



ARTS FOR THE AGING



“You have some talented and compassionate teaching artists that work with our senior population.”

- Jackie McCord, Therapeutic Recreational Leader, Alexandria Adult Day Services Center

Creative Connections Project Guide 2023-24

Sponsored by Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services



DHHS
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Department of Health
and Human Services

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS PROJECT

Arts for the Aging is partnering with Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services to provide participatory arts programming that fosters engagement, self-expression, and socialization for older adults and their caregivers. This pilot project continues through September 2024. Selected long-term care communities in Montgomery

County, MD each will receive a series of four workshops, sponsored through funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, to alleviate the negative health effects of social isolation, and to increase artful, therapeutic connection for older adults (age 60+) and caregivers.

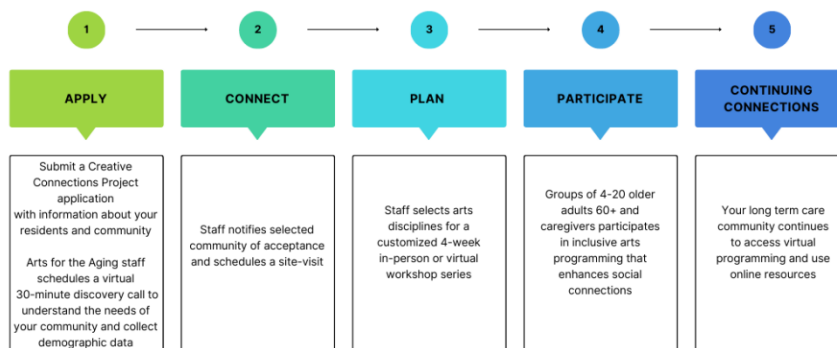
“We had a blast! It was heartwarming to see joy and smiles on the faces of the residents as they clapped, danced, and sang.”

— **Augusta Sannoh, Resident Counselor III, Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission, Arcola Towers**

Together with long-term care communities, Arts for the Aging will co-create multidisciplinary,

participatory, and inclusive arts programming tailored to client and participant needs. Workshops will be facilitated by trained and skilled Arts for the Aging Teaching Artists. This project will reach 300-400 unduplicated participants across 30-40 long-term care communities in need of programming--communities historically underserved or that don't otherwise have access to these kinds of creative aging programs. The workshop series can take place both in-person and virtually, and includes visual, performing, and literary arts disciplines. All communities selected for participation may access Arts for the Aging resources on how to use the arts to engage residents and build social connection, and those with staff capacity and available technology additionally may access monthly Arts for the Aging virtual programs.

Creative Connections Project



Arts for the Aging History and Mission (Who We Are)



Arts for the Aging was founded in 1988 by renowned artist, scientist, and philanthropist Lolo Sarnoff when she was 72. Her vision for the organization grew out of her work with the National Institutes of Health which showed that art-making lessened agitation and improved moods and behaviors in people with Alzheimer’s disease. Today, we are a nationally

recognized model in the growing field of creative aging with a vision to demonstrate excellence in multidisciplinary, participatory, and inclusive arts programming for older adults and caregivers with diverse abilities and backgrounds. As a regional human services provider in Greater Washington D.C. we engage older adults, family and professional caregivers, professional artists, community partners in aging services, cultural and academic institutions, volunteers, and intergenerational collaborators in the therapeutic joys of artistic self-expression. A faculty of trained professional teaching artists with diverse arts disciplines and backgrounds lead our programs.

Arts for the Aging is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization funded through grants, donations, and workshop fees. Our mission’s reach is focused especially on providing financial aid opportunities for underserved community and residential care settings; client groups that wouldn’t otherwise have access due to affordability and availability.

Value and Program Features (What We Do)

Arts for the Aging was founded on a premise, which scientific studies now prove, that regular participation in the arts helps to minimize health conditions in aging, and contributes to better physical, intellectual, and emotional health. Our services are comprehensive, diverse, and customized. This allows our clients, community and residential care



settings—adult care centers, community centers, senior centers, memory cafés, continuing care retirement communities, senior living, and affordable housing communities—to focus on the delivery of safety-net services, activities of daily living, and occupational and physical therapies. By providing a frequent source for high-quality arts interventions—those designed to engage creative expression, inspire empathy and respect, foster communication and belonging, and promote social connection—Arts for the Aging offers reliable and cost-effective therapeutic innovations that minimize strains on health and economic resources and maximize well-being and productivity in older adults and caregivers.

