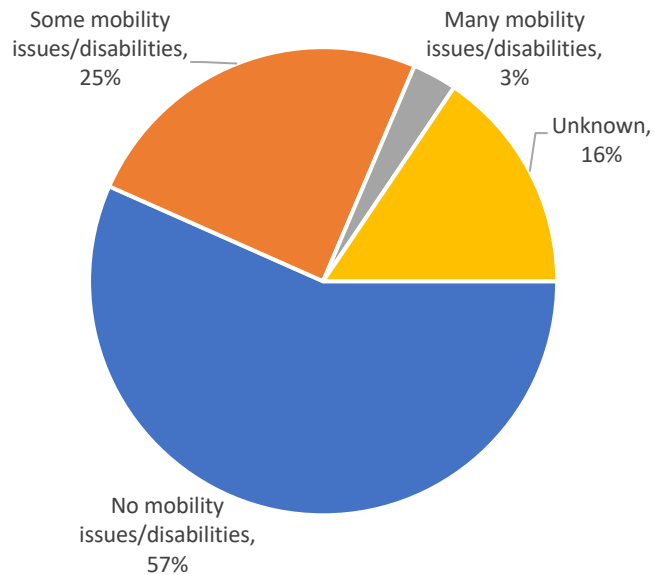
Figure 6: Average age ranges of participants by organization type



Pillsbury House + Theatre held most of its workshops at a partner organization's senior living facility in Year One of SVA MN, but moved programming back to their own facility for Year Two and invited participants from throughout the neighborhood. This resulted in younger participants: in 2018, only 30% of participants in their partner site programs were under the age of 75. In their 2019 programs at Pillsbury House + Theatre, 60% of participants were under 75.

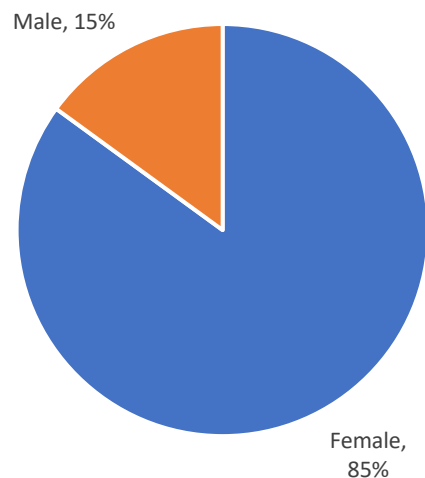
Most program participants in 2019 reported having no mobility issues or disabilities. However, as is shown in Figure 7, more than one in four participants said they had some or many mobility issues and disabilities. A further 16% of survey respondents opted not to answer the question regarding their mobility/disability status.

Figure 7: Participants with mobility/disability issues



As seen in Figure 8 below, the vast majority of participants in 2019 identified as female, with males making up just 15% of participants. This figure was nearly identical to the demographic picture of 2018's SVA MN programs and is in line with data collected from the SVA U.S. initiative.

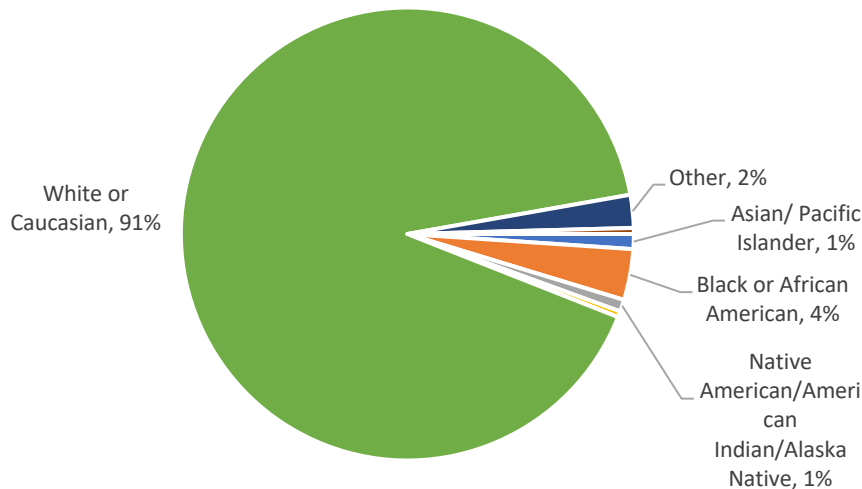
Figure 8: Gender of participants



Some grantee organizations had more success in drawing male participants than others. Park Square Theatre drew the most male participants with 12, some 21% of their participants. Walker Methodist Highview Hills and Johnson Memorial Health Services each drew 11, accounting for 31% and 41% of their participants, respectively. Conversely, no survey respondents from CommonBond Communities or Pillsbury House + Theatre identified as male.

As to the racial and ethnic identity of participants, overall about 9% of participants identified as people of color, down from 13% in 2018's SVA MN programming, and 91% identified as White or Caucasian (Figure 9). Ninety-nine percent of participants identified as ethnically non-Hispanic or Latino.

Figure 9: Racial identity of participants



Similar to 2018, the racial composition of the programs largely reflected the communities in which the programs occurred. The grantees with the most racially diverse participants in 2019 were Park Square Theatre, FilmNorth, and Pillsbury House + Theatre. Park Square Theatre's participants were 17% participants of color, including 12% Black or African American participants with 5% either Hispanic/Latino or Other. FilmNorth had just under one quarter of participants identify as a person of color, including African American, Asian, Hispanic/ Latino, and mixed race. Pillsbury House + Theatre's racial diversity among its participants is less clear: while 33% of participants did not identify as White or Caucasian, 23% of respondents selected "Other, Please Specify:", but chose either not to specify or specified "mostly European American," seeming to signify that they likely did not identify as a person of color.

SVA MN 2019 Outcomes

Outcomes for participants

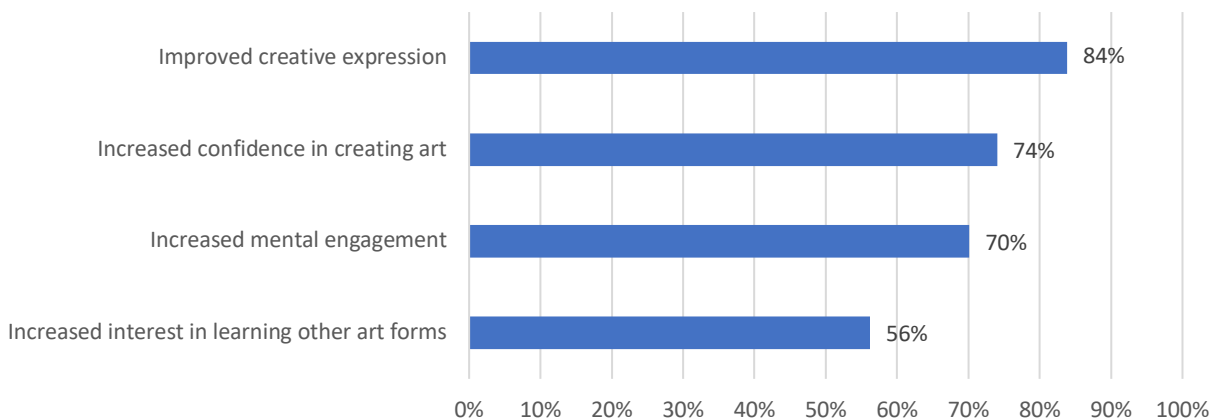
Throughout the two-year initiative, participants in the Minnesota cohort achieved strong outcomes in areas of artistic mastery and social engagement. The experience helped build confidence in artmaking, which often spilled into other areas of their lives. Participants who took sequential workshops grew more poised and self-assured in presenting their work publicly. The experience of learning something new helped to increase mental engagement as well creative expression. And depending on the art form some participants reported an increase in physical activity. Outcomes for individuals in 2019 programming were similar to those in 2018 and in the two rounds of SVA U.S. programming. Nine out of

ten participants reported growth in at least four of the 11 areas probed in the Post Program Participant Survey, with eight as the median number of growth areas reported.⁴

Increased creativity, confidence and mental engagement

Eighty-four percent of SVA MN 2019 participants felt that their creative expression had improved and nearly three-quarters expressed increased confidence in creating art, as shown in Figure 10. Seventy percent reported increased mental engagement.

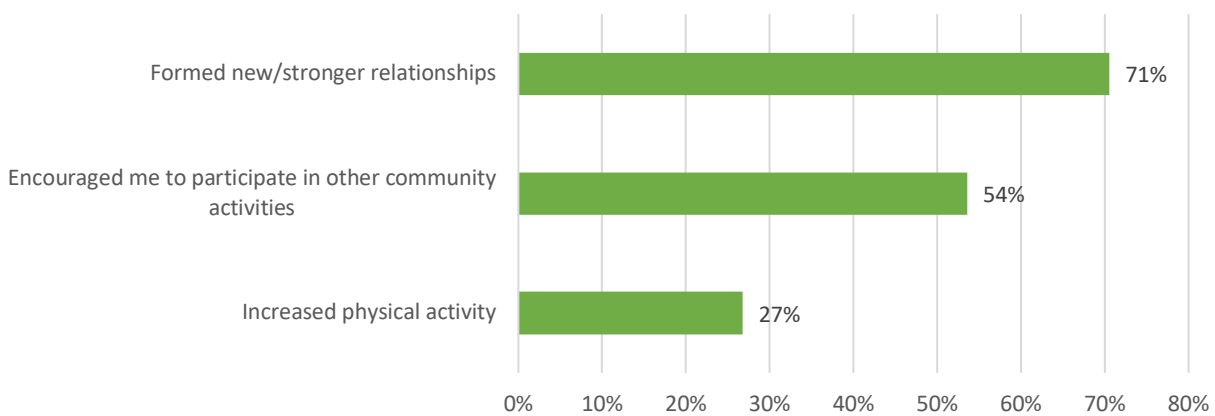
Figure 10: Participants reporting growth in creativity and mental engagement, SVA MN 2019



Social and physical gains

Fostering social connections is a core emphasis for Seeding Vitality Arts, and over two thirds of participants reported forming new or stronger relationships through their experience. As shown in Figure 11, over half of participants felt encouraged to participate in other community activities. About a quarter of participants – mostly those in movement or dance workshops -- reported increases in physical activity.

Figure 11: Participants reporting social and physical growth, SVA MN 2019

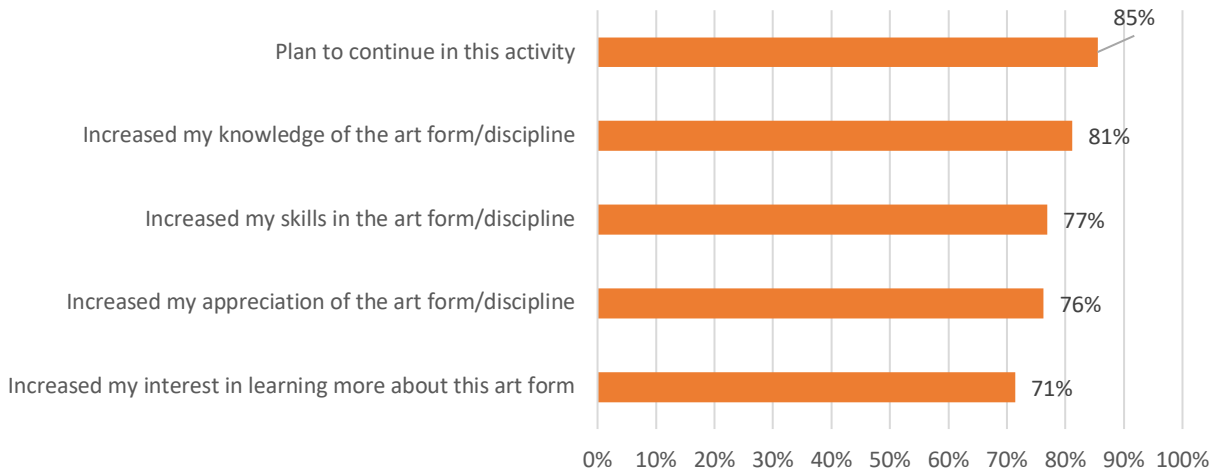


⁴ Participant outcomes data displayed are based on Post Program Participant Surveys collected from 489 participants in 53 SVA MN 2019 programs.

Artistic growth

These workshops were especially successful at fostering artistic growth in participants. As seen in Figure 12, more than three-quarters of participants reported growth in knowledge, skills, and appreciation for the art form of their workshop. Furthermore, 85 percent said they planned to continue the activity after the class ended and 71 percent reported greater interest in learning more about the art form.

