



## SUPPORTING ARTS

*Civilization depends on art. The human experience is uncovered, understood and recorded through artistic expression. From the potential unlocked in a young child's mind to the lessons imparted from generations past, the arts serve to define us as individuals, connect us as a community, and advance us as a people.*

The arts help us understand our past, comprehend our present, and anticipate our future. Widely valued for their role in developing wisdom and vision in the citizens of a democracy, the arts help sustain and enrich American society.

Forty years after the establishment of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities, public funding for the arts is in jeopardy. Without funding, arts falter. Despite the essential role that music plays in brain development, music education programs die for lack of support. Despite research that shows arts contribute to qualitative reasoning and abstract problem solving, few see the connection between diminishing art resources and falling math scores.

From music for young children to museums building distinctive collections, opportunities to support and sustain the arts abound. Help is needed.

“Art is a nation's most precious heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal to ourselves, and to others, the inner vision which guides us as a nation. And where there is no vision, the people perish.”

Lyndon B. Johnson  
On the National Foundation  
on the Arts and Humanities Act  
1965

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## FAST FACTS ON THE ARTS

**Boosting economies** The arts create jobs, increase the local tax base, boost tourism, spur growth in related businesses (hotels, restaurants, printing, etc.) and improve the overall quality of life for our cities and towns. On a national level, nonprofit arts institutions and organizations generate an estimated \$37 billion in economic activity and return \$3.4 billion in federal income taxes to the U.S. Treasury each year.<sup>1</sup> “Even in the most successful new economy regions, civic leaders are beginning to take stock of artistic and cultural assets, recognizing that they are essential to quality of life, which is, in turn, necessary to sustain growth in the new economy.”<sup>2</sup> The nonprofit arts industry in the U.S. generates \$134 billion in economic activity annually, including \$53.2 billion in spending by arts organizations and \$80.8 billion in event-related spending by audiences.<sup>3</sup>

**Academic achievement** Students who report consistent high levels of involvement in instrumental music over the middle and high school years show significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12 regardless of students’ socio-economic status. Differences increase over time.<sup>4</sup> After eight months of keyboard lessons, preschoolers showed a 46 percent boost in their spatial reasoning IQ.<sup>5</sup> A study of 237 second grade children receiving piano keyboard training scored 27 percent higher on proportional math and fractions tests than children who used only math software.<sup>6</sup>

**Positive alternatives** Secondary school students who participated in band or orchestra reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances (alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs).<sup>7</sup>

**Cultural identity** Art articulates the culture of a community. In the U.S., jazz, rap and hip hop have emerged as powerful voices of marginalized communities. Works created with the explicit purpose of changing attitudes and bringing about social change (e.g., *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Invisible Man*) can galvanize people into recognizing the contrast between what is and what could be.<sup>8</sup>

**Growth of empathy** The arts draw individuals into the experiences of people vastly different from them and cultures vastly different from their own. These experiences can make them more receptive to unfamiliar people, attitudes, and cultures.<sup>9</sup>

**Shared discourse** Art promotes community discussion, encourages public debate and reinforces shared values. Masterpieces—those defining works that endure from generation to generation—help preserve cultures, advance understanding and connect generations.<sup>10</sup>

**Creating community** Democracies need citizens who can think for themselves. Art helps individuals develop independent thought and creativity. The universal nature of art and music helps citizens see themselves not simply as residents of a region, but as human beings connected to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern.<sup>11</sup>

**Arts funding** Federal arts funding is complemented by state arts appropriations. In 2004, state level expenditures were \$273.7 million, a 23 percent decline from \$354.5 million in 2003. State arts budgets experienced cuts as high as 80 percent in 2003.<sup>12</sup>

*For generations, patrons of arts, music and culture have helped open eyes, touch spirits, enrich souls, connect people, create understanding, and overcome differences. Lifetime gifts and legacies keep the arts alive—supporting artists, promoting culture, and improving communities.*

<sup>1</sup>American Arts Alliance Fact Sheet, October 1996. <sup>2</sup>National Governors Association Issue Brief. “The role of the Arts in economic development.” June 25, 2001. <sup>3</sup>Americans for the Arts. “Arts & Economic Prosperity: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts Organizations and Their Audiences.” Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts, 2005. <sup>4</sup>Catterall, James S., Richard Chappleau, and John Iwanaga. “Involvement in the Arts and Human Development: General Involvement and Intensive Involvement in Music and Theater Arts.” Los Angeles, CA: The Imagination Project at UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, 1999. <sup>5</sup>Rauscher, Shaw, Levine, Ky and Wright. “Music and Spatial Task Performance: A Causal Relationship,” University of California, Irvine, 1994. <sup>6</sup>Graziano, Amy, Matthew Peterson, and Gordon Shaw. “Enhanced learning of proportional math through music training and spatial-temporal training.” *Neurological Research* 21 (March 1999). <sup>7</sup>Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse Report. Reported in *Houston Chronicle*, January 1998. <sup>8</sup>Kevin F. McCarthy et al. “Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts,” *Rand Research in the Arts*, 2004. <sup>9</sup>*ibid.* <sup>10</sup>*ibid.* <sup>11</sup>*ibid.* <sup>12</sup>National Endowment for the Arts. “How the United States Funds the Arts,” October 2004.