



ARTS FOR THE AGING

“I believe that art and music feed the soul.
The program today fed mine. I’m very
grateful. Thank you.”

- Penny, participant at Easterseals Adult Day Services

Program Guide 2024-2025

Arts for the Aging History and Mission

Arts for the Aging was founded in 1988 by artist, scientist, and philanthropist Lolo Sarnoff. Her idea grew out of a study she helped conduct with former colleagues at the National Institutes of Health. The study showed that artmaking reduced agitation and improved moods and behaviors in people with Alzheimer's disease. Since then, we have emerged as a pioneering and nationally recognized best-practice leader in the field of creative aging. We are a social service organization that brings the dazzling beauty and therapeutic power of the arts to older adults and their caregivers with diverse abilities and backgrounds —especially communities struggling with isolation, health, and accessibility needs. Our mission's premise is backed by studies showing that regular arts participation can improve physical, cognitive, and emotional health. Arts for the Aging is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization funded through grants, donations, and workshop fees that may include financial aid to qualifying partners.



Program Model



Arts for the Aging delivers professionally led creative aging programs that are multidisciplinary, participatory, and inclusive. They provide equitable access to arts engagements that inspire empathy and respect, foster communication and belonging, and promote social connection. One hour programs take place in group settings of older adults and caregivers affiliated with adult day centers, community centers, senior centers, nursing homes, continuing care retirement communities, senior 'Villages,' memory cafes, and group homes.

Participants can regularly explore a variety of art forms presented by our faculty of teaching artists. We can provide programs as standalone workshops, or as a series of interrelated workshops. Programs also engage community collaborators like museums, cultural, and academic institutions.

We enable our partners in aging, health, arts, and/or education sectors to strengthen safety net services, occupational and physical therapies, and social engagement opportunities, to participate in, study, and model top notch arts interventions, and to engage in interprofessional training and program collaboration. Our quality-based delivery model is comprised of services backed by full-time employees, vetted and trained artistic faculty, workshop assessments, and a consistent feedback loop between Arts for the Aging and partners. Our program director oversees planning and scheduling with partners and teaching artists for a streamlined, tailored process. [Learn more about our team here.](#)

Program Evaluation and Impact

To evaluate the effectiveness of our programs, we measure our impact on older adults' health and quality of life by collecting workshop assessments from participants, caregivers, and teaching artists. We continue to identify new ways to analyze programs and tie our metrics to current research in the field of creative aging. Learn more about our impact and reach in our [2023 Cultural Data.](#)

“One woman could not speak ... When I went to her with my guitar as we were all singing, she looked right into my eyes and smiled the biggest smile...she seemed so happy. This happened every time I went to her. This is what makes it all worthwhile.”

-Arts for the Aging Teaching Artist
Wall Matthews

Program Types

Creative Aging Workshops: In this signature Arts for the Aging program, our professional faculty of teaching artists facilitate therapeutic and customized visual, performing, and literary arts programs. They are available in-person or virtually and engage older adults and caregivers with diverse abilities and backgrounds. They take place with groups of approximately 15-20 participants affiliated with [community and residential care settings](#), and in partnership with [community collaborators](#).



heART Kits: These visual and literary art kits provide materials and instruction sheets with images to guide participants in hands-on art making. The kits are designed for our clients' participants and caregivers and provide a framework for promoting socialization and connection through the arts. Activities are suitable for clients or individuals to use on their own, or in virtual creative aging workshops led by an Arts for the Aging teaching artist.



Caregiver Workshops: Caregiver workshops are designed for groups of approximately 10-15 of our clients' professional and family caregivers. They provide an array of creative aging workshops and practices to help cope with burnout, process stress and emotions in a creative way, and demonstrate replicable, therapeutic arts activities. Arts for the Aging Teaching Artists lead the workshops and provide access to resources to enhance the caregiving experience.

Trainings for Teaching Artists: For organizations wanting to expand their reach and create programs for older adults and their caregivers. Partner with Arts for the Aging to train small groups of professional artist cohorts in creative aging best practices to support healthy aging and caregiving. Curriculum focuses on multi-disciplinary and multisensory approaches for virtual and in-person arts programming for older adults and caregivers with diverse abilities and backgrounds. [Learn more here.](#)

Quicksilver Dance Company: Quicksilver is an improvisational senior dance company sponsored by Arts for the Aging and co-led by teaching artists in dance and music. Company members are 65 and older. They rehearse weekly engaging in the health benefits of regular arts practice. They also present public performances and creative aging workshops with clients and community collaborators. [Learn more here.](#)

“It was a great, fantastic experience, everyone was involved in each of the moments. It was MAGICAL to see how they interacted with the props, music, movement, and voice. The intercultural, Chinese, Filipino, Latin, and USA community, everyone immediately felt connected to each other.”

- Arts for the Aging Teaching Artist
Laura Quiroga

Teaching Artists



Arts for the Aging believes that teaching artists trained in our creative aging best practices and programming support healthy aging and caregiving. Our faculty of 28 teaching artists are proficient in diverse disciplines, trained in our nationally recognized best-practices for facilitating creative aging programs, and they are professionally compensated. Workshops are customized from a curriculum of healing

movement, improvisation, improvisational dance, tango, drawing, painting, music (live drumming, guitar, piano, opera), digital photography, art history, creative writing, storytelling, expressive arts, poetry, musical theatre, collage/mixed media, theatrical improvisation, playwriting, museum outings, and intergenerational workshops. [Meet our teaching artists.](#)

Sample Pricing

Workshop payments subsidize programming for clients in communities in our primary region of service, Greater D.C., that couldn't otherwise access these programs due to affordability, availability, or ability to use such programs. Through your partnership, Arts for the Aging can continue to focus resources to vulnerable communities.

Program Type	Program Cost
Creative Aging Workshops	\$300*
heART Kits	\$30 per kit
Caregiver Workshops	Costs vary, please ask for a quote
Trainings for Teaching Artists	Costs vary, please ask for a quote

**Pricing includes: teaching artist fees for program planning and facilitation, evaluation time, mileage reimbursement, and materials fees. Final costs may vary depending on client needs. Financial aid may be available to qualifying clients. For more information, please email info@aftaarts.org.*



“Our residents experience a sense of accomplishment and pride. It is truly gratifying to witness their joy and satisfaction upon realizing their ability to create something meaningful and beautiful.”

- Claudia Campusano, Life and Leisure Manager at Cohen Rosen House and Landow House