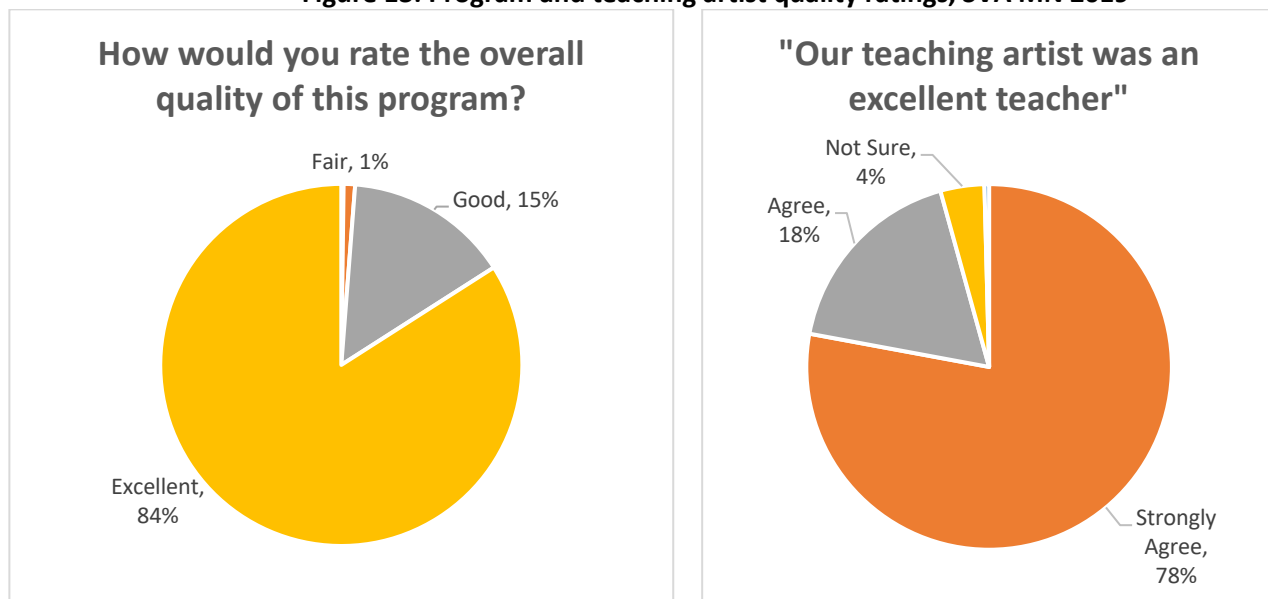
Figure 12: Participants reporting artistic growth, SVA MN 2019



Perceptions of program quality

Overall, participants gave very strong quality ratings for their programs and teaching artists. Eighty-four percent rated their program's overall quality as excellent and 79 percent strongly agreed that "our teaching artist was an excellent teacher."

Figure 13: Program and teaching artist quality ratings, SVA MN 2019



Themes in effective programming

In 2019 final interviews with coordinators and administrators, three interrelated areas worthy of note stand out – the renewal of a creative spirit, new energy generated through friendships, and the power of sharing personal stories.

Discovery of creativity

For many participants, Vitality Arts helped them discover or rediscover the joy of creating. Teaching artists commonly reported that often participants initially did not see themselves as artistic, holding to the stereotype that only “artists” are creative or that creativity does not happen in late life. Overcoming this belief required an inclusive, accepting, and intentional learning environment.

The awakening of the creative spirit to understand that creativity is a process, not just an end product is one of the most important individual outcomes of Vitality Arts programming. Many participants felt surprised at their creative accomplishments. They grew in confidence with a sense of mastery of new skills. They learned to see the world through new eyes as they experimented with media, sometimes new to them. They stretched themselves in sharing their creative experiences publicly, and in several instances these artists formed self-organizing groups to continue their creative work.

The following participant quotations help to illustrate the impact of this discovery.

The process of planning and creating a wearable work of art...also supported personal goals of building creativity into self-care and improving body image.

I found a new part of me...

Participating in these classes is pure joy! The opportunity to have free and full rein to express artistic creativity is a definition of happiness.

We are so proud and enthusiastic about our learnings, especially for those of us who never had any journalistic experience.

These and many more participant reflections as well as teaching artist and coordinator observations illuminate the potential in discovering one’s creative capacity, which often occurred as relationships developed. One participant put it this way, “Learning in community helps us confidently share ideas, give up the idea of being perfect and hold on to the concept that you’re never too old to create.” Discovery of creativity and learning together in a supportive environment appears to generate an energy that leads to community.

The joy of camaraderie

It is well known that reduction of isolation in later life contributes to overall health, both physical and psychological. Building new social bonds and deepening existing friendships are central to the Vitality Arts design. Teaching artists used a variety of techniques to encourage community building including invitations built into the curriculum for participants to reflect on and talk about life experiences (see storytelling); teaching processes that encouraged sharing constructive feedback with one another; opportunities to engage in joint projects such as choral events, dance, theater, or filmmaking. Preparation for the culminating event also required cooperative work. Teaching artists pointed to arrangement of physical space such as location of workspaces or placement of materials to encourage sharing and interaction. These techniques, many in combination, helped facilitate socialization. Several teaching artists found “forced” or structured sharing used as introductory techniques were not as effective as natural conversation embedded in the classes’ artmaking activities. The synergy created through camaraderie had ripple effects.

Before this class, many of us did not speak to one another. Though we lived in the same place, I felt alone. This class, these people, these teachers have helped to create a community around creating.

I was new to the community...The class hooked me and helped me belong. I even stepped up and have started a monthly creative friends group so that we can all keep drawing and together. I was never able to do this kind of work before taking this class.

There were other examples of strong bonds formed. Not surprisingly, participating in multiple Vitality Arts programs over the two years, as many people did, helped build close relationships. As indicated above, people who wanted to continue their artmaking with others found ways to work together in private homes, coffee shops, or in spaces provided by the sponsoring organization. For example, participants at Rumriver Art Center formed a painting club that met once a week throughout the summer at a city park facility.

Graduates of a visual art workshop at a CommonBond facility felt empowered by the success of their culminating event to organize an art exhibit and presentation at a nearby senior center that generated lively conversation among the audience attendees. Riding the success of this experience, the older adult artists intend to contact the community library to arrange another exhibit.

In a poignant example of social bonding, one Vitality Arts group supported a member who had revealed through her art that she was in an abusive relationship. The group encouraged her to seek a restraining order, and along with the teaching artist, went with her to court to get it. These examples, along with others, illustrate how friendships and supportive relationships motivate people to take risks, to see themselves as members of a community, to act in public, and to find ways to continue artmaking without the initial workshop structure. They tell a remarkable story of the some of the effects of social connection.

The power of storytelling

In 2019, storytelling was woven throughout many Vitality Arts media – dance, film, theater, memoir writing, poetry, collage and other visual arts. Nine organizations featured it in a total of 21 programs. It proved a powerful element in successful Vitality Arts programming.

An invitation to tell their story, in whatever art forms, helped people tap into their artistic wellsprings. And storytelling catalyzed camaraderie among participants as they discovered similarities and came to know each other in multi-dimensional ways. Four examples follow.

Telling one's story through memoir at Walker Methodist Highview Hills gave elder artists opportunity to share previously untold stories with family, each other, and with their community. Memoir writing also gave staff a deeper understanding of lives lived and sometimes helped reshape perceptions of capabilities, coordinators reported. The publication of these individual stories and as a collection brought recognition and visibility to the authors.

Vitality Arts at TU Dance integrated storytelling with movement, led by a teaching artist pair – a dancer and a writer/poet. "Telling Your Story through Dance" invited participants to explore their sense of self through movement, with storytelling giving shape to movement. This experience offered new or renewed ways of reaching inward to better understand oneself as an older person through another lens. Participants' comments suggest its value: "Help me to love myself;" "Helped me connect body, memory, moving, mind, words..." "Felt imaginative with others feeling the same."

The video memoirs created at FilmNorth proved an effective vehicle for participants to address important personal issues. In one poignant example, a woman worked through a traumatic event in her early adult life at the birth of her child. In retrospect, she likely experienced post-partum depression but at the time was misdiagnosed with a mental illness and institutionalized, where she underwent forced treatments. Revisiting this story through film helped resolve her feelings about this experience for the first time, she told the coordinator. Her film used her own visual art, which she created in the film lab. She received a scholarship to help her write a screenplay for her story.

Park Square Theater in partnership with the Wilder day care program found that storytelling with elders experiencing memory loss and physical limitations could open a window for communication. The teaching artist, T. Mychael Rambo, a talented storyteller and resident of the adjacent neighborhood, adapted the workshop in such a way that allowed everyone to contribute. Mary Finnerty, project coordinator described the final event. "The teaching artist set the stage showing great respect for each of the participants. He gave clues to those who had limited abilities, and they were able to respond. It may not have been the most polished event, but those in the audience, including staff and administrators, knew that they were witnessing something important. Some commented that this was so much more than they had previously seen from the group. They felt it was a huge success." Pending funding Wilder hopes to continue the program.

Programs included many examples of participant engagement and discovery through some form of storytelling. Autobiography has profound potential. It helps people tap into a wellspring of creativity. The telling of personal stories in later years can contribute to an integrated sense of wholeness. Louis Porter, the teaching artist who led memoir writing classes for two organizations, wrote in the introduction to a published collection of participants' memoirs:

In addition to writing memoir, we used the writing process as a path to healing. Our emerging writers explored small hurts and large hurts as well as the ways they overcome those challenges. We talked about winning, losing and everything in between.

Erik Erikson, the German psychotherapist who created a psychosocial theory of human developmental stages based on the resolution of crises that occur throughout life, named the final stage or developmental crisis, Integrity vs. Despair. The challenge, he explains, is to reflect on one's life story to answer the question, Have I lived a meaningful life? Resolved in an authentic way, integrating life's experiences leads to maturity. Artistic expression presents a pathway for such reflection and can be health producing.⁵

Outcomes for organizations

Successfully implementing two years of Seeding Vitality Arts programming impacted organizations in several ways. The extent of impact varied depending in part on supporting infrastructure, including budgets; the stage of organizational growth; and readiness to expand networks.

New and expanded programming

Grantees in the Minnesota cohort expanded their programs by introducing new art media, added depth to existing offerings implementing Lifetime Arts' model, and/or created programming specifically for an older audience. There are many examples.

The Textile Center is well known for its high-quality fiber arts programs for older audiences, however, previous offerings were of short duration, either drop-in sessions or two-hour workshops. The Vitality Arts eight-session format was new. "This is a significant programmatic change for us," said executive director, Karl Reichert. Not only has it added to the offerings, it also boosted professional development of teaching artists who stretched their teaching practices.

Some grantees with previous experience programming sequential learning for mixed-aged groups used Seeding Vitality Arts to test the viability of similar programs specifically for people 55 and older. They found interest from new audiences and saw a growing demand for more. This happened at both Pillsbury House + Theater and TU Dance, for example.

After two years of experimentation and support... we have found that this is an area where there is tremendous need in our community, and we are now committed to continuing to program arts classes for older adults in our facility in an ongoing way. (Pillsbury House + Theatre)

TU Dance had provided movement classes for older adults in the past, such as while on tour to other communities, but we lacked the resources and dedicated time to implement a local program serving them. These two years of support from Aroha have allowed us to create the workshop model and develop and refine it.

⁵ Cohen, Gene. *The Creative Age: Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life*, Avon Books, New York, 2000. pp. 233-258.

Program modifications

The two-year grant cycle allowed organizations to experiment with and then adjust programming to better fit their organization and their community. In the first year they worked to find the right messaging, get buy-in from partners and community, and determine level of interest. They piloted sequential learning program designs and identified optimal enrollment size. Commonly, changes made in the second year involved expanding the length or number of sessions and adjusting the time of day or season of year to better fit participant preferences. Some experimented further with charging fees and explored how to provide scholarships. Those with partnerships weighed the time considerations and benefits of community partnerships to inform their programming in a third year. They retained many Vitality Arts components, particularly teaching artists, sequential learning, intentional socialization, and culminating public events.

In Year Two, several organizations made further adjustments in program design and settings to better serve older adults. Those offering programs to residents of assisted living and care facilities, for instance, adapted to accommodate limited mobility, impaired communication and memory issues, while still encouraging engagement in creative work. To attract participants, several grantees found that offering demonstration classes was productive – particularly when a class started shortly after its sample class to sustain momentum.

New organizational structures or processes to support arts programming

The Vitality Arts model and guidance from Lifetime Arts helped organizations develop a framework to support and sustain arts learning. These elements included a community survey process to determine potential interests; tools for marketing and recruitment; a curriculum model geared for older adults; strategies to design and implement concluding public events; and evaluation tools.

The process of applying for the Aroha grant and the conversations at convenings encouraged some grantees to seek other grants supporting arts learning for elders. For instance, the experience of writing the first grant to Aroha helped launch a grants program at Walker Methodist, which had not been previously developed. “I believe that the Aroha grant has helped open our world to other grants. It is a template for other proposals.” Said Marilyn Nelson, director.

Episcopal Homes added a program assistant for their Creative Ventures Program. It is also studying transportation options to facilitate greater participation in arts experiences. Rumriver Arts Center added new staff including a Vitality Arts director.

The launching of Vitality Arts programming at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) converged with an institutional effort to better understand creative arts programming including for older adults. This included an accessibility study to learn the steps needed to become involved in the museum, such as finding out what is available at Mia, how to get there, and how to interact with the museum once there. Results helped to inform signage, lighting, and other features that address possible barriers to engagement. Mia also created a new Center for Empathy and the Visual Arts that brings together museum staff, social scientists, and academic researchers to study the influence of art on the development of empathy with the belief that museums can play a vital role in helping people relate to and understand one another.

Building effective partnerships

More than half of the grantees built on existing relationships or formed new partners to support Vitality Arts programming. Partnerships, while varied, fell in three general categories: 1) Arts organizations partnered with senior serving organizations to expand arts programming and access for older adults. These were the major partnerships within the cohort. 2) Senior living facilities tapped arts organizations to connect with teaching artists and enrich their programming. In this instance programming usually occurred at the grantee's organization. And 3) organizations also worked with each other to improve outreach and to increase diversity of participants and visibility in the local community.

