Arts and Creative Engagement: Successful Programs, Activities and Approaches

December 15, 2021
Webinar Instructions

Audio Options
• Use your computer speakers, OR dial in using the phone number in your registration email.
• All participants are muted.

Questions and Answers (Q&A)
• You can submit questions for the panelists at any time during this presentation. On the Zoom module on the bottom of your screen, click the Q&A icon, type your question in the box and submit.

Chat Feature
• The Chat feature allows webinar attendees, the host, co-hosts and panelists to communicate for the duration of the webinar.
Accessibility

• Screen Reader Users: Reduce unwanted chatter
  – Request speech on demand: Insert, Spacebar, “S”

• To get our attention if you need tech assistance:
  – Raise or Lower Hand: Alt + Y
engAGED

• National effort to increase social engagement among older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers
• Administered by USAging
• 17 Project Advisory Committee members: www.engagingolderadults.org/partnerships
• Funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging, which is part of the Administration for Community Living
Presenters

Sarah House
Program Director, Arts for the Aging

Meghan Young
Associate Director, Opening Minds Through Art, Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University

Luke Rackers
Director of Development and Communications, Central Vermont Council on Aging
Our Mission /
Arts for the Aging engages older adults and caregivers in health improvement and life enhancement through regular participation in the multidisciplinary arts.

Our Vision /
Pioneering arts programming for older adults, Arts for the Aging is a model for excellence in life-long learning and creative aging.

Photographer, Joel Breger
2020 Workshops and Programs

- In-Person Workshops: 98
- Virtual Workshops: 125
- heART Kits: 235
- Older Adults Reached: 680
- Total Older Adult Attendance at All Workshops: 3,011
- Cumulative Virtual Impact Hours per Older Adult: 10.3
- Professional Teaching Artists: 25
In-person Workshops

Slowly Reconnecting
Virtual Programming

Behind the Scenes
heART Kits
Visual Art at Home
Pre-Recorded Programs

Art Experiences on Demand

Arts for the Aging Teaching Artists
Carlos César Rodríguez and Peter Burroughs

Down and shading one side of the nose and above the nostril coming down and there’s shadow underneath my nose.
Creative Aging

Arts and Health
Commitment to Accessibility and Inclusion
"You brighten the day, you make us laugh, you help us sing, and you uplift us!“

- Ms. Betty Rice (participant with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Senior Program in Ward 8, Washington D.C.)
Opening Minds through Art: Connecting the Generations

Meghan Young, MGS
USAging’s engAGED Webinar
December 15, 2021
Overview

1. What is OMA?
2. What do people get from doing OMA?
3. Virtual OMA
4. Adapting OMA
5. How to get Involved
What is OMA?
Opening Minds through Art (OMA)

- An intergenerational art program for people living with dementia
- Developed in 2007
- Replicated at 200+ locations
- 2,476 Miami students since 2008
- Awards
- Research
OMA is inspired by modern, abstract art
An Overview of OMA:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATuvAzJ7VTM&t=1s
What do people get from doing OMA?
Overview of Research

8 published studies (2012-2021)
• 3 on elders
• 5 on students

All show the benefits for everyone
Virtual OMA
Virtual OMA

• Zoom breakout rooms
• Older adults with and without dementia
• Art, music, story building, poetry
• Weekly, 60 minutes
Comments from Older Adult Participants

“I was amazed at the level of sharing and touched by everyone’s authenticity. The students' final project blew me away. We all exchanged phone numbers so we could keep in touch. What an amazing gift this group is.”

“I am so grateful for the opportunity to interact with students and engage in enjoyable activities. The ability to meet through Zoom has been an excellent tether during the pandemic.”

“I found both in form and content our much too brief time together fascinating, surprisingly challenging, and very well presented.”
“I used to think older adults were not able to express creativity as well as younger adults. However, after a couple of sessions, I realized that older adults are just as capable of expressing creativity as anyone else, no matter their age.”

“I think this class has taught me how I will always be working with older adults so I should learn how to listen well, be respectful, and create relationships.”

