

Healing Through the Arts, a Project of Mariposa Arts in Partnership with the Delaware Art Museum

Evaluation Report, 2023

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Executive Summary

Vanessa Simon, of Mariposa Arts, launched the “Healing Through the Arts” program with the help of the Delaware Art Museum in 2017, which seeks to use art to help community members from diverse experiences and backgrounds to experience healing. Currently, the program delivers art experiences through 12 partners in greater Wilmington. The program works with a variety of groups including those experiencing cancer treatment, those who have served in the military, or youth exposed to violence or other traumatic events. The University of Delaware CRESA served as an external evaluator for the project during the 2022-2023 year with funding from University of Delaware / Jessie Ball duPont Fund Partnership in Arts & Culture Program.

During the 2022-2023 program year, Healing Through the Arts provided programming to the following participants:

- 971 adults
- 583 youth
- 12 organizational partners
- 7 in-person locations or sites, and 4 online or hybrid sites.

Evaluation Process

The evaluation effort began with the development of a logic model and objectives, along with a framework for the evaluation approach. In addition, an adult survey was developed and administered to program participants (n=36). A youth survey was also created and piloted.

In the Healing through the Arts program, participants described feeling reduced stress and feeling empowered to help manage their mental health with art, despite life’s challenges. Survey data show that:

- When participants were asked to select a word that best describes how they feel when they participate in this program, the most common word was “**relaxed**” (5 of 36 participants)
- 63.9% of participants found that “**When I make art, I feel less stress**”
- 80.6% of participants reported that when they make art with this program, they feel **respected and included**
- 86.1% of participants are **more interested in being creative** since beginning the program

Background

The Delaware Art Museum is a community-minded, historical institution located in Wilmington, DE. Dedicated to an approach centered around community members' healings, the Delaware Art Museum serves individuals with various programs throughout the year, both at the museum and partner sites throughout the city, that allows for community bonding, reflective dialogue, and mental and emotional healing, with the goal being reflecting the needs of each audience.

The Delaware Art Museum launched Vanesa Simon's pilot program, Healing Through the Arts, painting workshops and a community celebration designed to examine the role of creativity in healing. The Healing through the Arts program serves those who have experienced a traumatic event such as cancer patients, and victims of youth violence, social conflict, and adverse childhood experiences. The program provides routine art workshops, both in person and online, in both English and Spanish languages.

The University of Delaware's Center for Research in Education and Social Policy (CRESP) serves as the evaluation partner for Mariposa Arts' Healing through the Arts program, beginning in 2022. CRESP, established in 2016 in order to conduct high quality research and evaluation in the social sciences, worked over the past year with Healing Through the Arts staff and partners to initially design a logic model, and clarify program goals and outcomes as well as to pilot 2 assessment surveys (one for adults and one for youth). The adult survey was ultimately used, and data are provided in this report.

During program development, representatives Vanesa Simon of Mariposa Arts and Rebecca Howell of Delaware Art Museum established nine outcomes, for the Healing Through the Arts program which are reflected on in the subsequent pages of this report. Outcomes include:

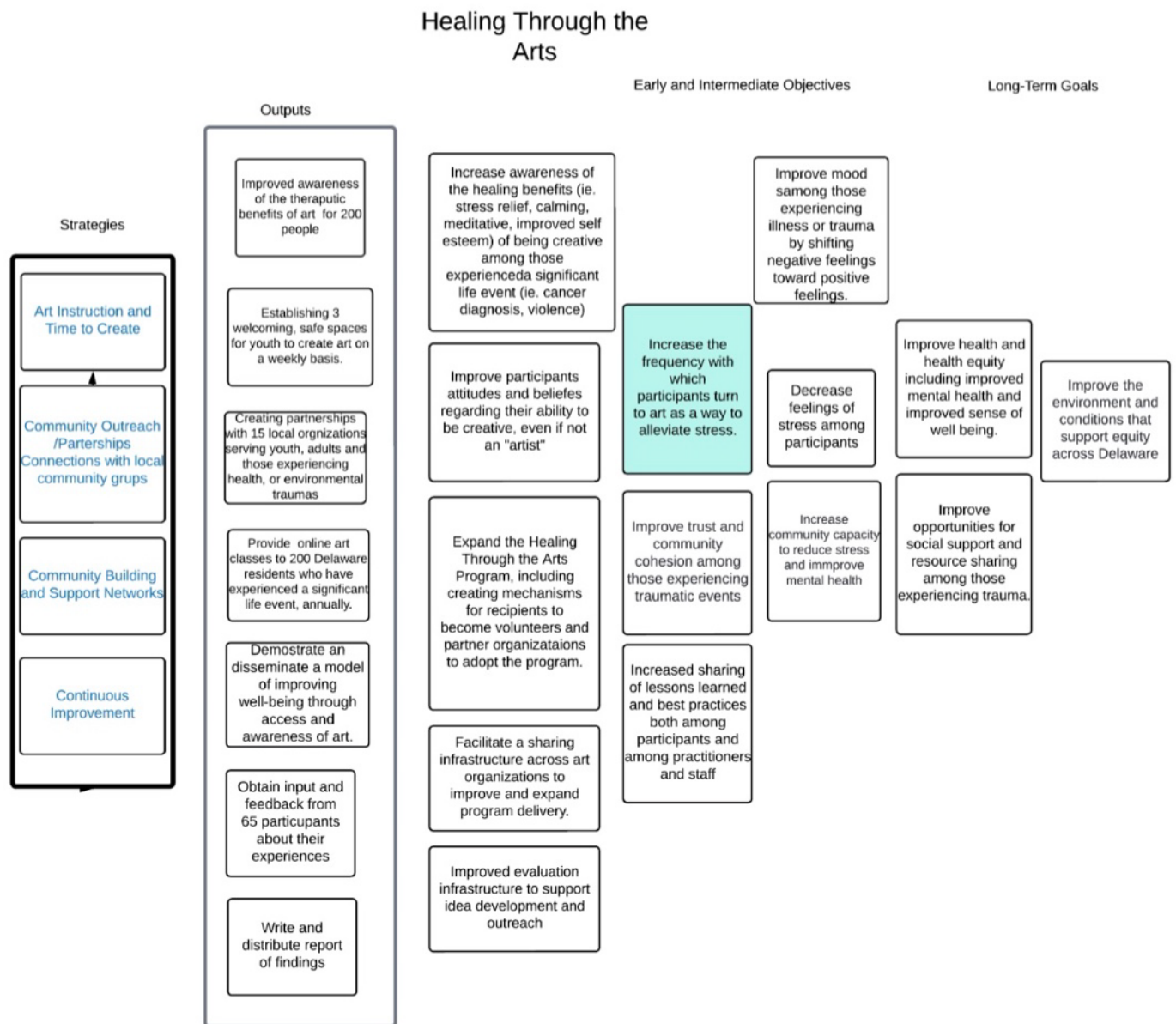
1. Increase awareness of the healing benefits of being creative among those experiencing a significant life event
2. Improve participants' attitudes and beliefs regarding their ability to be creative, even if not an "artist"
3. Facilitate a sharing infrastructure across art organizations to expand program delivery
4. Improved evaluation infrastructure to support idea development and outreach
5. Decrease feelings of stress among participants, and increase the frequency with which participants turn to art as a way to alleviate stress
6. Improve trust and community cohesion among those experiencing traumatic events
7. Improve mood among those experiencing illness or trauma by shifting negative feelings toward positive feelings
8. Increase community capacity to reduce stress and improve mental health

Methods

The following section describes methods related to several activities. In the first year of the evaluation, the project worked to both develop a logic model and establish clarity on key outcomes, as well as to design a survey tool for adult participants and pilot its administration. A second tool for younger participants (10-18) was also developed, and pilot testing is underway.