In Year One, eight of 13 and in Year Two, seven of the 13 grantees formed partnerships for Vitality Arts programming, with many adjusting partnership terms in the second year. Grantees added new partners (sometimes multiple partners), changed partnering organizations, or discontinued a partnership. Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts and Rumriver Art Center, for instance, expanded their community partnerships as their networks grew and visibility increased.

In Year Two, organizations grew smarter about how to engage and sustain partnerships between arts and senior serving organizations. Coordinators reflected on lessons through these experiences. Arts organizations providing programming at senior living facilities sometimes needed to assist teaching artists to adjust planned curriculum to accommodate participant abilities. Where facilities had traditionally offered only short-term or drop-in programming, extra effort had to be made so that both residents and staff understood the importance of consistently attending all eight sessions in Vitality Arts programs. Pillsbury House + Theatre moved programming in-house in the second year with better success. It should be noted, there were also positive responses in long-term care facilities. Where sequential arts sessions were familiar, as at Episcopal Homes, Vitality Arts worked well. Johnson Memorial Health Services and Walker Methodist Highview Hills also reported successful experiences and intend to continue Vitality Arts programming.

Partnerships, while potentially beneficial to both organizations, take time to develop. "It helps to have multiple human bridges," reflected one coordinator. Said another, "In a new partnership it takes at least two years working with the same people to solidify a relationship that would continue if players changed." Past experience with the partner either through the teaching artist's relationship or in an existing organizational partnership facilitated working together on Vitality Arts. Some grantees encountered challenges with staff changes at a partner organization, which required additional time to explain the model. While scheduling is challenging, it helps to build a team that plans and coordinates the program. Several coordinators recommended involving participants in the planning as well.

Shifting organizational identity and reputation

Finally, several grantees pointed to their two-year experience with Seeding Vitality Arts as contributing to significant changes at their institutions. Three examples highlight the impact of Vitality Arts programs on two community-based arts organizations and an affordable housing organization. They are of different sizes and at different stages of development.

Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts

Located in Winona and founded as a dance conservatory in 1973, Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts (MCA) now supports programming in theater, dance, music and visual arts for people of all ages in southeastern Minnesota.

Their Vitality Arts experience has shifted the organization's identity and reputation in the community and the region. "The community now sees us as the...community arts education center," said Jamie Schwaba, managing director. Formerly known mostly for its youth classes, MCA now has many adults participating both in its Vitality Arts classes and in other programs such as group piano classes and a community choir. From 2018 to 2019, adult participation increased 74 percent.

MCA has leveraged partnerships to expand opportunities for different audiences. In 2019, for instance, MCA partnered with Riverway Learning Center, a charter high school, for an intergenerational Vitality Arts printmaking workshop. Manitou Mindfulness worked with the teaching artist to integrate new practices with journal writing. Friendship Center, Winona's senior community center, contributed to outreach. Two elder care facilities – one in Winona, the other in Rushford -- contracted with MCA for Vitality Arts programming. Two residents who had participated in MCA's dance workshop in 2018 initiated the connection to the Winona facility. The teaching artist facilitated the Rushford connection. Additionally, the Caledonia Public Library, located an hour away, has asked MCA's director to meet with them to explore possibilities of arts programming for older adults. And a male gospel choir, Winona Hims, became a new financial partner in 2019, raising \$10,000 for MCA. These connections have increased the organization's visibility and expanded artmaking opportunities for people 55 and older in southeastern Minnesota.

CommonBond Communities

CommonBond is the largest provider of affordable rental housing in the Upper Midwest. Its purpose is to provide housing where residents can gain support, stability and experience community. The Aroha grant funded six workshops at two senior housing sites in 2019, but, as in 2018, CommonBond also presented artmaking workshops using the Vitality Arts model at nine additional facilities. In the second year, Aroha funded the program coordinator, who was previously funded by EngAGE Heartland, to continue to oversee Vitality Arts programs and artmaking at all 11 sites.

Jennifer Neilson, administrator, and Kate Houston, project coordinator, both saw a strong impact on residents' socialization and confidence building through artmaking programs. Over time this has helped to improve the social climate in facilities where Vitality Arts is present, they report. Property managers and program coordinators see more positive interaction among residents and a "more vibrant" environment. A recent survey of staff observations included the following comments:

Residents who otherwise have not engaged with each other end up working and helping each other out in class. The class gets some residents who rarely leave their apartment to come out.

Residents really appreciate this programming and have expressed that this program in particular was life changing and made their community a better place to live.

Significantly, the director and coordinator identified a beginning change they observe in their service provision model. CommonBond organizes community services for residents but does not provide wrap-around programs in-house such as congregate meals. Thus, residents tend to live in their apartments without socializing with their neighbors, the director said.

The impact of Vitality Arts on CommonBond as a whole has begun to shift our thinking about how we serve seniors. In the past, we've focused on safety and aging in place. [This experience] is changing people's thinking about what seniors have to contribute...It also begins to shift our model from mostly connecting people to services they need to providing opportunities that create vibrancy. This comes from staff and older residents who see themselves as people who have something to contribute.

In 2020, CommonBond leaders are considering organizational structures that can sustain existing arts programming and respond to increasing demand by staff and residents for more artmaking opportunities.

Rumriver Art Center

This art center, located in the Twin Cities' north suburban area, began in 2009 with a small studio and a drawing class. Known in its early years primarily for its summer and school year art programs for youth, through Seeding Vitality Arts it has expanded to include a full range of art opportunities for people of all ages.

"Rumriver Art Center (RRAC) has been transformed through its participation in SVA MN," reported directors Larry Weinberg and Susan Yee. Older adults now comprise 40% of their participants compared to only 2% before Seeding Vitality Arts. "RRAC's community base changed from mostly youth to now mostly older adults." At the same time, summer youth participation has swelled to record highs.

"The launch of Vitality Arts programs has forever changed the organization... Many SVA participants later became students, teachers, volunteers and even employees after attending a Vitality Arts class... From the ideas and support of many of our SVA participants, RRAC has developed an annual Art-A-Thon Fundraiser event, which is 48 hours of nonstop art and creativity where all funds raised support RRAC programming."

Other organizational changes include the creation of a new Board of Directors; an expanded facility space, including a larger gallery to display participants' work; additional staff including a Vitality Arts program director and moving teaching artists from contractors to employees. RRAC has created a "Senior Art-Reach" program to bring artistic opportunities to elders at local senior centers, assisted living facilities and YMCAs throughout the north metro. It also encourages and supports creation of "clubs" for those who wish to continue their art together. Larry and Susan now participate in regional arts councils, and RRAC has begun to receive grants from both the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council and the Minnesota State Arts Board.

These examples demonstrate a synergy that Vitality Arts can generate. Engaging arts programming along with organizational vision and leadership, enthusiastic participants who spread the word and demand more, and active community networks can work together to help shape an organization's

identity and reputation. In these three organizations, as well as several others in the Minnesota cohort, creative aging programming became part of a strategic effort to move forward on organizational goals.

Commitment and capacity for continuation

All 13 SVA MN grantees said in early 2020 that they wanted to continue Vitality Arts programming. Twelve said their boards of directors are strongly supportive of continuing, and the other said continuation was entrusted to staff. They vary, however, in their financial readiness to continue, with about two-thirds reporting funds in place to offer at least some 2020 programming and all working to enlarge and solidify their funding streams for this.

They are drawing on many different sources for continuation funding. About half are raising some funds from individual donors. Several organizations found that some of their Vitality Arts participants subsequently made donations and even helped lead fundraising efforts.

Participant fees are also a source of revenue for about half of these organizations. Arts organizations in the cohort are familiar with charging fees for at least some of their programming, though they are also attentive to keeping their offerings accessible to people with less income. In 2019, five of the nine arts organizations charged fees, and two others said they were considering adding a fee in 2020. The remaining two both felt that fees might keep away too many low-income members of their community. Senior residences less commonly charge program participation fees, and in 2019 only one of these four did.

Of those using fees, about half charged nominal amounts of \$25 or less per program. The others charged up to \$150 or even \$450 per program with scholarships available as needed.

Grant funding beyond Aroha was reported most often from two public sources, the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC). Two of the 13 grantees reported receiving grants from private foundations for their Vitality Arts programming.

One organization, Minnesota Conservatory for the Arts, is earning some revenue through contracts to provide sequential arts programming at senior residences.

Financial capacity for continuation showed no particular correlation with either the size of the organization or the size of their Aroha programming grant. It did appear that funding for continuation may have been more difficult to obtain for organizations located in greater Minnesota, outside of the Twin Cities metro area.

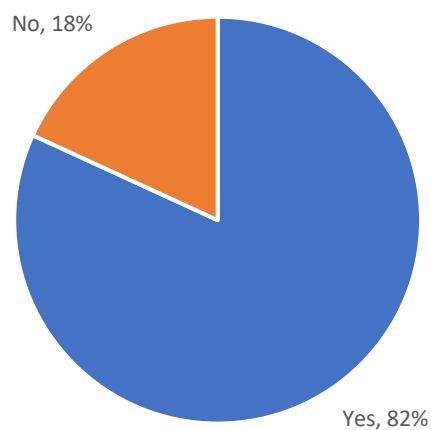
SVA MN appears to have been substantially effective at motivating and equipping organizations to continue offering creative aging programming after their Aroha support ended even though the scale of grant support was less than half of what was invested in the SVA U.S. cohort (about \$450,000 over two years for MN grantees compared with \$1 million for U.S. grantees).

Community-level and broader impacts

Shifting attitudes toward older age, art making, and these organizations

As in SVA MN Year One, and in both rounds of SVA U.S. programming, culminating event audience surveys in MN Year Two indicated that these programs are helping to strengthen positive attitudes toward older adults and toward artmaking. Eighty-two percent of respondents agreed that “this event expanded my view of older adults’ capabilities,” as shown in Figure 14.

**Figure 14: Culminating event audience responses to
“This event expanded my view of older adults’ capabilities.”**



Most audience comments emphasized that they already knew that older adults are highly capable and creative. Some noted new appreciation for the possibilities in older age:

Of course older adults are capable of creativity, and it's incredible what they can create when given the opportunity and the materials. What pleasantly surprises me is learning that many of the artists featured in this show are new to creating!

I'm getting "older" and it made me realize maybe I can do some of this stuff.

It reminded me that adults are just children in larger bodies still growing up, still taking risks, still nervous but also more courageous.

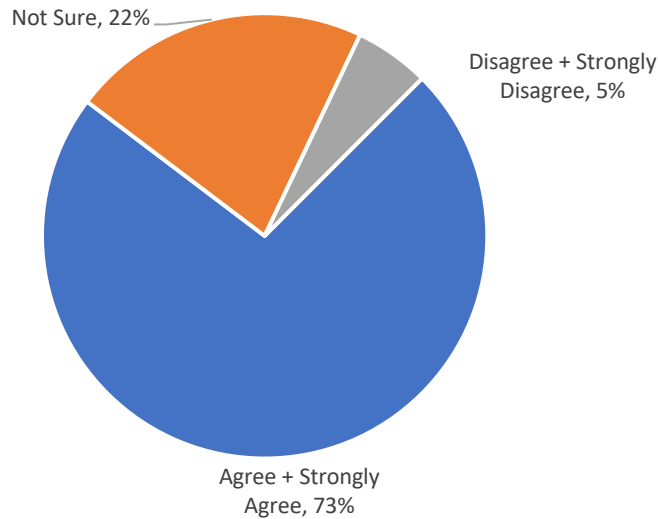
As an older adult myself, to see others exploring their creativity is inspiring, and acknowledges the lifelong learning concept for all of us.

Always time and energy to grow, create, participate. Makes me hopeful for my golden years!

To see older adults trying new things makes me feel capable of taking risks. They are so full of life and energy.

Seventy-three percent of audience respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “this event sparks my interest in art making.”

Figure 16: “This event sparks my interest in art making.”



The growth in individual donor support for Vitality Arts programming at many sites suggests that these programs may be contributing to greater recognition of older age as a vital stage, greater appreciation for the vitalizing power of art-making, and greater appreciation for these organizations as community assets.

Growing the visibility and credibility of Vitality Arts programming

There is some evidence that leaders in SVA MN organizations are helping to make their professional peers more aware of the benefits of creative aging programming and the creative potential of older adults. Staff at Johnson Memorial Health Services in 2019 presented on their Vitality Arts programming at the state conference of care center activities staff, the Minnesota Statewide Activities Professionals (MNSWAP) conference and won the prize for best poster presentation. Mia's Director of Learning Innovation said she made presentations at several conferences, including one in Spain, on Mia's Vitality Arts work.

Feedback on support from Lifetime Arts, Aroha and Touchstone

Many grantee leaders expressed appreciation for the two years of support provided by this initiative. The second year allowed them to build on their lessons from Year One, and most reported that Year Two went more smoothly and easily than Year One. The additional year of successful experience bolstered their confidence as it confirmed and reinforced their competence.