“She loves to do the activities, and especially likes to tell us stories. Not only that, she likes to hear about our lives too. She is a joy to talk to and I am so glad she is our partner.”
Adapting OMA
During the Fall of 2021, Miami students went to the local senior center and worked with clients.
How to Get Involved

1. Invite clients to **attend our classes**: Free and starts February 2022

2. **Creative Caregiving Guide**: Free and available now

3. Become a **certified OMA Facilitator**: Open to anyone

4. **ScrippsAVID**: Free and available in 2022
Attend our Classes

• Registration will open in **January 2022** for the Spring semester

• **FREE** and open to **all** older adults

• **1 hour** per week for **10 weeks** (February – May)

• **Zoom access** required

• **First come, first served** sign-up

• **Email us** for registration form at ScrippsOMA@MiamiOH.edu
Creative Caregiving Lessons

**Visual art:**
Create beautiful paintings or discuss artwork by famous artists

**Music:**
Create activities around familiar songs

**Dance & movement:**
Create dance movements using familiar songs

**Poetry & language:**
Recite familiar poems and create original poems and stories

Thank you to our Creative Caregiving sponsors and supporters!

https://caregiving.scrippsoma.org/
OMA Facilitator Training

Two formats:

• Fully Online Training with live art-making sessions
• Hybrid training (online training with in-person practicum in Ohio and Virginia)

Cost: $750

“Very well thought out training process with support from OMA leaders are available to continue implementing. The OMA concept down to the small details is well communicated.”
Opportunities for the Future

ScrippsAVID

Arts-based
Virtual
Intergenerational
Dementia-friendly
Thank you!

Meghan Young, MGS

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facebook.com/openingmindsthroughart

@openingmindsthroughart
Creative Aging Initiative
HELLO!

I’m Luke Rackers, Director of Development and Communications at CVCOA and advocate for creative aging to promote healthy aging and enhance social connection.
Creative Aging Description

Creative aging activities promote positive psychological, physical, and emotional well-being through engagement with skills-based, social-centric, and practice-focused creative opportunities.

Creative aging is an important component of healthy aging for those who seek to share, expand, and unlock their capacity for self expression and reflection, meaningful connection, lifelong learning, and personal growth throughout the lifespan.
Why Creative Aging?

Alleviate loneliness and enhance social connection by encouraging ongoing meaningful conversations, a path to self-expression, and connection to community.

A way to emphasize “doing with” rather than “doing for,” encouraging autonomy and independence.

Engage the mind holistically, helping people create meaning and purpose through artistic expression, processing of emotions, storytelling, and lifelong learning.

Utilize multiple areas of the brain and physical processes simultaneously through arts creation and replication, helping to make new connections and improve memory.

Tap into the resource of professional teaching artists who are trained in creative aging best practices to design activities and help others express freely.

Provide a path for participants to develop new skills and mental habits, promote neuroplasticity, and improving overall health and well-being.
Even when we recognize the value of creativity, too often we remain blind to the presence and potential of creativity throughout our life span...
Our vision is clouded most of all by stereotypes, misunderstanding, and ignorance about aging, and then muddled more by stereotypes of creativity as belonging only to the artists’ domain.
Creative Barriers and Blocks

**Habitual**
- Physical, time, and/or financial limitations
- Reluctance to share new ideas or engage in creative thinking

**Perceptual**
- Ageism, and the perception of creativity as frivolous
- Hesitancy to communicate different values or personal needs

**Motivational & Emotional**
- Fear of taking risks, uncertainty, and ambiguity
- Lack of social connectedness and support

**Cultural**
- Traditional roles and social norms
- Cultural desire to protect the status quo
- Communication needs and expectations
Some people have had more opportunity and fewer obstacles in acquiring experience or expertise; some have had the good fortune of ample exposure to positive influence and opportunities...
But it is never too late to benefit from new opportunities and positive influences.
Creative Care Kits

A project providing skills-based, practice-focused, and social-centric creative arts opportunities to homebound older adults.
Providing Creative Motivation

The Cycle of Creative Motivation

- Self-reflection & expression
- Skill-building & practice

Connection to Teaching Artists, Community, & Peers
Project Goals

- Provide a path for ongoing self-expression, reflection, and social connection through creativity
- Alleviate the opportunity gap for homebound older adults
- Showcase and honor the creative work of older adults in the community
- Help bridge the digital divide by providing devices, connection and individualized training
- Facilitate peer to peer engagement and intergenerational storytelling
Pilot Project
Kit Contents
Activities and supplies designed for months of practice
A Very Merry Christmas
A Happy New Year
Love, Nana
75% Answered Yes or Maybe to developing new social connections

65% Answered Yes or Maybe to strengthening existing social connections

97% Indicated their interest in participating again!
Project Pilot and Second Project Round Key Differences

Pilot Project 2020-21

Single kit option, with watercolor activities designed by teaching artists and supplemental activities added for additional interest.

The teaching artists created additional instructional videos toward the end of the project period to inspire continued practice.

Participants were connected with a Creative Companion volunteer who contacted a cohort of 2-5 kit recipients a few times per month to help inspire their creative journey.

Informal virtual art show at the end of the project to highlight creative work of participants.

Second Iteration 2021-22

Two kit options, both containing a primary activity intended to be completed over several months and a supplemental

Kits designed by professional teaching artists trained in creative aging best practices by Lifetime Arts in conjunction with the VT Arts Council.

