

ART IMPACT PROJECT



Program Portfolio

Emotional healing through art

Art as a Path to Healing

Since 2014, Art Impact Project has been transforming lives through the power of creative expression. Based in Lake County, Illinois, we create inclusive, art-based experiences that meet people where they are—using the healing language of art to inspire self-discovery, resilience, and emotional growth.

By engaging the creative mind—with guidance, not instruction; freedom, not evaluation; encouragement, not pressure—we help individuals explore and communicate their emotions. When feelings are present, but words are not, art provides a vital outlet. It becomes a tool for healing and a foundation for social-emotional skill development.

With over 100 unique projects in our expanding library—each grounded in clear goals and supported by outcome data—we provide safe, nurturing environments for participants from teens to older adults. Our programs encourage emotional expression, foster interpersonal connection, and support personal progress at every stage of life.

At Art Impact Project, we believe art is more than expression—it's transformation. It's belonging. It's a path to wellness. And it's accessible to all.

WHY ART?

Because when words fail, art speaks.

Nonverbal Expression

Art offers a powerful way to express emotions that may be difficult to put into words.

Mind-Body Connection

The physical act of art-making helps process emotions through touch, color, and movement.

Safe Exploration

The creative process provides time and space to explore feelings without fear of judgment.

Community & Connection

Group sessions with peer-to-peer engagement build community, invite trusting relationships, and reduce isolation—all key factors in mental health and emotional wellness.

Confidence & Empowerment

Completing an art project and sharing it with peers builds self-esteem, provides a moment of personal achievement, and encourages people to embrace what they can accomplish.

Our Evidence-Based Program Model

Our programs follow a consistent, supportive structure designed to engage participants in both creativity and reflection:

- **A brief introduction** of our mission and goals of the program
- Dedicated **time for making art**, with support from our trained Volunteer Art Advocates and facilitators
- **Group discussion**, safe sharing, and reflection
- A closing **moment of affirmation** and takeaway learnings
- Completion of an **outcome survey**



All staffing, materials, and supplies are provided. Programs are delivered in partnerships with schools, treatment centers, and other community organizations.

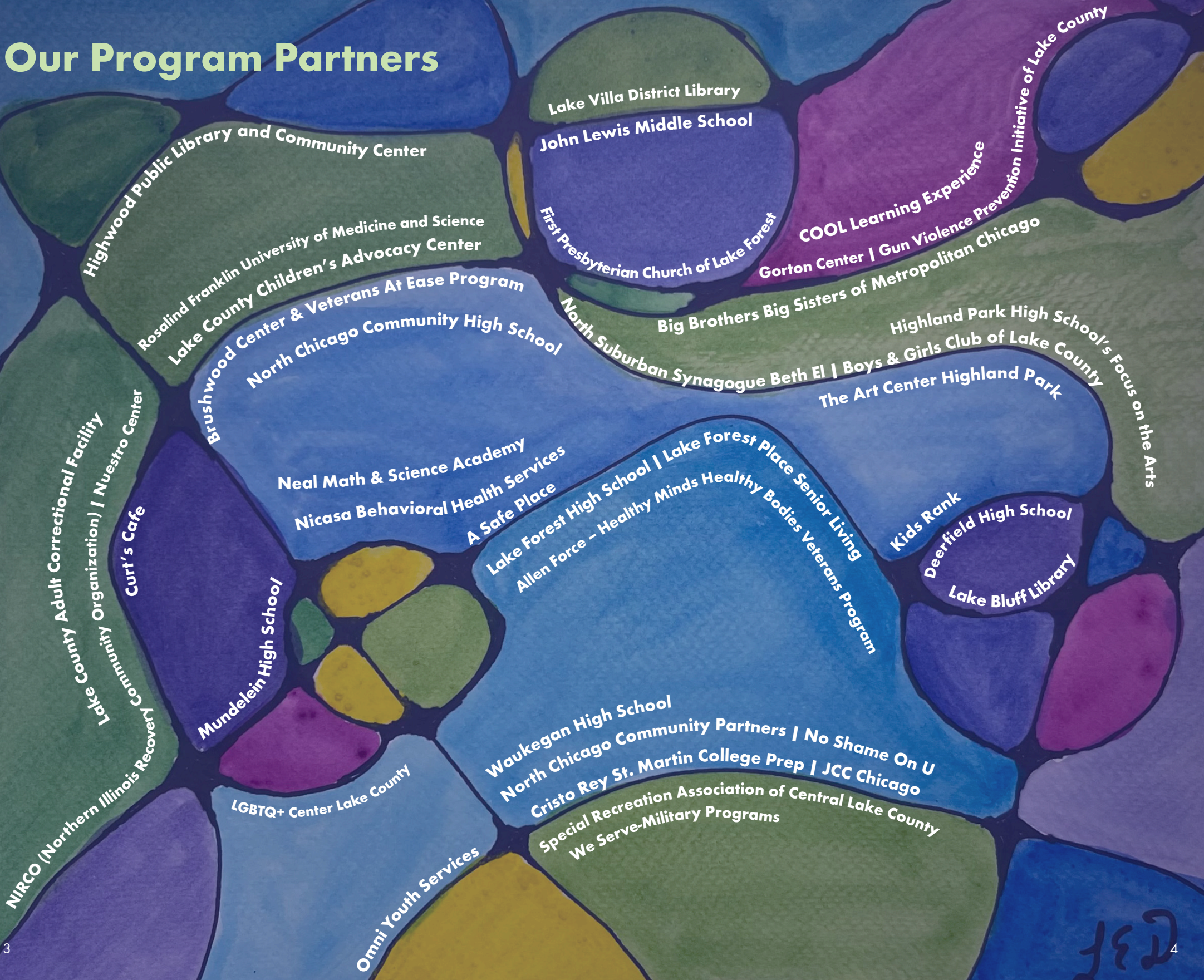
Thanks to the generosity of our funders, we are able to offer programs free of charge or for a nominal fee, based on a sliding scale and demonstrated need. This ensures that cost is never a barrier to accessing our services and participants do not have to pay to take part in programs.