As discussed in previous years' reports, almost all grantees voiced strong praise for the package of supports provided by Lifetime Arts, Touchstone Center, the Basecamp digital sharing platform, and the personal attention provided by Aroha staff. Grantees also highly appreciated the convenings of cohort members with Lifetime Arts, Aroha and Touchstone representatives. These gatherings helped people learn from and with their peers; build and strengthen relationships; and understand themselves as part of a larger movement formed to rewrite the narrative on aging in this country. Lifetime Arts staff creatively designed and skillfully facilitated the convenings, which demonstrated a welcoming, inclusive environment that could be modeled in future programming. The following comments were typical:

"I have been writing grants for 30 years. I am not at all used to the level of support offered with this grant. It is amazing. I gained ideas from other organizations from Basecamp and felt a sense of community. I very much enjoyed and learned from the evaluations with Touchstone and appreciated the comments and insights from the evaluator. When I contacted staff about timelines and reports I got a very prompt answer and the support I needed. I cannot stress enough how lovely it was to work with people who truly cared about our success with our workshops and were always readily available. The advice offered was valuable and the support was amazing!"

"The support and information provided by Lifetime Arts really taught us how to work with older adults, how to build a curriculum...and implement it. Their guidance increased the detail and rigor that we were able to apply to the program design and implementation, making it a more positive experience for the participants and the teaching artists...We found Basecamp to be a great way to stay in communication with other cohort members. It was very valuable to learn what others were doing in real time."

"I have found it reassuring to know that support was there at any point that we needed it. The biggest benefit of having check-ins was that they helped keep us accountable and consistent...It was nice to have tools that were created for us and to have deadlines for turning in lesson plans and recording survey results. Now we have so much consistent data and samples that can be shared with our board and other funders...I like the idea of Basecamp. It was fun to see photos and comments about other programs...The in-person trainings and visits that I have been able to participate in have been very impactful."

While Basecamp was widely appreciated, a few grantees said they were still a bit intimidated or rarely found time to visit it. One suggested, "I do wish that more programs would have used it to have actual conversations. I wonder if it would have been helpful to have Lifetime Arts pose a question every so often, maybe once a month, to spark a conversation or possibly share resources that could be used to promote the creative aging movement on social media."

Concluding Lessons from SVA MN and SVA U.S.

Reviewing the total evidence from both rounds of programming in the two Seeding Vitality Arts cohorts – U.S. (2016-2019) and MN (2017-2020), including 274 Vitality Arts programs across 30 organizations with survey data from 2,187 participants and 2,898 culminating event audience members across 220 programs – points to two overarching conclusions:

- The Vitality Arts program model is highly effective at generating growth in older adults across diverse populations, settings and art forms.
- The Seeding Vitality Arts initiative model is substantially effective at equipping organizations to continue this kind of programming.

In this chapter we present highlights from the combined survey data from both rounds of the two cohorts, followed by a summary of key features of the Vitality Arts program model and lessons learned about how to achieve program excellence.

That will be followed by a review of key features of the Seeding Vitality Arts initiative model, with lessons on how to achieve organizational sustainability for this programming.

Key results from SVA U.S. and SVA MN, 2016-2020

These programs are highly effective at helping older adults grow artistically, mentally and socially.⁶ Very large majorities of program participants across all four rounds reported growth in multiple areas of artistic, social and personal development.

- 84% reported improved creative expression
- 79% said they increased their skills in the art form
- 75% reported increased mental engagement
- 68% said they formed new or stronger relationships
- 55% said the experience encouraged them to participate in other community activities
- 35% reported increased physical activity

The organizations in these two SVA cohorts delivered top-quality programs that achieved high levels of participant satisfaction:

- 84% of participants rated the overall quality of their program as “excellent”
- 81% strongly agreed that “our teaching artist was an excellent teacher”

Demographically, the programs attracted participants across the age spectrum of older life. Most often, they were aged 65-74 (40%), but 21% were 55-64, 25% were 75-84, and 12% were 85 years or older (and 2% were younger than 55). Five out of six (85%) were women.

⁶ Detailed results from the four rounds in aggregate are shown in Appendix C.

Most participants (54%) reported no mobility issues or disabilities, while nearly one fourth (24%) reported some such issues. Nearly one in five (19%) declined to give information on their mobility/disability status.

A large majority (85%) said they were White or Caucasian, with 5% identifying as Black or African American, another 5% as Hispanic or Latino, and smaller numbers identifying racially as Asian/ Pacific Islanders, Native American/ American Indian/ Alaska Native, or Other.

The Vitality Arts program model is effective across diverse settings and populations

Working with participant survey results from 220 programs over three years in the two cohorts (from 2,187 participants in total), we examined whether results varied across program settings including community setting (urban, suburban, or rural/small town); regional setting (Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, West); and organizational setting (arts/cultural organization, senior residence, senior community center, or skilled care/ day activity center). We also probed for differences across the demographic categories of age, gender identity, racial identity, and disability status.

The survey data indicate that the Vitality Arts program model is highly effective across all of these settings, for all of these demographic groups. There are some minor variations.

Most interesting, perhaps, is that while the Vitality Arts model was originally developed primarily for independent, younger older adults, in the Seeding Vitality Arts initiative results have also been quite strong for people older than 85, people who report having some or many mobility issues/ disabilities, and for people in skilled care facilities and senior day activity centers. In other words, this program model can be effective in a broader range of settings, and with a broader range of older adults, than originally envisioned.

In addition, while programs achieved good outcomes with both women and men, men were slightly less likely to report growth across all 11 areas when compared to female participants.

Social outcomes were slightly stronger in programs that enrolled a racially diverse group of participants. A comparison of programs that enrolled at least 20% participants of color with those with 100% White participants found that in the racially diverse programs, participants more often said that they formed new or stronger relationships and that their program experience encouraged them to participate in other community activities.⁷

Dance and movement classes also were slightly more successful in achieving positive social outcomes. We would speculate that mustering the personal vulnerability and courage required to express one's art bodily among other people, and the supportive responses to this from fellow participants, helps to build bonds and increase people's confidence about participating in other community activities.

⁷ Data drawn from the US and MN cohorts in 2018 and 2019. Fifteen programs reported at least 20% participants of color, with ranges from 23% to 100% participants of color. Sixty-four programs reported 100% white participants during that same time frame.

Programs with more than eight sessions also achieved stronger social outcomes. Higher percentages of their participants reported that their experience encouraged them to participate in other community activities. Participants in programs of 16 or more sessions also more often reported forming new or stronger relationships.

Programs with longer sessions (two or three hours long compared to those with 90-minute sessions), had higher percentages of participants report artistic growth in several dimensions and that they formed new/ stronger relationships.

Appendix D provides more information regarding this model's effectiveness with different demographic groups and in different settings.

Key features of the Vitality Arts program model

In summary, the model of programming that delivers these outstanding results is as taught by Lifetime Arts and has these primary features:

- Taught by professional teaching artist, prepared to work with this age group
- Sequential instruction curriculum
- Intentional social engagement as well as artistic development
- Minimum of 8 sessions of at least 90 minutes, with public culminating event

Important secondary features include: quality materials and supplies (e.g. visual & textile arts supplies and equipment; musical instruments); suitable space/ facility for learning and for culminating events, tailored as necessary to the physical limitations of participating older adults; and offered free or at an affordable price for the spectrum of local older adults.

Lessons for program excellence

Within the program (guidelines for teaching artists)

Expand participants' use of the art form's language. Visual arts, dance and movement, and storytelling each have their own distinctive terms and concepts, the building blocks of expression in that form.

Balance structure with freedom to explore. Present a planned, sequential curriculum; and include permission and encouragement to sometimes ignore or break the rules, in order to develop one's personal style in both form and subject. Structure class to include time to learn/teach, time to work, time to play, time to interact. Be flexible while staying clear about overall goals and vision.

Provide a framework for feedback. Teach participants a method for constructive conversation and critique that demonstrates how to raise questions and notice things about one's own and each other's work without judgment.

Develop an inclusive community of artists. Recognize and embrace differences in skill levels, experience levels, and personal preferences, and help all participants grow. Sharing ideas and personal stories helps networks of relationships to form. Teach, model, and cultivate trust within the class, an essential ingredient in community formation. Assure participants that everyone has creative ability; this helps to ease fears. As participants' self-trust expands, so will trust within the group. The experience of playfulness often strengthens bonds.

Use culminating events as a developmental opportunity. Present these in high quality settings, ideally those used by professional artists, to reinforce participants' self-identity as legitimate artists. Use top-quality staging techniques and equipment. Coping together with the butterflies experienced in getting ready for an exhibition or performance often strengthens bonds among participants.

Lessons in program management (guidelines for coordinators)

Ensure effective communication. Keep participants informed and engaged as the course progresses. Establish communication schedules with the teaching artist, to celebrate strengths, troubleshoot difficulties, and ensure each session runs smoothly. Engage a team to support the work and report regularly to other staff, the administration and governing board, so that they can appreciate and support this programming. If your organization has a tradition of drop-in or one-time programs, help staff and elders understand that Vitality Arts' sequential learning design expects participants to commit to full, consistent attendance and to contribute to the public culminating event.

Tailor program structure to fit your situation. The number and length of sessions in a workshop, and the time of year it is offered, can vary depending on the art form and on participants' availability and stamina. Some organizations found that spring and fall are the best seasons for older adult programming, while others also have success with summer and winter programs. Studio arts programs often prefer longer sessions because of the greater set-up and clean-up required for each session. Choose art forms that work in the setting, particularly with consideration to equipment, access to water, and space. Some teaching artists work better in teams, or with an assistant. Participants with physical limitations often benefit from having individual assistance from a volunteer or teacher.

Build visibility within the organization and the broader community. Encourage participants to engage with the organization's programs and activities beyond their Vitality Arts class. Offering participants scholarships in exchange for volunteer service can expand participation, build ownership and benefit the organization. Communicating about your Vitality Arts programming in the broader community can attract new participants, build support and lead to new partners. Strategies for wider visibility include: artmaking demonstrations in community centers, senior residences and fitness facilities; conversations with local government bodies, service clubs, faith institutions, labor union retiree groups and other associations; and inviting local influencers to culminating events. Presenting culminating events in community settings such as a library, museum, gallery, or performance venue can also make programming more visible, build good will, and catalyze a partnership. In all, these approaches can help address stereotypes about aging and energize the creative aging movement.

Build a leadership structure to steward Vitality Arts programming. Several larger organizations in Seeding Vitality Arts found it valuable to create a team with members from several functional areas to ensure coordination and build shared awareness and ownership across areas such as programming, marketing, communications, finance, and planning. Awareness and support from executive leadership and the governing board are also important.

Incorporate Vitality Arts into the organization's strategic vision and plan. When organizations recognize older adults as a vital constituency and asset, and when creative aging programs become an effective way to fulfill an organization's mission, whether an arts organization or a senior-serving organization, organizations can embed these priorities into strategic plans and institutional budgets. This ensures continuation of Vitality Arts and helps buffer against shifting priorities or resource constraints.

Lessons for effective partnerships

Organizations formed partnerships for three general purposes: to assist with outreach, including to diverse audiences and to attract and enroll participants; to insure adequate space for programming; and to assist with identifying and engaging teaching artists. Grantees described varying experiences in forming new partnerships. Often the second year ran more smoothly because program expectations, scheduling, clarification of roles, and communication processes were mutually understood and streamlined. Grantees described useful learning from the two-year experience:

Recruit partner organizations with complementary strengths. In these two cohorts, most arts organizations engaged senior-serving organizations as outreach partners, publicizing their Vitality Arts program opportunities to attract older adults to participate. Most senior-serving organizations reached out to arts organizations as program partners: for access to teaching artists, and sometimes for assistance in managing teaching artist contracts and program budgets.

Consider the "fit" with both organizations' mission and strategic goals. This means that administrators and Board members understand Vitality Arts and see the partnership as mutually beneficial. Early thinking about budgeting and fundraising helps to ensure continuation of the partnership and Vitality Arts programming.

Be realistic about partners' strengths and limitations. Not all senior residences or day activity centers are reliable sources for Vitality Arts participants. Many residents and center participants may not be interested in or have stamina for programs with eight sessions lasting 90 minutes or longer. Participants with physical and cognitive limitations require adapted curricula and higher staff or volunteer assistance.

Successful partnerships require time, trust, and effective communication. Ideally, maintain the same "bridge" people for at least two years to solidify cross-organization connections. When staff turnover at a partner organization, it requires building relationships with new staff liaisons. Without this, programming details fall through the cracks. While an organization may offer desirable strengths due to its mission, participants or other assets, a partnership will not flourish without committed staff leadership and a good working relationship. Organizations' past experience in working together, sometimes with the teaching artist as connector, can help facilitate a new venture

like Vitality Arts. Consistent, proactive communication, along with realistic awareness of each partner's interests and constraints, are the keys to productive partnerships.

Partnering for off-site programs presents challenges as well as rewards. Facility partnerships are more complex than outreach or program partnerships. Senior residences found it simplest to offer Vitality Arts programs in their own facility, because managing the logistics of transporting frail residents elsewhere often proved difficult. Some found it worthwhile, however, to stage culminating events at another community venue because of the payoff for participants, the organization and the community for that special occasion.

Arts organizations faced challenges presenting programs in senior facilities. In some cases, teaching artists brought supplies with them and adapted programs to the space available, which was sometimes noisy or cramped. In settings where people were free to drop-in, teaching artists had to establish boundaries to prevent interruption.

Working partnerships can become funding partnerships. For at least two arts organizations in Seeding Vitality Arts, local senior-serving organizations eventually began providing funds to enable continuation of Vitality Arts programming at their sites.

Strengths of the Seeding Vitality Arts initiative model

Reflecting on the experience of SVA U.S. and SVA MN as overlapping philanthropic initiatives, the following lessons stand out:

Strengths

Two years of program support proved highly valuable. Grantees in both cohorts solidified their gains in knowledge, skills, and confidence in their second year. Their structures and systems for planning, conducting and sustaining their Vitality Arts programming grew stronger. Several said they became more effective at attracting grants from other sources thanks to the track record and evaluation evidence they built up during their two SVA years.