Logic Model

The following logic model was created through an iterative process, which also drove the development of the survey measure and overall approach. Once the objectives were set, the logic model acted as a framework for the evaluation design. The model assisted in specifying the outputs and objectives, the evaluation, and reporting strategies as they related to qualitative or quantitative data collection.



Survey Tool Development and Administration

Initially, the evaluation team undertook a review of literature^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11} and available survey instruments which appeared to assess similar outcomes.

In order to measure program impacts and processes, as well as progress towards meeting established outcomes, a survey measure was created, reviewed by leaders and tested with a small sample of participants and then used (Appendix A). All program materials and surveys were available to participants in both English and Spanish and are available in this report's Appendices. UD-CRESP and the Delaware Art Museum collaborated on the creation of survey tools November – December 2022.

The Participant Survey tool consists of 7 core questions and 4 demographic questions, and the survey has both Spanish and English versions. This tool was altered for a younger audience, slightly modifying the original language to simplify its content, but it remains a 11 question tool (7 core questions and 4 demographic questions). It has both Spanish and English versions as well. Team members of the Delaware Art Museum administered the survey via a QR code through Qualtrics during four classes, selected for convenience and to capture both English and Spanish speaking participants. Broadly, the survey inquiries about participants' attitudes and beliefs about the Healing Through the Arts program and its effects. The Qualtrics survey was

¹ Hu J, Zhang J, Hu L, Yu H, Xu J. Art Therapy: A Complementary Treatment for Mental Disorders. *Front Psychol.* 2021 Aug 12;12:686005. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.686005. PMID: 34456801; PMCID: PMC8397377.

² Holly Feen-Calligan PhD, ATR-BC & Dana Nevedal MEd (2008) Evaluation of an Art Therapy Program: Client Perceptions and Future Directions, *Art Therapy*, 25:4, 177-182, DOI: [10.1080/07421656.2008.10129544](https://doi.org/10.1080/07421656.2008.10129544)

³ Graham, C., Chattopadhyay, S., Lakhanpal, J.R. (March 2014). Using New Metrics to Assess the Role of the Arts in Well-Being: Some Initial Results from the Economics of Happiness. Available online: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwif08yonYn_AhVhMVkFHbIFCcYQFnoECA0QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.arts.gov%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2FBrookings-Final-Report.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1Etr07wAoQnjWgTGJ3_PKI

⁴ Olson, E., Spade, C., Turbyfill, C. (2020). Arts For Life Final Evaluation Report. N.C. Center for Health and Wellness. Available online: www.artsforlifenc.org

⁵ Girija Kaimal, Carol Ann L. Blank. (2015) [Program Evaluation: A Doorway to Research in the Creative Arts Therapies](#). *Art Therapy* 32:2, pages 89-92.

⁶ Sarah Dorothy Kowitt, Dane Emmerling, Diane Gavarkavich, Claire-Helene Mershon, Kristin Linton, Hillary Rubesin, Christine Agnew-Brune, Eugenia Eng. (2016) [A Pilot Evaluation of an Art Therapy Program for Refugee Youth From Burma](#). *Art Therapy* 33:1, pages 13-20

⁷ Abbing A., Ponstein A., van Hooren S., de Sonnevill L., Swaab H., Baars E. (2018). The effectiveness of art therapy for anxiety in adults: a systematic review of randomised and non-randomised controlled trials. *PLoS One* 13:e208716. [10.1371/journal.pone.0208716](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0208716)

⁸ Matthew B. Feldman, Donna J. Betts, Daniel Blausey. (2014) [Process and Outcome Evaluation of an Art Therapy Program for People Living With HIV/AIDS](#). *Art Therapy* 31:3, pages 102-109.