Group zoom opportunities with teaching artists scheduled in early and mid-winter plus pre-recorded instructional videos.

Creative Companion volunteer connection and open virtual studio sessions optional.

Creative aging community event to showcase work in May!
Teaching Artist recruitment and training. Creative Aging capacity building.

Supply and material ordering, including tech to help bridge the digital divide.

Creative Care Kit delivery and volunteer organizing.

Continued Creative Companion connections and open studio Zoom sessions.

Encourage recipients and volunteers to continue sharing work.

Community event to highlight Creative Aging and the work of older adult artists.

- **JUL**: Activity and resource binder development
- **AUG**: Video production to accompany activities and training materials for volunteers.
- **SEP**: Volunteer training and initial calls by volunteers. First group Zoom session to engage with teaching artists.
- **OCT**: Second group Zoom session with teaching artists. Contact recipients to share work.
- **Nov**: Planning for community event to celebrate and honor the creative work of older adults.
- **Dec**: Document lessons learned, send surveys, and event followup.
Second Iteration
Kit Contents

Activities and supplies designed for months of practice
Features of the Kits

- High-quality supplies and materials to help motivate and inspire
- Resource binders with primary and supplemental activities developed by professional teaching artists trained in creative aging best practices
- Include technology option to encourage and facilitate the sharing of work digitally
- Enough supplies and materials to allow for several months of practice and skill-building
This activity is made possible by a grant provided by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in partnership with Aroha Philanthropies.
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Bridging the Digital Divide

1- iPad Device

2- Individualized tech training through Tech4Tomorrow and CVCOA’s Community Engaged Tech Specialist

3 - Broadband internet connection

If participants are continuing to use the iPad at the end of the project, then can choose to keep it indefinitely!
Volunteer Engagement

Creative Companions and volunteer drivers are the heart of the project.
Volunteer Drivers

Volunteers delivered kits in November before the holiday season, just in time to check in on people and bring some warmth as the cold weather came to Vermont. One volunteer dressed up to provide some extra holiday cheer!
Creative Companions

Creative Companion volunteers courageously embrace the unknown, inspiring kit recipients and motivating them to stay engaged through the project period, continue practicing the skills, and share their work with others. These volunteers play a key role in leading conversations about creativity and the meaning of creative work in their lives.
The Role of Creative Companion Volunteer

- Contact their assigned participants (2-3) a few times per month via phone, video calling, or in person
- Complete the same activities as kit recipients
- Serve to inspire and motivate kit recipients to continue practicing
- Lead meaningful conversations inspired by the creative work
- Encourage kit recipients to share their work for the community event at the end of the project
Voices of Kit Recipients

We asked kit recipients to provide 1-3 sentences about their motivation for engaging in creative activities this fall/winter/spring.
I am always interested in creativity. It’s particularly important now with COVID and the new variant on the loose. We all need good ways to express ourselves.
Mobility issues are making it difficult to get out and about. Rising COVID cases make it less likely that I will want to gather in enclosed spaces...
"I enjoy doing artwork, but I find it most difficult to do in a vacuum."
Help getting through the winter.

I really need this at this time!

Boredom.
I want to write love notes for my wife when we are apart.

I want to watch much less TV!

I love to do things with my hands and mime.
Partnership with Vermont Arts Council

- Training professional teaching artists in creative aging best practices through Lifetime Arts
- Bringing together stakeholders from area agencies on aging, community centers, and arts education organizations
- Sharing sample kits and activities with other area agencies on aging throughout the state to encourage more Creative Care Kit projects
- Building a creative aging resource hub on the Vermont Arts Council website
- Developing a creative aging networking website to bring together creative aging volunteers and aging services professionals
Let’s Get Creative!

How can we continue to uplift creative aging as an integral component of healthy aging?

How can we help older adults overcome creative barriers and blocks, particularly for homebound older adults?
THANKS!

Any questions?
You can find me at lrackers@cvcoa.org
engAGED Resources

- Innovations Hub
- Toolkits and template materials
- Videos
- Consumer brochures
- Newsletter and blog
- Resources and research links
- Information on upcoming events
Connect With Us!

- www.engagingolderadults.org
- Facebook: @engAGEDCenter
- Twitter: @engAGEDCenter
- info@engagingolderadults.org
Commit to Connect

• ACL campaign working to combat social isolation through:
  – Network of champions
  – Connection to resources
  – Establishment of partnerships
  – Sharing of successful initiatives

acl.gov/CommitToConnect
Questions and Discussion

Please submit your questions or comments through the Q&A.
Thank You!

- Please complete the survey which will be displayed in your browser after Zoom closes.
- The recording will be available on [www.engagingolderadults.org](http://www.engagingolderadults.org).
- Thank you for attending today’s webinar!