The training, support and convening provided to grantees along with their grants contributed to their success. Even several experienced arts organization leaders and teaching artists said that Lifetime Arts' model of sequential curriculum design with its planning templates, and their constructive feedback on plans, raised the quality of their programs. Further, the convenings and personal attention from Aroha staff went beyond what grantees experienced from other funders. It helped energize grantees to do their best.

Almost all grantees also reported that the initiative's evaluation design was valuable, particularly for its survey strategy that generated clear evidence of impact, and the reflective interviews with Touchstone consultants that generated insights into program impact and effectiveness.

The scale of funding and other support provided in SVA MN was sufficient to equip most grantee organizations to continue beyond their Aroha support, even though the funding was much less than in SVA U.S. MN cohort members received on average less than half the funding that U.S.

cohort members did. But it appears that most finished with similar readiness and commitment to continue post-Aroha as did those in the U.S. cohort. SVA MN grants of \$12,500-\$25,000 per year were not particularly large. But when provided for two consecutive years and combined with the other supports offered in this initiative, it was enough for this purpose. Indeed, five of the eight MN grantees that expressed definite plans to continue in 2020 had received only \$12,500 per year. While we are sure the U.S. cohort members were glad to get grants of the sizes they did, and they used them well, it appears that the smaller MN grants were about equally effective in enabling seeds to take root and blossom.

Conducting a cohort in a single state provided some advantages. Travel costs were lower for convenings and evaluation site visits. Grantees could more easily access others' teaching artists if needed, as Pillsbury House + Theatre did in Year Two. Collectively they may have influenced some in-state funders such as the state arts board and regional arts councils, to become more supportive of creative aging programming.

However, it did not appear that Minnesota cohort members engaged in more peer learning or joint action than did the more dispersed members of the U.S. cohort. The lesson might be that to achieve greater collective impact in a state or region, a cohort initiative must include more features to develop collective leadership.

These might include organizing joint culminating public events to better showcase Vitality Arts accomplishments across diverse organizations. There could be more frequent or extensive convening to bring together leaders across organizations to build stronger relationships, engage in more leadership development training, and strategize jointly about how to wield their collective power for greatest impact. Bringing together larger leadership teams, for example three to five people from each organization rather than the one or two more common in SVA MN convenings, would allow denser peer networks to form and equip a wider range of organization leaders to grow into field leadership roles. If a cohort were supported for more than two years, this would provide more time for leadership and peer networks to ripen into action.

Suggestions for improvement in the SVA cohort model

A kickoff meeting of cohort members is a strong way to launch a cohort. This happened in SVA U.S. and not in SVA MN. This initial convening of chosen grantees helped ensure that everyone understood the goals, expectations and resources of the initiative and it jump-started peer relations among the grantees. Year One went more smoothly for the U.S. cohort than the MN cohort.

SVA MN's choice to offer a daylong, in-person professional development workshop to interested nonprofit organizations before inviting applications to join the SVA MN cohort may have been more useful for seeding the Vitality Arts creative aging model more widely than was the SVA U.S. pre-application webinar. Certainly, it was a more in-depth introduction to the Vitality Arts model. And the two-day training for SVA MN cohort teaching artists held after grants were announced and before grant activity began was surely useful for preparing those teaching artists. But if one aspiration was to build a leadership network of Vitality Arts innovators working concurrently in the initiative, bringing together the members of the new cohort at the onset for further in-person training and networking appears to be useful for developing relationships and ensuring clarity about initiative resources and procedures.

Lessons for building sustainability

Lifetime Arts coached organizations to build their capacity to sustain their Vitality Arts programming beyond their Aroha funding, focusing on growth in three dimensions: programmatic, administrative and financial capacity. Lessons for building programmatic and administrative capacity for continuation were summarized in the earlier sections on program excellence and effective partnerships. Lessons from both cohorts learned over nearly four years regarding how to build financial capacity to continue Vitality Arts programming include the following:

Program excellence and visibility lay the groundwork for attracting financial resources. As organizations demonstrated program excellence and strong outcomes, particularly through high quality public culminating events and credible evaluation, it became easier to attract funds from other sources. Several SVA grantees said that they had more success attracting grants from other foundations when they could point to what they had accomplished with Aroha support. Several reported growth in donations from individuals as well.

Visual and narrative documentation, along with evaluation, help to tell the story and attract support. Photos and videos of class sessions, culminating events and exhibits are valuable for showing prospective supporters what Vitality Arts programming is all about. Quotes from participants and their family members on what this programming has meant to them also helps bring to life the importance of Vitality Arts. Evaluation practices can collect such visual and narrative evidence of impact, along with survey-based quantitative measures of program impact and quality. By doing evaluation, organizations also show their commitment to ongoing learning, accountability and improvement -- a credential that helps attract more and larger gifts.

Financial support can come from many sources. As mentioned earlier and in previous reports, SVA organizations have attracted a wide range of supporters. These include private foundations, state and regional public funding sources, municipal governments, individual donors, corporate donations and matching funds for employee gifts. Senior housing organizations sometimes allocate funds from their marketing budgets as well as their program or activity budgets, recognizing that Vitality Arts programs are an attractive amenity for recruiting new residents. Some arts organizations have obtained contract support from senior residences for presenting creative aging programming at their facilities to their residents.

Vitality Arts program participants can be an important part of the revenue solution.

At many of these organizations, some participants have become willing donors in support of these programs. In some cases, donors have participated in a Vitality Arts program and subsequently made larger gifts. In others, participant donors have also become active in organizing fundraising events and projects. In addition to financial gifts by participant donors, many organizations are generating revenue through participant fees, appropriately scaled to ensure affordability for the full range of potential community participants.

Recommendations

Based on the results and lessons from the Seeding Vitality Arts initiatives, from four rounds of programming by SVA U.S. (2016-2019) and SVA MN (2017-2020), we offer the following recommendations to Aroha, Lifetime Arts, and others who want to grow the creative aging field and make arts engagement of this kind more widely available to older adults. These recommendations are offered with awareness that the COVID-19 pandemic will radically impact our society over the next year and beyond, particularly for older adults and the organizations that work with them.

For further impact through SVA MN organizations

Experiment with virtual convening and peer networking to help SVA organization leaders grow into creative aging field leaders. This could include catalyzing dialogue among SVA leaders on common challenges and innovative practices through online platforms such as Basecamp and Zoom. A coordinator from Lifetime Arts, or perhaps someone drawn from the cohort, could post prompts for chat room responses and exchanges. Virtual meetings could be facilitated for peer conversations and to examine useful cases and new resource materials. Since travel is not required and these gatherings can be done in one-hour increments, this could be an efficient way to deepen relationships and stimulate learning. Planning and conducting virtual learning events offer fairly low-risk opportunities for people to build relationships through working together and to build their confidence and competence by stepping into new leadership roles.

Provide support for field leadership ventures. Organization leaders who present on their Vitality Arts experience at professional conferences could be awarded stipends or otherwise have costs underwritten. Those that collaborate to make joint presentations might be rewarded at a higher rate since such presentations would illustrate how Vitality Arts can deliver value in multiple settings, and they would foster relationships among the collaborators. Funders might consider providing support to MN cohort leaders who step into leadership positions in professional associations, to enlarge the incentives for taking on field leadership responsibilities.

Continue to develop and share videos, tools and other resources that MN organizations can use both externally and internally to strengthen their communications, training, programming, sustainability and leadership. Creating communications products that feature the work of SVA MN organizations will be especially useful to those organizations.

Continue to make Lifetime Arts coaching and consulting available as these organizations move further into institutional change and into larger field-leading roles.

Provide training and resource materials on adapting the Vitality Arts model to the coronavirus pandemic era. Organizations and teaching artists must devise ways for older adults to learn sequentially and strengthen their social engagement even while maintaining safe social distancing and participating largely from the safety of their own homes.

Consider offering matching funds to SVA MN grantees for up to two more years. These organizations desire to continue their Vitality Arts programming. Most of them made impressive progress in only two years of Aroha grant support to develop the financial capacity to do so. However, all are now imperiled by the economic downturn caused by this pandemic. Offering two

more years of grant support on condition that organizations match Aroha grant dollars with dollars from other sources would give organizations a powerful tool for building their financial base through this difficult time.

The steps suggested here could also be offered to SVA U.S. “alumni” organizations.

For possible new philanthropic initiatives

Should Aroha or other funders want to launch further initiatives to build the creative aging field, we would offer the following recommendations.

Offer a combination of grants, training, consulting assistance and evaluation support similar to in SVA MN. The MN grants were big enough and two years was long enough to substantially achieve the goals of SVA MN, given the high level of coaching support provided by Lifetime Arts and Touchstone.

Include a kickoff convening of cohort organizations once they are selected, to build a common vision of initiative expectations and resources and to accelerate formation of meaningful relationships among grantees and between grantees and the initiative’s support organizations.

In recruiting and screening potential grantee organizations:

- **Give priority to those that see creative aging programming as a strategic institutional effort** rather than simply adding to their list of program offerings. This is more likely to result in ongoing commitment to creative aging work and to grantees becoming leaders in this movement.
- **Consider an organization’s stage of development.** Is it in, or nearing, a growth stage? Is it clear about direction? Does it have adequate staffing and leadership to grow into its vision?
- **Consider an organization’s history and potential for networking** with arts, residential and community organizations. How skillful is it at screening and collaborating with partners?

For greater collective impact, consider expanding the initiative timeline, with match funding expectations; and doing more convening and coaching to foster leadership growth and joint action. This strategy would give more attention to nurturing grantee leaders to grow into active field leaders in the creative aging movement, as discussed in the Lessons section. Convening, coaching, and support for action steps could help grantees become more active and effective as champions of Vitality Arts’ vision and strategy within their spheres of influence.

Building the movement, changing the narrative on older life and the arts

We must report modestly here, as this was not an official goal of SVA nor did SVA have a particular strategy for this other than equipping organizations to be successful in conducting and sustaining this kind of programming. Nonetheless, it was an aspiration of these initiatives. SVA helped reinforce or instill a narrative that older life can be a time of vibrant creativity, learning and social connection, and that sequential arts learning in this program model contributes to artistic, personal and social growth in older adults.

These organizations are demonstrating that this kind of programming is effective, meaningful, and relevant to their missions and to their communities. They are modeling a new narrative on older life and the arts.

Some leaders from these grantee organizations have become, or show readiness to become, more active as field and movement-builders for creative aging as speakers and mentors to others. SVA coordinators and teaching artists have made presentations at professional conferences, sometimes with Aroha staff. They have publicly advocated for Vitality Arts, and raised visibility beyond their organizations. Some, along with program participants, have worked with public television's Next Avenue⁸ to produce content and perspectives on arts and aging. Potential leadership exists in both cohorts to help energize a broader movement. We encourage Aroha, Lifetime Arts and their allies to bring visionary yet grounded leaders such as these into larger public roles.

⁸ Next Avenue is a national journalism project that presents issues relevant for the older population.

Appendix A: Organizations in Seeding Vitality Arts U.S., 2016-2019

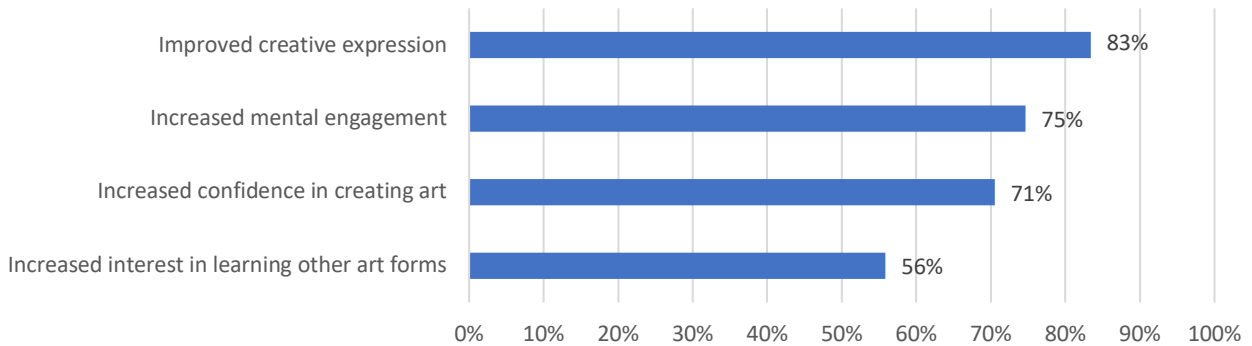
| Organization | City, State | Project Name |
|--|------------------|---|
| Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, Inc. | Lebanon, NH | Experience/Arts in New Hampshire's North Country |
| Integrace Fairhaven | Sykesville, MD | Cultivating Creativity |
| Johnson City Public Library | Johnson City, TN | Fullness of Time: Exploring the Arts and the Gifts of Aging |
| Keshet Dance Company | Albuquerque, NM | Fine Wine Dance (Moving FWD) |
| Minnesota Opera | Minneapolis, MN | Voices of Opera |
| Newark Museum | Newark, NJ | Creative Aging at the Newark Museum |
| Paramount Center for the Arts | St. Cloud, MN | Growing Art-FULL! |
| School One | Providence, RI | Working Stories |
| Silicon Valley Creates | San Jose, CA | ShakeXperience: Life Experience Meets Classic Texts |
| Space One Eleven | Birmingham, AL | Art in the Making |
| Taller Puertorriqueno | Philadelphia, PA | Imagine the Possibilities |
| Teachers & Writers Collaborative | New York, NY | Storytelling: Poetry, Stage and Song |
| The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art | Amherst, MA | Create at The Carle: Art Classes for Adults |
| United Methodist Retirement Communities Foundation | Chelsea, MI | Story Lines: Sharing Life Experiences with the Generations through Art, Music and Drama |
| YMCA of Rock River Valley | Rockford, IL | YMCA Senior Arts Project (Y-SNAP) |