⁹ Ia G., Atid L., Danos S., Gabay N., Epelbaum R. (2007). Art therapy improved depression and influenced fatigue levels in cancer patients on chemotherapy. *Psychooncology* 16 980–984. [10.1002/pon.1175](https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.1175)

¹⁰ Crone D. M., O'Connell E. E., Tyson P. J., Clark-Stone F., Opher S., James D. V. (2013). 'Art Lift' intervention to improve mental well-being: an observational study from U.K. general practice. *Int. J. Ment. Health Nurs.* 22 279–286. [10.1111/j.1447-0349.2012.00862](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1447-0349.2012.00862)

¹¹ Nainis N., Paice J. A., Ratner J., Wirth J. H., Lai J., Shott S. (2006). Relieving symptoms in cancer: innovative use of art therapy. *J. Pain Symptom Manage.* 31 162–169. [10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2005.07.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2005.07.006)

shared securely between UD-CRESP and the Delaware Art Museum. Feedback was collected online, via University of Delaware Qualtrics link. The University of Delaware was responsible for data analysis and reporting.

An IRB protocol for review by University of Delaware was submitted in the Summer of 2022 and was determined exempt.

Findings

“This program has helped me immensely in my path towards healing. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!” -Healing Through the Arts Participant

Program Participation

The Healing Through the Arts program surveyed 36 adult participants between December 2022 and April 2023. Table 1 presents the participant population’s diverse demographic makeup. Most participants were female (66.7%), Latinx (75.0%), and non white-identifying (52.8%).

Table 1: Healing Through the Arts Participant Characteristics

Demographic and Other Characteristics (n=36)	
Gender	
Female	66.7%
Male	16.7%
Non-binary	5.6%
No Response	11.0%
Ethnicity	
Latinx	75.0%
Not Latinx or Latino	13.9%
No Response	11.1%
Race	
African American	16.7%
White	47.2%
Latino or Hispanic	16.7%
Asian	11.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0%
More than one race	0.0%
No Response	8.3%

Progress towards Outcomes

Overall, participants are very satisfied with the program. Using a Net Promotor Score metric, 31 of 33, or **94% of adults are Healing Through the Arts promoters** and rated the program as a 9 or 10. The remaining 2 respondents rated the program only slightly lower as an 8.

Of the 4 youth participants who completed the youth version of the survey, responses were similar; 3 youth rated the program as a 9 or 10 and a single youth as an 8. Appendix B contains the youth survey, and Appendix C contains the output of results from the 4 pilot youth participants. Because of the small sample size from this subset of participants, the following sections focus primarily on adult feedback.

The remainder of the findings portion of this report is organized by the outcomes initially established at the onset of the program.



Progress toward Outcome 1: Increase awareness of the healing benefits of being creative among those experiencing a significant life event

Nearly half of participants (42.7%) believed that making art directly improved their health.

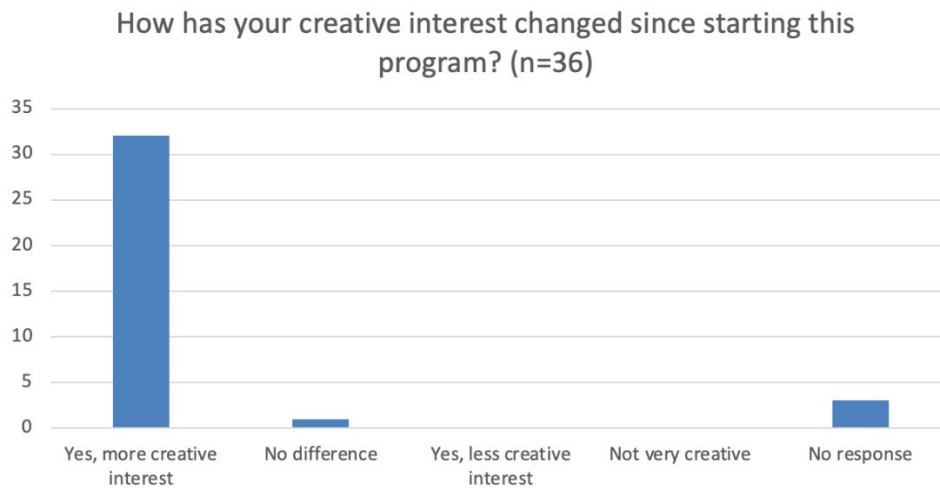
Participants were asked to select from a variety of options from which they could select any or none, selecting “Any of the statements that are true for you.” Among responses was the option: “When I make art, my mental health improves.” Of 36 participants, 17 (47.2%) affirmed this statement was true for them.

