

In Creative Company: Art Classes for Older Adults

[Sacramento Public Library](#)

Intergenerational

In Creative Company: Art Classes for Older Adults

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\$5,000+

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Byline

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Editor's note: This Program Model is part of a series highlighting the work of the [Lifetime Arts Affiliates](#), a cohort of 20 libraries that has been working with Lifetime Arts Inc. to launch professionally conducted arts education for older adults. For more information, check out [Lifetime Arts' Creative Aging Toolkit for Public Libraries](#), a free online resource for librarians that provides information about creative aging research, best practices and practical advice for planning and implementing creative aging programs.

Sacramento Public Library (SPL) first offered creative aging programs for older adults in 2015 as a partner library in Lifetime Arts' Creative Aging in America's Libraries project. The library regularly offers engaging programs for all ages that educate, entertain and inspire lifelong learning. In Creative Company provided a series of sequential arts instruction led by an experienced teaching artist.

Advanced Planning

SPL's creative aging programs reflected several art media. The various disciplines were selected by the participating library locations based on input from library patrons. Surveys were distributed several months in advance by the project pilot sites (**view the patron survey under Attachments at right**). Based upon patron interest, watercolor painting and beginning drawing were offered.

The classes were offered in concurrent eight-week sessions spanning from April to June 2015. Three teaching artists were engaged to lead the classes. A final culminating art show featured the art work of 60 student artists. Three hundred friends, family and others attended the show hosted at Central Library.

The program sought to:

- Engage older adults in high-quality, free arts programming
- Provide artist-led programs for participants to learn new skills and to engage socially
- Build capacity of the library to sustain arts programming geared toward older adults

Marketing

The library's communications department branded the classes "In Creative Company: Art Classes for Older Adults." Four weeks in advance, bookmarks were printed and distributed throughout the library system to promote the three classes. The classes were promoted on the library website, online calendars and on social

media. Teaching artists also shared the library classes through their websites and social media channels. Registration was handled online on the library's website. Classes reached capacity, with a wait list, very quickly.

Budgeting

A grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services helped cover the cost of this program. The budget was \$7,500 (\$2,500 for each project library site), which included:

- Teaching artists' stipends: \$4,800
- Art supplies: \$1,800
- Branded tote bags: \$200
- Large culminating event: \$750
- Branch library individual art reception: \$450

Day-of-event Activity

The classes were led by a teaching artist and hosted by the branch library supervisor. Branch staff set up the library community rooms in advance. Supplies were distributed to participants in tote bags. (Prior to the first class, teaching artists filled the bags with supplies, and branch staff assisted in handing them out.)

Class handouts, name tags and sign-in sheets were distributed at the beginning of each class. Library supervisors and teaching artists worked closely together to ensure that classes ran smoothly and goals for each class were met.

Program Execution

A total of 60 adults participated in the pilot programs (20 per class). At the conclusion of each series, participants had the opportunity to display their work in the library branch and at the large culminating event.

The library used a post-program participant survey and culminating event audience survey, both provided by Lifetime Arts (**view both surveys under Attachments at right**). Those surveys were designed to gather feedback on the overall quality of the program and the impact on the participants' relationship with the library.

Feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive. The overall rating of the quality of programs was "excellent," as was the rating of the teaching artists. A frequent reply was "please offer more classes like this," and SPL has responded by offering more arts programming for older adults.

As a result of the pilot classes, five additional library locations have offered arts programming for older adults. SPL has received several grants from the Sacramento Arts Commission to sustain the program, as well as funding from Friends of the Sacramento Library.

Advice

It is very important to recruit an experienced, engaging teaching artist for the program. The artist is key to the success of the program.

Supporting Materials

Document

[patron_survey.pdf](#)

Document

[participant_survey.pdf](#)

Document

[audience_survey.pdf](#)

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

- Feedback (Coming Soon!)
- [Programming Librarian Facebook Group](#)

Slideshow Images

Image



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[Arts Education for Older Adults at the Brooklyn Public Library](#)

Audiences:

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