Appendix B: Persons Interviewed for this Report

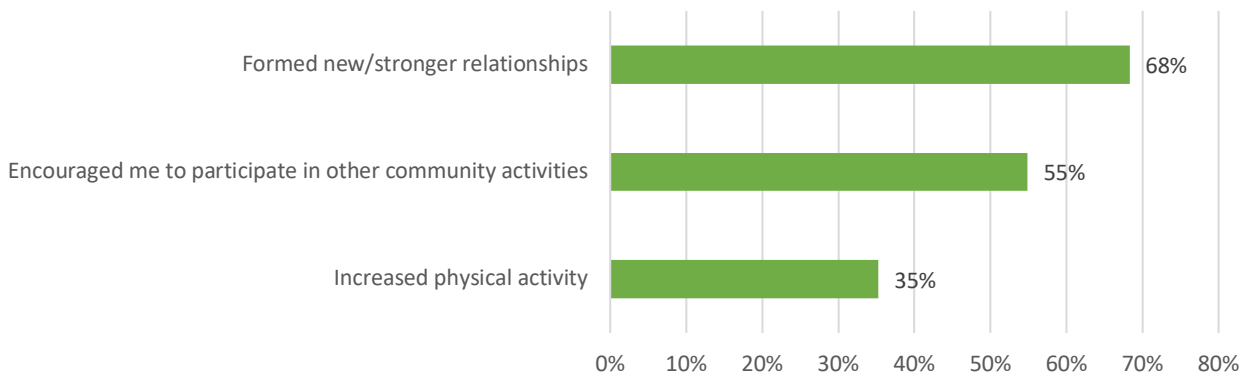
| Name | Title | Organization | City |
|------------------------|---|---|--------------|
| Kate Houston | | Common Bond Communities | East Metro |
| Jennifer Nielsen | Director of Programs | Common Bond Communities | Maplewood |
| Kristin Aitchison | Program Director | Episcopal Homes | St. Paul |
| Reilly Tillman | Deputy Director of Education | FilmNorth | St. Paul |
| Robyn Gray | Grants Specialist (and former director for 24 yrs) | Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls (St. Francis Music School) | Little Falls |
| Jess Wollschlager | Payroll/Personnel Coordinator | Johnson Memorial Health Services | Dawson |
| Gail Schlimme | Activities Director | Johnson Memorial Health Services | Dawson |
| Steph Simonson | Activities Staff | Johnson Memorial Health Services | Dawson |
| Amanda Redepenning | Director of Nursing and Older Adult Services | Johnson Memorial Health Services | Dawson |
| Darcy Berus | Foundation Relations Manager | Minneapolis Institute of Art | Minneapolis |
| Elizabeth Callihan | Director of Multi-generational Learning | Minneapolis Institute of Art | Minneapolis |
| Jamie Schwaba | Managing Director | MN Conservatory for the Arts | Winona |
| Mary Finnerty | Education Director | Park Square Theatre | St. Paul |
| Faye Price | Co-artistic Director | Pillsbury House + Theatre | Minneapolis |
| Larry Weinberg | Executive Director | Rumriver Art Center | Anoka |
| Susan Yee | Director | Rumriver Art Center | Anoka |
| Karl Reichert | Executive Director | Textile Center | Minneapolis |
| Tracy Krumm | Director of Artistic Advancement (also teaching artist) | Textile Center | Minneapolis |
| Kaitlin Kelly Benedict | Education & Outreach Director | TU Dance Center | St. Paul |
| Abdo Sayegh Rodriguez | Managing Director | TU Dance | St. Paul |
| Mary Coulter | Foundation Marketing Manager | Walker Methodist – Highview Hills | Lakeville |
| Christine Kelly | Director of Life Enrichment | Walker Methodist – Highview Hills | Lakeville |
| Cathy Schutt | Project Coordinator | Walker Methodist – Highview Hills | Lakeville |

Appendix C: Overall SVA U.S. and SVA MN Survey Findings 2017-2019

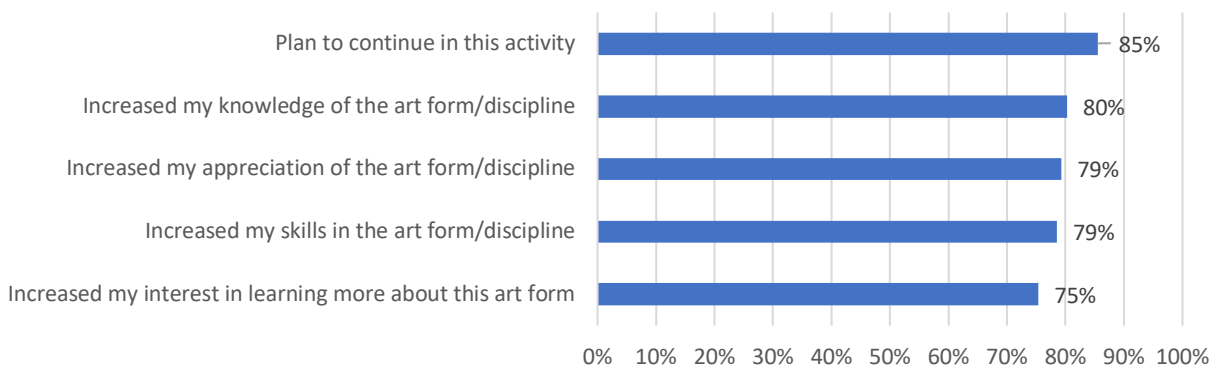
Participants reporting growth in creativity & mental engagement



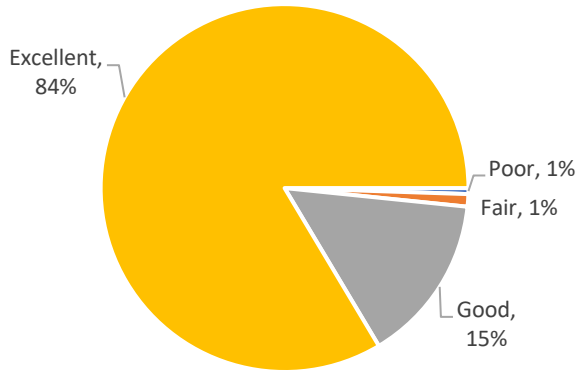
Participants reporting social and physical growth



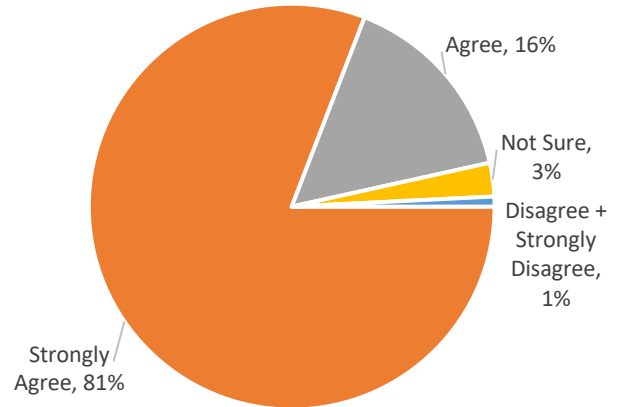
Participants reporting artistic growth



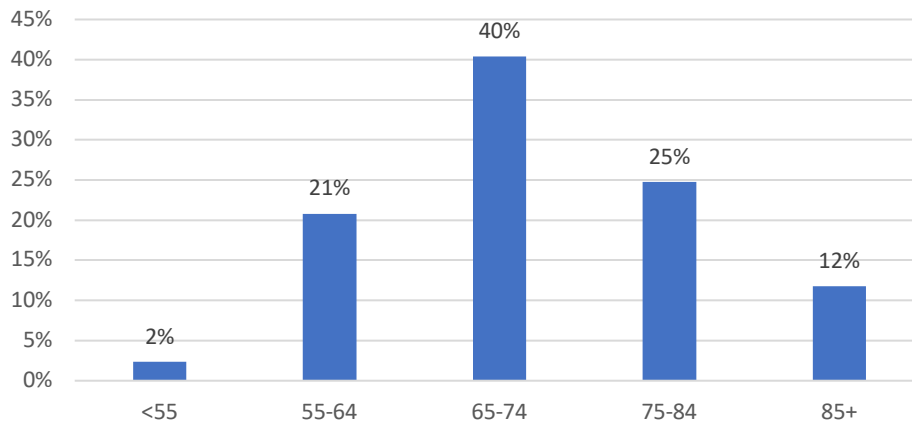
How would you rate the overall quality of this program?



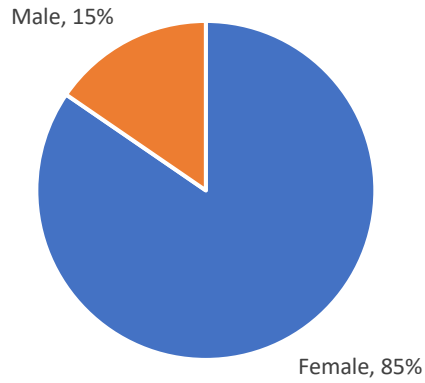
"Our teaching artist was an excellent teacher"



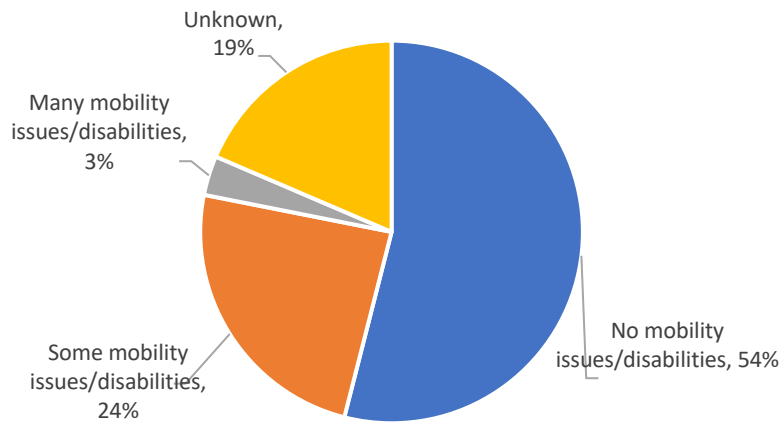
Participant Demographics: Age



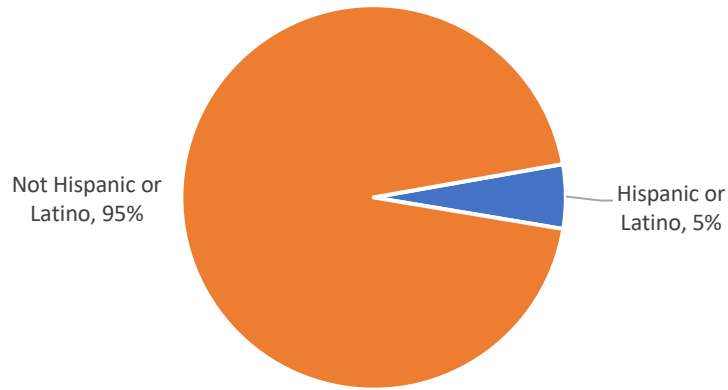
Participant Demographics: Gender



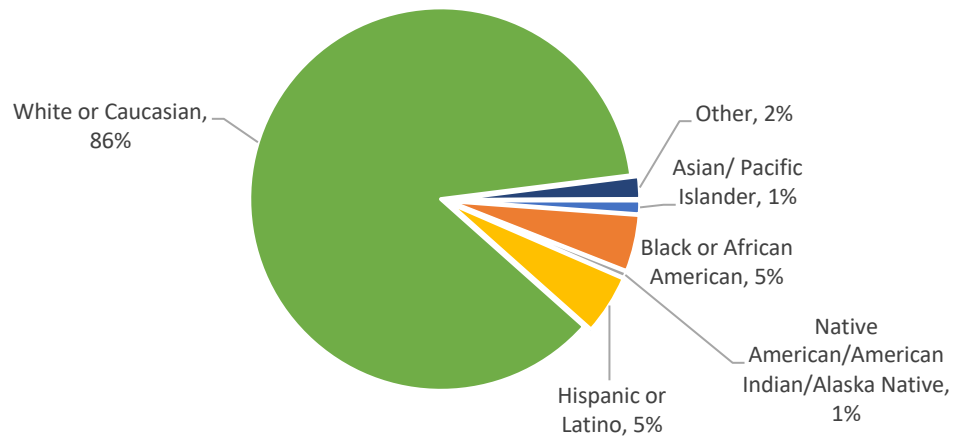
Participants with Mobility/ Disability Issues



Participant Demographics: Ethnicity



Participants Demographics: Race



Appendix D: Outcomes across Diverse Populations and Settings

These findings are based on analysis of 2,187 participant post program surveys from 220 programs conducted by 30 Seeding Vitality Arts organizations, 2017-2019.