Progress toward Outcome 2: Improve participants’ attitudes and beliefs regarding their ability to be creative, even if not an “artist”

Since participating in the Healing Through the Arts program, nearly all participants (88.9%) are more interested in being creative.

Increased creative interest since starting this program was determined via responses collected via the Participant Survey tool. The following question was asked to participants: “How has your creative interest changed since starting this program?” Of 36 participants, 32 (88.9%) answered affirmatively to this question, indicating “Yes, more creative interest.” A singular (2.5%) participant indicated that there was no difference in their creative interest, and 3 (8.3%) participants did not respond to this question.

Figure 1: Change in Creative Interest



Progress toward Outcome 3: Facilitate a sharing infrastructure across art organizations to expand program delivery

The Healing Through the Arts program collaborated with 12 partner organizations to achieve a broad program reach.

Mariposa Art’s Healing Through the Arts program in partnership with the Delaware Art Museum collaborated with other organizations to increase program delivery and reach a variety of adults and youth across the state.

Some partners of note include:

- Cancer Support Community of Delaware
- Latin American Community Center Breastfeeding Support Group
- Latin American Community Center Los Abuelos Group
- Latin American Community Center ESL Group
- Latin American Community Center Mujeres Poderosas Group
- Hispanic American Association of Delaware
- Hicks Anderson Community Center
- The Teen Warehouse
- Mental Health Association of Delaware

Progress toward Outcome 4: Improved evaluation infrastructure to support idea development and outreach

The partnership between Mariposa Arts, the Delaware Art Museum, and UD CRESP resulted in the creation of a variety of evaluation tools, as well as robust discussion and planning for how evaluation effort can be integrated into regular program activities.

The Healing Through the Arts and UD partnership resulted in monthly (or more) discussions about evaluation efforts and a toolset for evaluation including adult and youth surveys, a logic model, and frameworks to connect objectives, measures, and data collection tools.

Progress toward Outcome 5: Decrease feelings of stress among participants, and increase the frequency with which participants turn to art as a way to alleviate stress

More than half of participants (66.7%) felt less stress when making art with the program.

Decreased feelings of stress was measured by a statement that participants could select from a group of statements in the Participant Survey tool: “When I make art, I feel less stress.” Of 36 participants, 24 (66.7%) affirmed this statement was true for them. Also, 6 (16.7%) participants selected the following statement, “Since coming to this program, I am better able to manage my stress.”

Also in the Participant Survey tool, participants were given an open-ended question: “What is one word that describes how you feel when you participate in the Healing Through the Arts program?” A variety of participants’ answers reveals that this program has made participants feel less stress. A Word Cloud was produced with the responses:



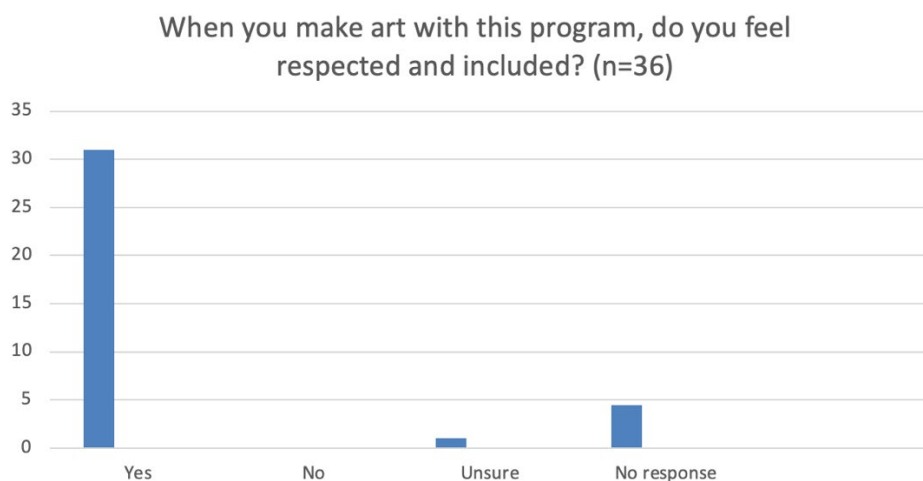
Progress toward Outcome 6: Improve trust and community cohesion among those experiencing traumatic events

Most participants (83.3%) felt respected and included when making art with the program.

Improved community cohesion among those experiencing traumatic events was determined via responses collected via the Participant Survey tool. The following question was asked to participants: “When you make art with this program, do you feel respected and included?” Of 36 participants, 30 (83.3%) answered affirmatively to this question. A singular participant (2.5%) indicated they were unsure if they feel respected and included while making art with the program, and 5 (13.9%) participants did not respond. With majority of participants having affirmative answers, this reflects

that the Healing Through the Arts program provides an inclusive and respectful environment for community members to connect with one another.

Figure 2: Improved Trust and Community Cohesion



Progress toward Outcome 7: Improve mood among those experiencing illness or trauma by shifting negative feelings toward positive feelings

More than half of participants (61.1%) reported that participating in the Healing Through the Arts program makes them feel good and improves their mood.

Improved mood was measured by a statement that participants could select from a group of statements in the Participant Survey tool: “Participating in this program makes me feel good and improves my mood.” Of 36 participants, 22 (61.1%) affirmed this statement was true for them.

Also in the Participant Survey tool, participants were given an open-ended question: “How does art make you feel better, if at all?” A variety of participants’ answers reveals that the Healing Through the Arts program has reduced negative feelings, and improved positivity.

Some responses include:

It makes me feel joy!
A different approach to expressing my sadness, rather than crying
Art always gives me a sense of hope and creativity
It’s an outlet to explore feelings
Art makes me feel more grounded
It gives me an indescribable release
Going to these classes distracts me from my pain and worries

A Word Cloud of responses to the question “How does art make you feel?” is also provided below:



Progress toward Outcome 8: Increase community capacity to reduce stress and improve mental health

In the 15-month period between January 2022 and April 2023, the Healing Through the Arts provided programming to 971 adults and 580 youth.

The diversity of institutions that the Healing Through the Arts program partnered with and the number of individuals reached in their workshops increased community capacity. The program worked with various organizations with participants varying in gender, race, and age. Further than simply just broadening the characteristics of the individuals partaking in the workshops, the program was successful in reaching a large number of community members who desired to reduce stress.

Conclusions

Mariposa Arts’ Healing Through the Arts is a very well-liked program where many report decreased stress and improved mood as well as improved interest in creativity. The outreach over the past year has resulted in more than 1,500 participants from a variety of backgrounds, and affiliations with more than 12 institutions. As the programs continue to expand, additional information about the ways in which art impacts youth, using the revised and piloted youth questionnaire, may be of interest. Additionally, qualitative interviews with participants in order to garner more in-depth feedback about their stories and the program’s impact may help to influence future programming strategies, as well as articulate the scope and outcomes of the work. Given the range of types of venues where art is applied for those who are experiencing physical or emotional stress, there are many opportunities for expansion of Healing Through the Arts, both in clinical and non-clinical settings.

Appendix A: Adult Survey Administered via Qualtrics

(also made available in Spanish)

Title of Study: Healing Through the Arts Program

Principal Investigator(s): Allison Karpyn

Important aspects of the study you should know about:

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Mariposa Arts Healing Through the Arts program in partnership with the Delaware Art Museum for adult participants.

