

## TALKING POINTS: SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE ARTS

### STATE OF OUR REGION

- **There's a disconnect between public perception of the value of the arts and their impact.** While 79% of King County residents believe arts benefit their personal wellbeing, and 60% cite them as a key factor in their decision to live in the area, only 28% think arts and culture promote social change at a community level.
- Research shows that beyond significant economic impact and the powerful impact arts have on each of us individually, **arts create social impact and public good**, even for those who don't participate directly.
- **Arts are a viable and proven** – yet often underutilized and unacknowledged – **strategy to intersect with social issues and meet community needs**, advancing positive and equitable outcomes in youth development and education, health and wellness, and neighborhood vitality.
- Arts aren't working in isolation: **84% of King County arts nonprofits report partnerships outside the sector.** Complementing traditional approaches to social issues, when art is integrated with another intervention it makes people more successful. These creative collaborations are helping solve the 21st century challenges we face.

### ARTS X YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

- **Involvement in arts improves academic and social outcomes for youth**, leading to higher test scores and graduation rates, a greater likelihood to attend college, and an ability to regulate emotions. Positive academic outcomes are especially strong for low income youth.
  - » “At-risk” students involved in the arts are 23 percentage points more likely to attend college than peers with low arts involvement. (The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth, 2012).
  - » Research shows that arts build 21st century skills including critical thinking and technical capacity for expression. This suggests arts play a key role in the development of local talent and the future of work (ArtsFund's Social Impact of the Arts Study, 2018).
  - » Students with an education rich in the arts have higher GPAs and standardized test scores, including higher SAT scores, as well as lower dropout rates (Multiple sources).

### ARTS X HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- In and out of medical settings, **arts can improve individual and community health**, benefiting patient recovery, reducing anxiety, and helping individuals cope with symptoms of disease, leading to longer lives, better lived.
  - » Nationwide, 45% of medical institutions offer some sort of arts program, with 80% of those saying they do so to benefit patient recovery. (Arts in Healthcare, 2009).
  - » 67% of music therapy participants with dementia felt less anxious and reduced their use of medication (Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing, 2017).
  - » Research is particularly strong on the impacts of arts on aging adults, and those with diseases that cause dementia (ArtsFund's Social Impact of the Arts Study, 2018).

### ARTS X NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY

- **Arts build communities** by increasing neighborhood livability, promoting social inclusion and community cohesion, and bridging cultural divides.
  - » Low-income neighborhoods with cultural resources have 14% fewer cases of child abuse and neglect and 18% less serious crime than low-income neighborhoods without cultural resources (Culture and Social Wellbeing in New York City, 2017).
  - » Cities with high concentrations of art have increased civic engagement, social cohesion, and child welfare, as well as less crime and poverty (Multiple sources).

### LOOKING AHEAD

- Arts advance equitable outcomes. As the positive benefits have disproportionate impact on low income youth & neighborhoods, who often have the least access to arts resources, **arts are a means to lessen the opportunity gap.**
- **Investment in arts is a proactive strategic investment in community.** Arts can be a powerful strategy, responding to current community need and enabling preventative intervention.
- **You can have an impact** right now by leveraging and scaling what is proven to work – **by investing** in arts organizations and arts-based strategies, **partnering** across sectors and inviting arts voices to planning tables, and **amplifying understanding** of this message, we can bring the social impact of the arts to its full potential to address community priorities.

[www.artsfund.org/socialimpact](http://www.artsfund.org/socialimpact)

For more information or questions about ArtsFund's *Social Impact of the Arts Study*, contact Sarah Sidman, ArtsFund Vice President of Strategic Initiatives & Communications, at [sarahsidman@artsfund.org](mailto:sarahsidman@artsfund.org) or at 206-281-9050.