Successful with diverse types of older adults

Across different age groups and disability levels

Growth outcomes were strong across all age brackets of older adult participants. They were quite similar among participants between ages 55 and 84. Participants older than 84 were slightly less likely to report growth, though two thirds or more did report growth in eight of the 11 areas queried, and this was the age group that most often said their experience encouraged them to participate in other community activities.

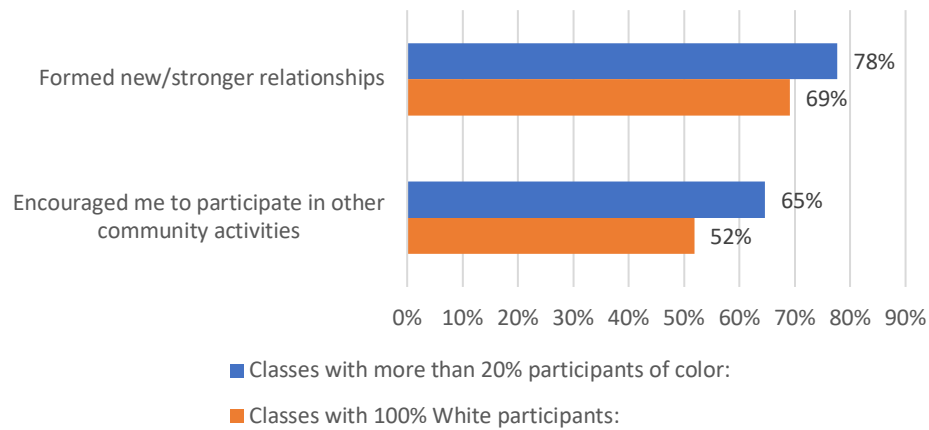
Growth outcomes also were strong across the three mobility/ disability brackets among participants (many, some, or no self-reported mobility issues or disabilities), with some small differences. Higher percentages of those with many mobility issues/ disabilities said their Vitality Arts experience encouraged them to participate in other community activities. They also more often reported increased mental engagement and physical activity as a result of their participation than did those who said they had no or only some mobility issues/ disabilities. People reporting some mobility issues/ disabilities more often said their Vitality Arts experience increased their interest in learning about other art forms.

Across racial and gender identities

Survey data show Vitality Arts programs are effective among racially diverse participants. Participants of color reported outcomes similar to or slightly better than did white participants across all 11 categories of growth. Some programs sought to increase racial and ethnic participation through partnerships with organizations that served more diverse groups. Organizations located in racially diverse neighborhoods enrolled participants reflecting the local population. Interestingly, our data, though somewhat limited, found that in programs that enrolled at least 20% people of color, participants more often said that they formed new or stronger relationships and that their program experience encouraged them to participate in other community activities, as shown in Figure 17.⁹

⁹ Data drawn from the US and MN cohorts in 2018 and 2019. Fifteen programs reported at least 20% participants of color, with ranges from 23% to 100% participants of color. Sixty-four programs reported 100% white participants during that same time frame.

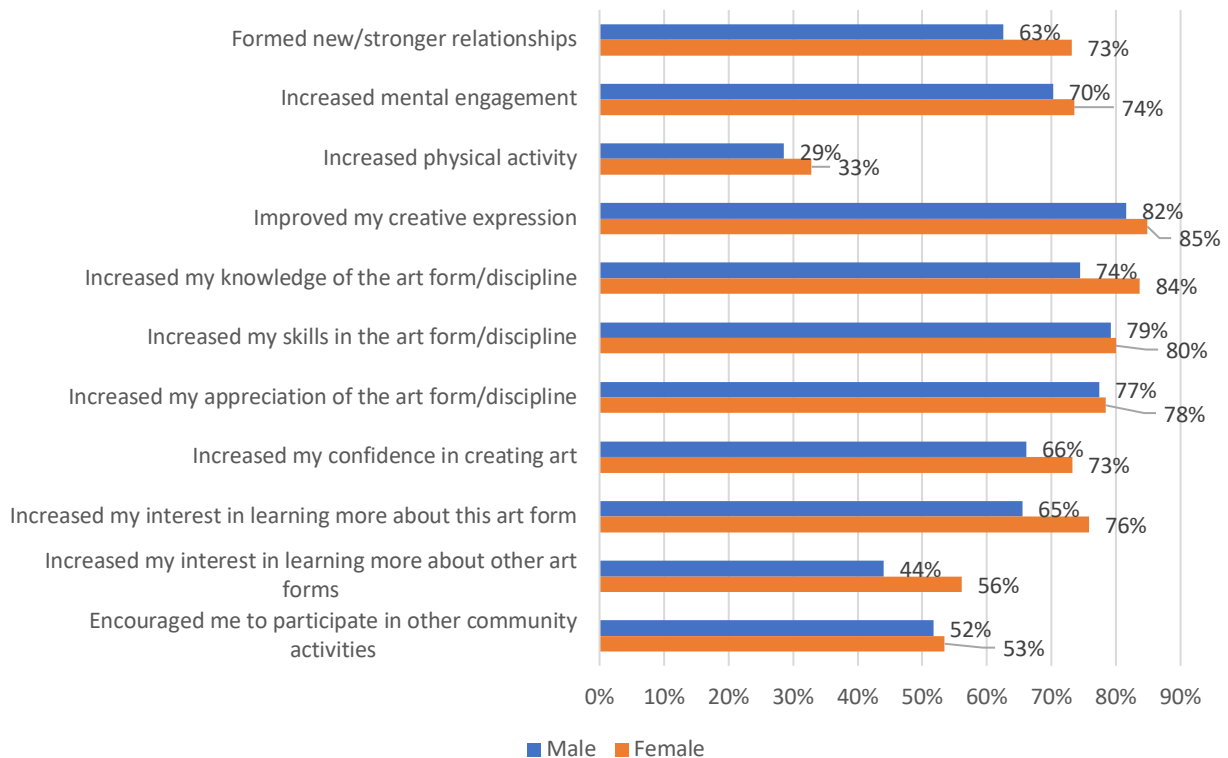
Figure 17: Social outcomes in programs with greater racial/ethnic diversity



Similarly, survey data indicate successful outcomes regardless of gender. However, male participants were slightly less likely to report growth across all 11 areas when compared to female participants, as shown in Figure 18. Notably, 11% fewer male participants reported forming new/stronger relationships as a result of participation than did female participants. This difference may reflect the lower rate of enrollment for males in SVA programs. From 2017 through 2019, male participants made up 15% of total participants.

Several coordinators noted that in some workshops, women easily formed strong bonds, perhaps giving the perception that male participants were “outside” the tightly knit subgroup. This may reflect women’s long-time experience forming social relationships rather than any intention to leave men out. The imbalance of men and women in programs may also be a deterrent for more men to join. Regarding how to engage more men in Vitality Arts programs, data also suggest that the choice of art form may increase the number of male participants. Men most often enrolled in literary and performing arts programs, and least often in textile arts programs.

Figure 18: Outcomes by gender



Successful in diverse settings

Program results were strong in all regions of the country, according to the limited data from these 28 organizations (seven in the Northeast, two in the Southeast, 17 in the Midwest, two in the West). They also were similar whether the programs occurred in large cities, small cities, suburban or rural settings.

Whether programs were located at arts or cultural organizations, senior residences, community centers, or in skilled care facilities or elder day activity centers, participant growth was similar – with some small differences. Program participants at skilled care and elder day activity facilities most often reported increased mental engagement, physical activity, confidence in creating art, interest in learning more about other art forms, and that their experience encouraged them to participate in other community activities. They were least likely to report growth in knowledge or skills in the art form taught, though over two thirds did say they had grown in these areas. Growth in art form knowledge and skills was reported most often by participants in programs located at art or cultural organizations.

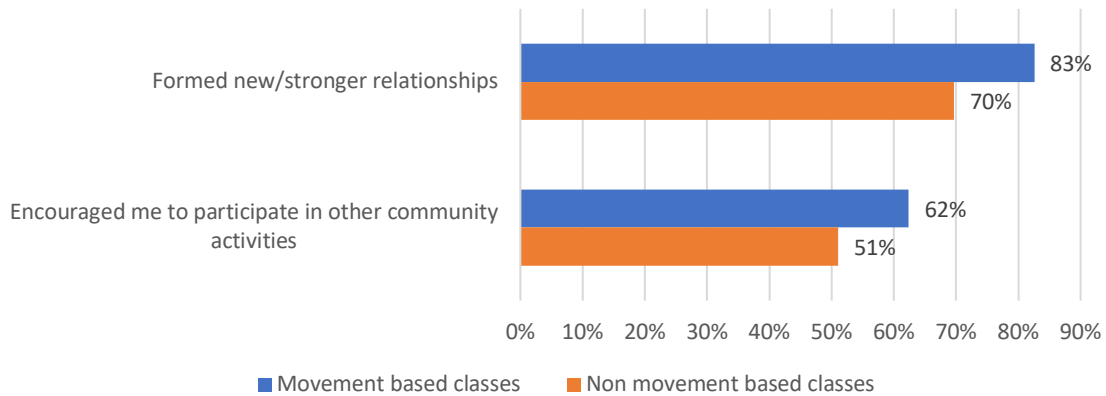
Successful in diverse art forms

This program model worked well in all art forms offered. Participant outcomes were broadly similar across the many different art forms taught in these two cohorts.

One nuance in these findings, however, is that dance and movement classes were slightly more successful in achieving positive social outcomes than were other art forms, as shown in Figure 19. We would speculate that mustering the personal vulnerability and courage required to express one's art

bodily among other people, and the supportive responses to this from fellow participants, helps to build bonds and increase people’s confidence about participating in other community activities. Dance and movement class participants also were most likely to report increased physical activity, not surprisingly.

**Figure 19: Percentage of participants who reported social growth:
dance vs. other art forms**



Comparing participant survey results among the five art form categories of visual, performing, literary, textile and combined art forms reveals a few small differences. Growth was most common in visual arts programs (on average across the 11 growth areas queried, 73% of these participants reported growth), followed by textile (71%), combined (70%), performing (65%) and literary (62%) arts programs. However, literary program participants most often said their mental engagement had increased (79%). Participants in combined art form classes most often reported forming new/ stronger relationships (79%). Improved creative expression was reported most commonly among combined and among visual arts programs (89% in each). Textile arts participants most often said they had increased their skills in and appreciation of the art form studied (87% in both).

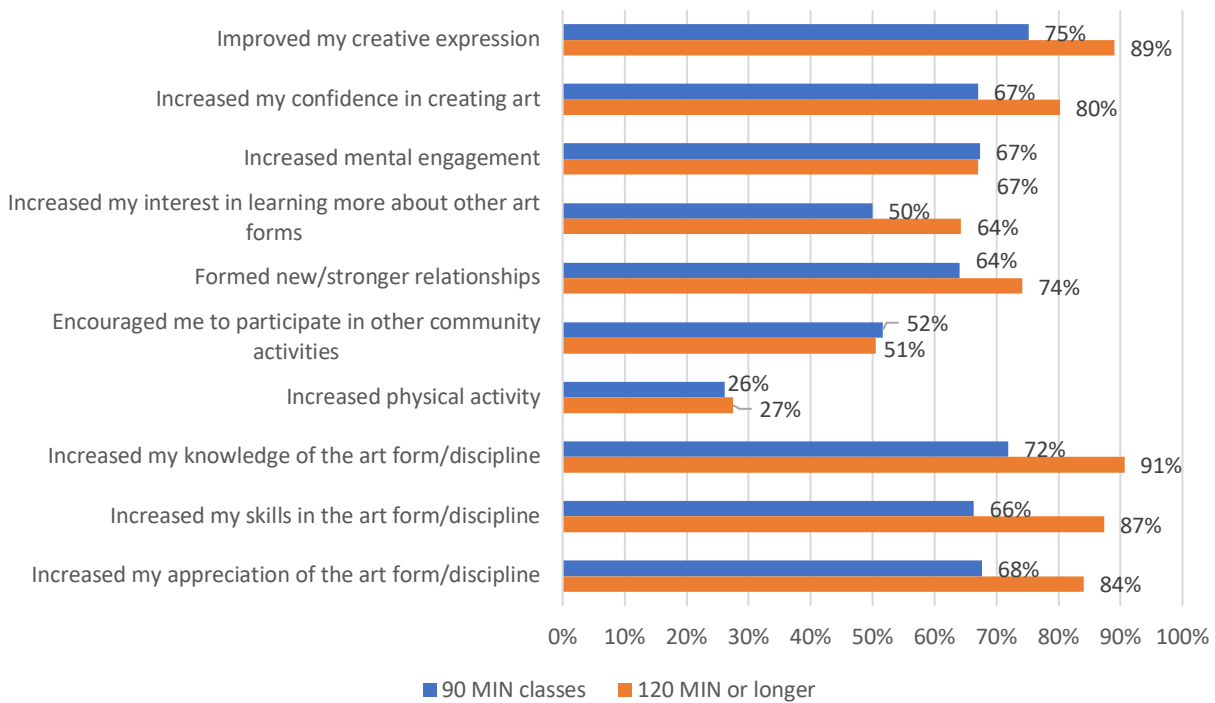
More successful with more or longer sessions

While very good participant outcomes were achieved by programs with eight sessions of 90 minutes, outcomes were even better for programs with longer sessions or more than eight sessions.¹⁰ Programs with sessions that were two hours long had notably higher percentages of participants reporting artistic growth in all seven dimensions queried. Higher percentages also said they formed new/ stronger relationships, as shown in Figure 20.