Caregivers, Clients, Teaching Artists, and Staff (How We Do It)



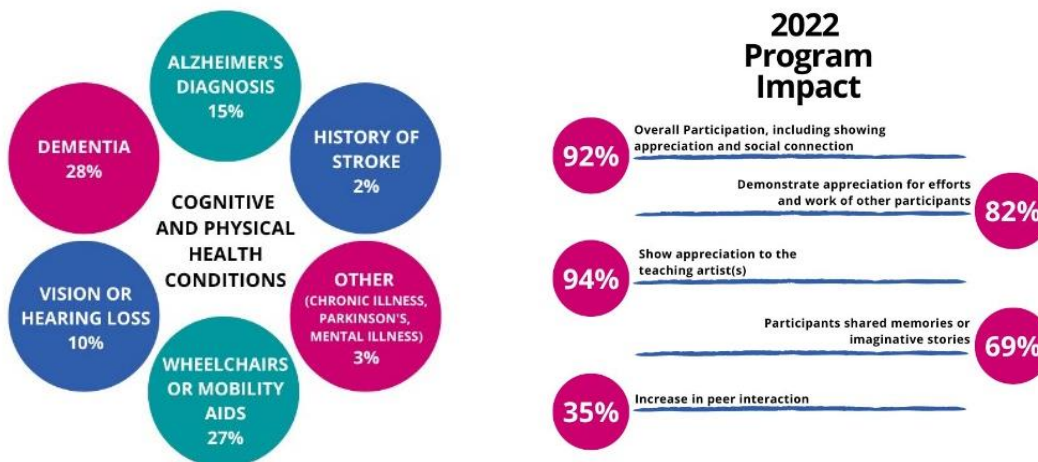
Arts for the Aging’s participatory workshops are designed to engage older adults and caregivers in artistic self-expression. Workshop curricula includes drawing, painting, music, singing, creative writing, storytelling, expressive arts, poetry, dance, photography, creative movement, and theatre. The organization offers these services by supporting professional artists as teaching artists. All Arts for the Aging Teaching Artists are trained in our creative aging best practices and programming to

support healthy aging and caregiving. Our program director oversees communications and scheduling with clients, community partners, and teaching artists for a streamlined process and a positive, collaborative experience.

Program Evaluation and Impact (How Does it Work?)

Arts for the Aging conducts pre- and post-workshop evaluations of all workshops, both in-person and virtual. These allow us to measure the direct impact of our programs. Below is the report of data collected from 346 multidisciplinary artist-led programs taking place over a 12-month period in 2022 at 40 client locations in Greater Washington D.C.

During the Creative Connections Project we will evaluate the effectiveness of our programming through surveys of the participants and caregivers. These may include follow up surveys one month or more after the four-week series to determine the long-term benefits and whether the programming reduced the effects of social isolation.





Teaching Artists (Who leads the programs?)

Workshops are customized by an experienced artistic faculty proficient in diverse specialties, trained in our best-practices, and paid to facilitate group workshops. Arts for the Aging Teaching Artists are professional working artists in a variety of art forms including dance, music, singing, visual art, art history, creative writing, storytelling, poetry, photography, expressive arts, musical theatre, and theatrical improvisation. [Learn more about our teaching artist faculty.](#)

Application (How do we get involved in the project?)

Arts for the Aging is seeking applications from communities including group homes, nursing homes, and other long-term care communities for individuals 60 and older.

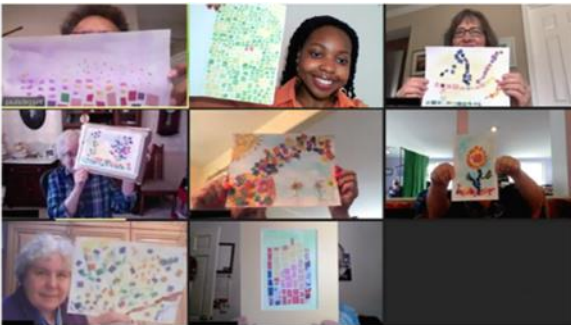
Qualified applicants will be long term care communities for older adults that show a demonstrated need in the following areas:

- Limited opportunities for social connection between residents and with the outside community;
- Limited budget and resources for multidisciplinary, participatory, inclusive arts programming led by trained artists.

[If your community meets these qualifications, please fill out an application here](#)

Join the Creative Connections Project to help alleviate the effects of social isolation. The self-expression and socialization ignited by our programs spark imagination and memory, lift spirits, and create social bonds integral to happiness, vitality, and good health.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q. When will I hear if our application was selected?

A. You should receive an acknowledgment that we received your application within 48 hours of submission. Final decisions will be made within two weeks of submission.

Q. How much staff time will be required for this project?

A. Plan on six to ten hours of staff time to support your participation in the Creative Connections Project. This includes application time, site visit, planning the workshop schedule, attending and supporting the workshops, and completing evaluations on the effectiveness of the programming.

Q. Can we get more than the project's series of four workshops?

A. Project clients are welcome to join Arts for the Aging's monthly virtual workshops. These are generally scheduled on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 2:00 p.m. (schedules are subject to change). If you are interested in continuing with regular in-person programming, a fee-for-service option with financial aid may be available and arranged through the Arts for the Aging Program Director.

Q. Are there any other eligibility requirements?

A. The Montgomery County funding sponsoring the programs requires that at least four older adults 60+ must be present in programs to fulfill the terms of the project contract.

Before final decisions are made, you will receive a demographic survey that is required to complete. Potential acceptance will be contingent upon completion of the demographic survey because Arts for the Aging's contract with Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services requires that we provide detailed reports about older adults and caregivers reached through this pilot program. Having this information ensures that we have an equitable reach and prioritize communities that do not have regular access to quality participatory arts programming.

For detailed information about the Creative Connections Project, visit the [website](#).
