

What Can Community Arts Programs Do for Young People?

Researchers collaborated with artists and leaders of youth arts programs to see how they can help young people understand themselves and their relationships and pave the way for future opportunities. Interviews have been culled into a set of relational and opportunity outcomes that can serve as a tool for program design and improvement or to advocate for increased support for programs.

Relational Outcomes

Social Bonds	Enduring Relationships with Friends & Mentors 93%	Ongoing Mentoring 75%
		Creative Networks 52%
	Building Community Connections 88%	Fostering Friendships 28%
Self-Awareness & Growth	Arts Family 82%	Additional Supports 73%
		Home-Family Overlap 44%
Safe Spaces	Identity & Interests 97%	
	Skills for Working with Others 78%	
	Cultivating Sense of Wellness 33%	
Occupational Effects	Safety of Expression 46%	
	Physical Safety & Support 32%	
Educational Effects	Pre-Professional Development 83%	
	Exposure to Career Pathways 61%	
	Short-Term Employment in Programs 46%	
	Short-Term Employment through Brokered Connections 42%	
	Long-Term Career in Arts Work 39%	
	Long-Term Career in Non-Arts Work 13%	
Creative Development	Access to Arts & Enrichment 58%	
	Cultural Exposure 58%	
	Access to Education 48%	
	Civic Engagement 36%	
Opportunity Outcomes	Deepen Understanding in Art-Making 94%	
	Collaborating & Exhibiting Work 85%	
	Peak Experiences 59%	

Opportunity Outcomes

Percentages refer to the percentage of interviewees who cited each outcome.

This graphic maps relational and opportunity outcomes identified in the report *Creative Expression, Caring Relationships, and Career Pathways: A Guide to Youth Outcomes in Community Arts Programs*. Peppler, K., Corrigan, S., & Dahn, M., Sefton-Green, J., Nelligan, P., DiGiacomo, D., & Mejias, S. (2025). The Wallace Foundation. <https://doi.org/10.59656/A-YA2685.002>