Longer sessions did not correlate with significantly more participants reporting increased mental engagement, increased physical activity, or feeling encouraged to participate in other community activities.

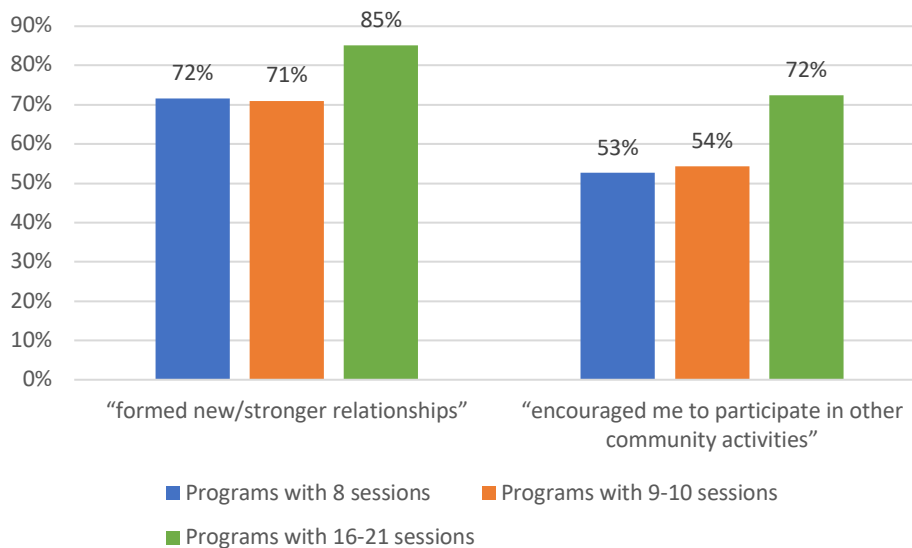
¹⁰ Data on session length was collected from the 53 programs in SVA MN 2019 only.

Figure 20: Participants reporting growth in workshops of different session lengths



When programs contained 16 or more sessions, notably higher percentages of participants reported that their experience encouraged them to participate in other community activities and that they formed new/ stronger relationships. Programs with nine or 10 sessions, compared to those with only eight sessions, were more likely to have participants report feeling encouraged to participate in other community activities, but were similar to the eight-session classes in the percentage of participants who said they formed new or stronger relationships through their program experience.

Figure 21: Social outcomes for programs with differing numbers of sessions



Appendix E: Seeding Vitality Arts MN 2019 Evaluation Instruments

The following data collection instruments were used in SVA MN in its final year. Additional evaluation instruments and guidelines are in the SVA MN and SVA U.S. Evaluation Toolkits, available on request from Touchstone, Aroha or Lifetime Arts.

Post-Program Participant Survey

Date: _____

Organization Name: _____

Program Title: _____ Teaching Artist: _____

Your Name (optional) : _____

Please take a few minutes to give us your feedback about this Seeding Vitality Arts program. Your responses will be carefully considered in planning for future programs. All demographic data is anonymized when used for program analysis.

1. Demographics (optional)

Age:

☐ <55

☐ 55-64

☐ 65-74

☐ 75-84

☐ 85+

Ethnicity:

☐ Hispanic or Latino

☐ Not Hispanic or Latino

Gender Identity:

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Non-binary

☐ Prefer to self-describe: _____

Race (check all that apply):

☐ American Indian/Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Black or African American

☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

☐ White

☐ Other: _____

Mobility Issues/Disabilities:

☐ I have no mobility issues/disabilities

☐ I have some mobility issues/disabilities

☐ I have many mobility issues/disabilities

2. In what areas did you experience growth as a result of your participation in this program?

(check all that apply)

☐ Formed new/stronger relationships

☐ Increased mental engagement

☐ Increased physical activity

☐ Improved my creative expression

☐ Increased my knowledge of the art form/discipline

☐ Increased my skills in the art form/discipline

☐ Increased my appreciation of the art form/discipline

☐ Increased my confidence in creating art

☐ Increased my interest in learning more about this art form

☐ Increased my interest in learning more about other art forms

☐ Encouraged me to participate in other community activities

☐ Other; Please specify:

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|----------------------|----------|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| a. The workshop's physical space promoted learning and creativity. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <i>If you disagree or strongly disagree, please explain what could be improved:</i> | | | | | |
| b. Our teaching artist was an excellent teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. Our teaching artist had excellent group management skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. Our teaching artist provided excellent help when asked. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Our teaching artist gave me confidence that I could make choices about learning and creating art for myself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. I would recommend this program to a friend or family member. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. As a result of this program, I plan to continue in this activity. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please explain:

3. How would you rate the overall quality of the program?

☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

4. We welcome any further thoughts or comments you would like to share!

Thank you!

Culminating Event Audience Survey

Date: _____

Organization Name: _____

Program Title: _____

Please take a few minutes to give us your feedback about this Seeding Vitality Arts culminating event. Your responses will help improve future programs. All demographic data is anonymized when used for program analysis.

1. Demographics (optional)

Gender Identity:

- ☐ Male ☐ Female
☐ Non-binary ☐ Prefer to self-describe: _____

Age:

- ☐ 0-18 ☐ 19-34 ☐ 35-54 ☐ 55-74 ☐ 75+

2. How did you hear about the event?

- ☐ Participant ☐ Organization staff ☐ Television/Radio ☐ Email
☐ Friend ☐ Flyer ☐ Facebook ☐ Website
☐ Family member ☐ Newspaper ☐ Twitter ☐ Other

3. Did you come to see a participant in the program?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, did the participant seem to acquire new skills?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Do you understand the purposes of this program?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Please rate the following statements based on your experience of this event.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|----------------------|----------|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| I was completely absorbed by the event. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It got me thinking about things differently. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| This event sparks my interest in art making. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I'm really glad I came. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

6. Did this event expand your view of older adults' capabilities?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why or why not? (If you need more space, please use the back of this form.)

Thank you for your feedback!

- ☐ Please add me to your mailing list! (please include name, email, and/or address)

Coordinator Post-Program Report

(to be completed on-line by coordinator at the conclusion of each workshop series)

1. Briefly describe your program.
2. How many sessions were included (not including the culminating event)?
3. How many people enrolled?
4. How many people completed the sessions?
5. Did you establish a waiting list? (Yes/No)
 - 5a. If yes, how many people were on the waiting list?
 - 5b. How many people eventually moved from the waiting list into the workshop?
6. Ages of the participants (circle all that apply)
 - a. <55
 - b. 55-64
 - c. 65-74
 - d. 75-84
 - e. 85+
 - f. Other (please specify)
7. What feedback did you receive from the participants? (You may refer to the Post-Program Participant surveys for feedback.)
8. Based on your observations, what were the noteworthy outcomes for participants?
9. Briefly describe the culminating public event.
10. How many people attended the culminating event (not including the participants)?
11. Roughly what percentage of the event audience was aged 50 or older?
12. How did audience members describe their experience? (You may refer to the Audience Participant Survey.)
13. What did you learn about planning and carrying out the culminating public event?
14. In coordinating this program, what worked well and why?
15. What challenges did you face and what will you do differently next time?
16. Please share any other reflections or questions from your experience in this program.

Thank you!

Program Coordinator/Administrator Final Interview Guide, 2019

Introduction

Provide an overview of what we hope to learn: 1) General reflections of programs in the second year; 2) your thoughts about impact of the program on individuals, on your organization and your community; 3) your plans and thoughts for this kind of programming into the future.

Key experiences and memories

1. Tell me about your Seeding Vitality Arts workshops in this second year.
 - a. Did you make any modifications in the second year (If so, please describe) What were the results of these changes?
 - b. Were there any new challenges this year?
 - c. What have been some of the memorable aspects.
 - d. What examples of individual change or areas growth among participants stand out for you?
 - i. Artistic development
 - ii. Social connection
 - iii. Overall vitality (e.g. confidence, excitement)
 - iv. Other?
 - e. What seemed to support or hinder community building in these workshops?
2. Describe the culminating events.
 - a. Did you make any changes in the way you organized culminating events in the second year? (If so, what were the results?)
 - b. Who came to these events? What were their responses? Were there any new audiences this year?
 - c. How did the participating students respond?
 - d. What lessons would you share with others about carrying out the public event?
 - e. What do you see as the benefits to your organization (and your partners, if any) of doing these culminating events?
 - f. Did you identify any potential leaders or advocates among the participants to help spread the word or participate in fundraising? What assistance would help these potential advocates be most effective?
 - g. Do you have any thoughts/suggestions about how to use the public event to further the organization's strategic plan? (e.g. who to invite; where to hold the event; how to advertise it)
 - h. Did you hear or note a demand from the general community regarding interest in more programming of this kind?

Lessons in working with partners

3. If you partnered with another organization, please describe the roles each played (sort: outreach; facility; programming; financial).
4. Was this partnership new to your organization? If so, how did you identify the partner?
5. What benefits did this partnership bring? *Including:* Did it add to increased diversity of participants?
6. What were the challenges; how did you navigate the them?
7. Are there plans to continue with this (or other) partner(s) in art-making programs for older adults?
8. What advice would you give to others interested in working with a partner?

Outcomes for your organization

9. How would you describe the impact this Vitality Arts experience is having, if any, on your department/organization?
 - a. Have new areas of programming for older adults developed? (Examples?)
 - b. Has this programming led to engagement with new audiences? (Examples?)
 - c. Have new or stronger organizational partnerships formed? (Please describe)
 - d. Has this programming led to new opportunities/approaches to fundraising?
 - e. What would you say about the amount of staff time and skill required for successful implementation (including evaluation tasks)?
10. In all, how would you describe the fit (or lack of) with your organization's culture? Do you think VA had an impact on the culture? If so, how would you describe it?
11. Have there been shifts (changes) in the way staff view Vitality Arts? (View programming with older adults in general?)
 - a. Thinking about a wider group of staff members – those not directly involved with Vitality Arts, have you noted any curiosity or changes in their interest/support?
 - b. To what extent do you think the culminating events helped shift perceptions? (Explain.) What ideas do you have about maximizing leverage of these events?
12. Do you think Vitality Arts has helped address your organization's strategic plan or organizational mission in any way? (please explain) How well does it align with organizational priorities?

13. What shifts, if any, have you seen in your organization's capacity and commitment for this kind of programming:
- how you and other staff view the mission or role in the community, and/or in how you view or do your jobs (e.g. shifts in identity/vision, growth in skills, knowledge, relationships, etc.)
 - Shifts in how your organization promotes or supports this kind of programming – any new policies, structures, resources, incentives, etc.? (Consider: outreach, marketing, professional development, documentation, program evaluation)
 - What plans, if any, does your organization have to embed arts programming for elders in regular programming?
 - What commitments do you have from your board and top leadership? What's their level of ownership for continuing this? What steps are they taking or planning?
 - What funding resources (if any) do you have in place for the future?
(Get names and \$ amounts, if possible)
How were you able to attract these?
(Listen/probe for their plans to charge fees as a revenue strategy)

Building sustainability and spreading the word

14. What has been your experience in cultivating support for sustained programming?
(Explore the following)
- Partner organizations
 - Local foundations
 - Continued organizational funding
 - Individual donors and grassroots fundraising
 - Area Agency on Aging
 - State level support – esp. arts councils)
15. Are there challenges related to your organization's' sustainability of this project that you have not yet been able to address? (Please describe)
16. Have you been able to establish links with other grantees or participated in events sponsored by Next Ave or other community events? (If yes, please describe.)
What benefits do you see in making these connections?
17. Have you participated in any regional or national gatherings or made presentations re: VA programming?
- What receptivity to creative aging programming are you perceiving in your professional and institutional networks?
18. Would you point to anything that may suggest a change in the dominant narrative about stereotypes of aging?

Lifetime Arts and Aroha Services/Resources and Touchstone

19. Looking back from this time, what have you appreciated most about Lifetime Arts' assistance? What has been most useful about their materials, training, coaching, etc.?
20. Have you used the videos available through the Aroha website? If so, in what context and to what effect?
21. What suggestions, if any, do you have for how Lifetime Arts and Aroha can be more effective at promoting and assisting this kind of role and programming for other organizations similar to yours? (Were there any gaps, mistakes, or rough edges in Lifetime Arts' performance? How might LA do better?)
22. Looking forward are there any topic areas that would be beneficial to you that might be addressed at a convening or in webinar or another format? (e.g. assistance in developing funding strategies, developing new partners)
23. What has been helpful about the evaluation support provided by Touchstone?
24. What suggestions or feedback regarding how the evaluation component could be improved for future initiatives like this?
25. Have you participated in Basecamp communications with peers? If yes: what difference, if any, has it made for you? How effective is this internet tool in creating a supportive cohort?
 - a. What ideas do you have for strengthening peer connections and mutual support among organizations doing Vitality Arts-type programming?

Finally

26. If there is to be a convening of MN programs next year, what topics would be most helpful to explore?
 - a. Would you be willing to help plan such a gathering?
27. What recommendations do you have to others considering this kind of programming?
28. Given the overarching goals of Seeding Vitality Arts – to seed more SVA programs, to build organizations' capacity to do so, and to inspire others to change the narrative about older adults and their capabilities – what do you think are the most important next steps to take, whether by field leaders such as yourself, or by Lifetime Arts, Aroha or others?



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