



ARTS FOR THE AGING

Nonprofit Village Impact Award Case Study

The Nonprofit Village awarded **Arts for the Aging** the 2020 Impact Award for small nonprofits. Artist and scientist Lolo Sarnoff established the nonprofit organization in 1988 to bring arts to older adults after a successful pilot with the National Institutes of Health providing arts workshops to persons with Alzheimer’s disease.

Today, Arts for the Aging is a unique organization in its specific dedication to providing multidisciplinary arts programming to older adults and their caregivers. It implements best-practice strategies to engage older adults through art to reduce social isolation and boost their health and well-being. Arts for the Aging is recognized as a leader in the growing field of creative aging due to its innovative practices and regularly shares its methodological approaches and best practices with other nonprofits and practitioners.

Programming and Services



Arts for the Aging offers a range of programming, including its signature program **Joy in Generation**. Through one-hour workshops like “Shake, Rattle, and Roll” or “Marvelous Musicals,” Joy in Generation offers a variety of arts to older adults with mild to moderate physical and cognitive impairments – as well as to their caregivers. Part of its unique approach to bringing arts to older populations centers on its widespread artistic

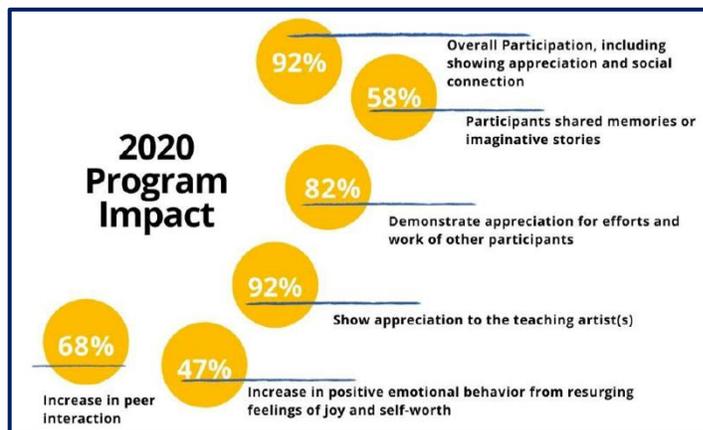
offering and multi-sensorial approach, across art forms.

Caregiver Training programs provide caregivers with tools and tips for recreating therapeutic, multi-disciplinary arts activities in the home. Arts for the Aging also supports caregivers, professional and family in their role, through multi-disciplinary arts activities and practices to promote their own well-being.

Impact and Reach

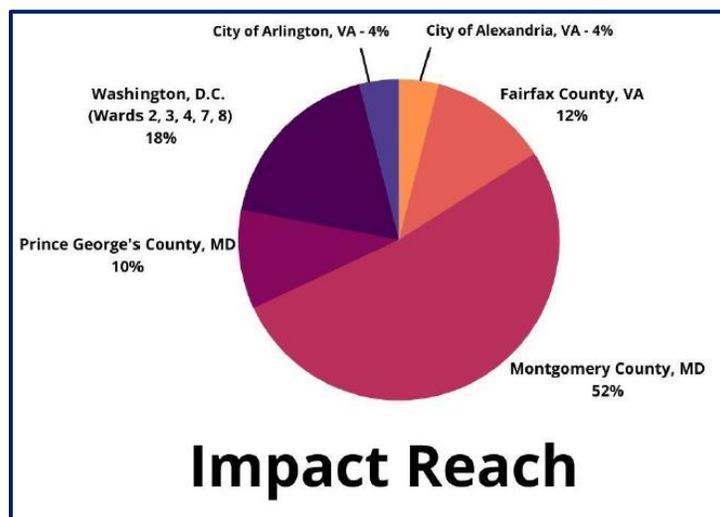
Arts for the Aging has a demonstrable impact on the community and on participants, as reflected in the data it collects; it evaluates its work and the impact of its programs based on nine indicators.

Its work has been recognized at a local and national level, including as a “trailblazer” by the Maryland Department of Aging.



Collaboration

A lot of the work and success of Arts for the Aging can be found in the organization’s ability to leverage community collaboration and partnerships in arts and aging services. Pre-pandemic, the nonprofit was partnering with 49 community and residential care partners in the region. These partnerships contribute both space and enrollment for programs. Partnerships also involve cultural and arts institutions and museums, enriching the program offerings for participants. Recent partners include the Embassy of Argentina, the Alzheimer’s Association of the National Capital Area, and the Washington Chorus.



Scaling up Sustainably and Equitably

Over the last few years, demand has grown for Arts for the Aging's services – as a result, the organization has reevaluated its model and strategized on how to continue to grow in a sustainable way and to diversify funding streams. The organization converted to a fee-based service model with financial aid, which has resulted in an increase in earned income from clients and a strategic shift in mindset focusing more on the value of programs offered. Between January 2018 and May 2019, Arts for the Aging earned \$40,000.

As part of its strategic planning, Arts for the Aging is also reevaluating its policies and programs through an **equity lens**, with the aim to be more intentional and strategic in improving equity as an organization. The widening inequalities brought on by the pandemic and the calls for greater social justice sparked by the breadth of protests for racial equality in 2020 made it imperative for the organization to reevaluate its practices to ensure that internal and external policies were in line with equity goals, and to identify ways in which it could be more diverse in hiring, identifying clients and teaching artists, and recruiting board members. Part of this work has involved equity and diversity education for employees, teaching artists, and board members – this is an on-going process, and Arts for the Aging is committed to the equity journey.

Redefining Services During a Pandemic

Like many other organizations in 2020, Arts for the Aging has had to reevaluate services and redesign programming due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially considering its target population. When the pandemic hit, it continued to support its teaching artists and after a period of readjustment, reestablished its community and artistic offerings in the virtual world. With virtual and pre-recorded workshops or heART Kits, Arts for the Aging has been reaching seniors where they are and maintaining key partnerships with cultural arts partners like the Phillips Collection and the Smithsonian.

In 2020, Arts for the Aging's impact brought 25 teaching artists together with 24 program partners in Greater Washington, D.C., providing therapeutic, multidisciplinary arts workshops, regularly reaching 680 older adults and 114 family and professional caregivers. Finding alternative solutions during the pandemic, Arts for the Aging held their first [virtual exhibition, called](#) Creative Café, showcasing the programs and the art produced by participants with the JCA Kensington Club.

*Thank you to Arts for the Aging for providing these charts.