1. What is one word that describes how you feel when you participate in the Healing Through the Arts program?

2. How likely would you be to recommend the Healing Through the Arts Program to others?
 - a. 0 – Not at all likely
 - b. 1
 - c. 2
 - d. 3
 - e. 4
 - f. 5
 - g. 6
 - h. 7
 - i. 8
 - j. 9
 - k. 10 – Extremely likely
3. Has your interest in being creative changed since starting this program?
 - a. Yes, more creative interest
 - b. No difference
 - c. Yes, less creative interest
 - d. Not very creative
4. When you make art with this program, do you feel respected and included?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Unsure
5. Select any of the statements below that are true for you:
 - a. When I make art, I feel less stress.
 - b. I like art, but it does not change my mood.
 - c. Participating in this program makes me feel good and improves my mood.
 - d. Since coming to this program I am better able to manage my stress.
 - e. I feel connected to others in this program.

- f. When I make art, my mental health improves.
- g. I do not feel any different when I participate in this program.

6. How does art make you feel better, if at all?

7. Please provide any additional feedback you have about the program here.

8. In what zip code do you live?

9. What gender do you identify with?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Non-binary
- d. Prefer not to say
- e. Other

10. Please specify your ethnicity.

- a. White
- b. Black or African American
- c. Asian
- d. Latino or Hispanic
- e. American Indian or Alaska Native
- f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- g. Other

11. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to answer

Appendix B: Youth Survey Administered via Qualtrics

(also made available in Spanish)

Title of Study: Healing Through the Arts Program

Principal Investigator(s): Allison Karpyn

Important aspects of the study you should know about:

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Mariposa Arts Healing Through the Arts program in partnership with the Delaware Art Museum for youth participants.

1. In one word, share what it feels like to take a Healing Through the Arts class?

2. How would you rate the Healing Through the Arts program on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is bad and 10 is great?

- a. 1 – Bad
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5
- f. 6
- g. 7
- h. 8
- i. 9
- j. 10 – Great

3. Have you felt more creative since starting this program?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure

4. When you make art with this program, do you feel respected?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure

5. Select any of the statements below that are true for you:

- a. When I make art in this program, I feel less stress.
- b. Participating in this program makes me feel good and improves my mood.
- c. I feel connected to others in this program.
- d. My mood does not change when I make art in this program.

6. How has this program helped you?

7. If there is anything else you want to share with us, please write it here:

8. In what zip code do you live?

9. What gender do you identify with?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Non-binary
- d. Prefer not to say
- e. Other

10. Please specify your ethnicity.

- a. White
- b. Black or African American
- c. Asian
- d. Latino or Hispanic
- e. American Indian or Alaska Native
- f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- g. Other

11. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to answer

Appendix C: Youth Survey Responses

Table 1: "In one word, share what it feels like to take a Healing Through the Arts class?"

Fun
Happy
Nice
It feels good. I like it. It's fun to do.

Table 2: "How would you rate the Healing Through the Arts program on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is bad and 10 is great?"

	Youth Responses Count
1 – Bad	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	1
8	0
9	0
10 - Great	3

Table 3: "Have you felt more creative since starting this program?"

	Youth Response Count
Yes	2
No	1
Unsure	1

Table 4: "When you make art with this program, do you feel respected?"

	Youth Response Count
Yes	4
No	0
Unsure	0

Table 5: "Select any of the statements below that are true for you:"

	Youth Response Count
When I make art in this program, I feel less stress.	3
Participating in this program makes me feel good and improves my mood.	1
I feel connected to others in this program.	2
My mood does not change when I make art in this program.	1

Table 6: "How has this program helped you?"

It helped me be free.
Because it helps me talk more.
It helped me be more creative.
Sometimes I feel upset, I draw a lot when I do that.

Table 7: "If there is anything else you want to share with us, please write it here:"

No
I want to do more of this. I want you to stay.