Our Gently Guided Process

- Making space to create, listen, and express without judgment
- Encouraging interpersonal connection and a sense of belonging
- Fostering positive mental health and overall wellness
- Inspiring a two-way exchange of creativity and self-reflection
- Building Social & Emotional Learning outcomes through art-making and group discussion in a safe, trusted environment
- Supporting peer-to-peer relationships that reinforce mutual understanding and collective resilience

Our Program Partners



Project Spotlight: Poetrees

Trees represent strength, resilience, and growth—qualities that mirror the personal journeys of those facing emotional challenges. By adding meaningful words to their art, participants reflect, express, and give voice to their inner experiences in a creative and meaningful way.

"Art gives us the opportunity to express ourselves without having to use words."

Volunteer, Heidi Torres Smith

"I have multiple parts of me. All these parts make up who I am as a person and I should be proud of who I am."

AIP Participant



45 minutes

The amount of time that making art can significantly reduce the stress hormone cortisol according to research.*

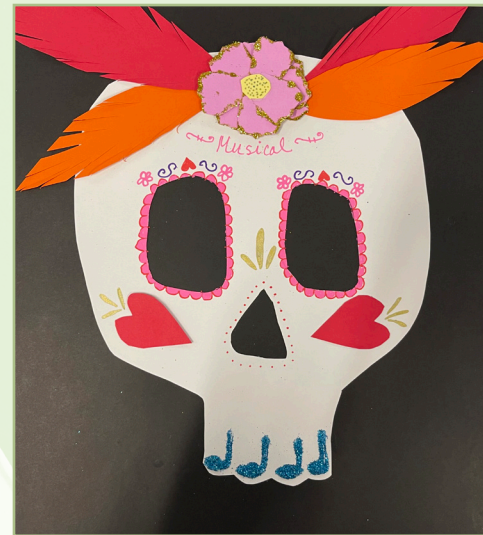
*Research sources listed on website at artimpactproject.org

Project Spotlight: Sugar Skulls

Sugar Skulls are a vibrant way to honor cultural traditions and remember those we've lost. Through the use of color, symbolism, and meaningful words or quotes, participants explore personal memories, express feelings, and share stories that connect them to their heritage and to one another.

"Art provides another voice for us all. It is often a voice that reflects back with surprise."

Volunteer, Marcia Pantell

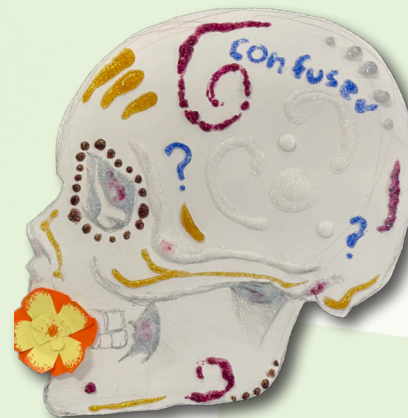


90%

of AIP teen participants said their program experience will help them to be kinder to themselves.

"Don't be ashamed to be different."

AIP Participant



A study of 69 adolescents with depression found that participating in an arts camp program significantly **reduced symptoms, enhanced wellbeing, and helped them build new skills and perspectives** for managing life's challenges.*

Project Spotlight: **Quill**

The feather quill symbolizes personal expression and the power of communication. Participants reflect on a single word that captures how they feel in the moment and then bring that feeling to life through color, design, and written language—creating a meaningful visual of their inner experience.

"I learned that my journey of sobriety is BRIGHT in my FUTURE."

AIP Participant



93%

of AIP adults said participating helped them recognize their value and encouraged them to prioritize self-care.



Project Spotlight: **Neurographic Art**

Neurographic Art invites participants into a calming and meditative process that encourages mindfulness and personal insight. By focusing on a thought or emotion and allowing intuitive lines and shapes to emerge, individuals create new visual pathways, promoting relaxation, focus, and a renewed perspective on a challenge they are facing.

"This project helped me discover new coping skills and strategies to help me feel calm."

AIP Participant



"I love watching them do Neurographic Art because it is low pressure, self-paced and they can take the time to find the meaning of the project themselves."

Volunteer, Rachel Plummer



79%

of AIP teens said participating helped them connect with themselves and how they are feeling.

Project Spotlight: **Perspectives**

The Perspectives Project encourages participants to explore how personal and cultural experiences affect the way we see the world. Inspired by African American artist Jacob Lawrence, this project uses visual storytelling to reflect on identity, challenge stereotypes, and consider how seeing through another lens can shift our perspective of people, places, and experiences.

"Freshmen are navigating the transition to high school and trying to understand new relationships. Art helps them discover how they see themselves and how they want to be seen."

NCCHS Assistant Principal, Breana Calloway

85%

of AIP teens said participating helped me accept and appreciate different aspects of who I am.



"I learned how many imperfect traits I have in myself that I didn't take the time to realize are the good parts of me."

AIP Participant

A study of 23 youth who participated in group art-making—without formal therapy—helped teens **redefine resilience, strengthen peer identity connections, and develop healthy coping strategies.***



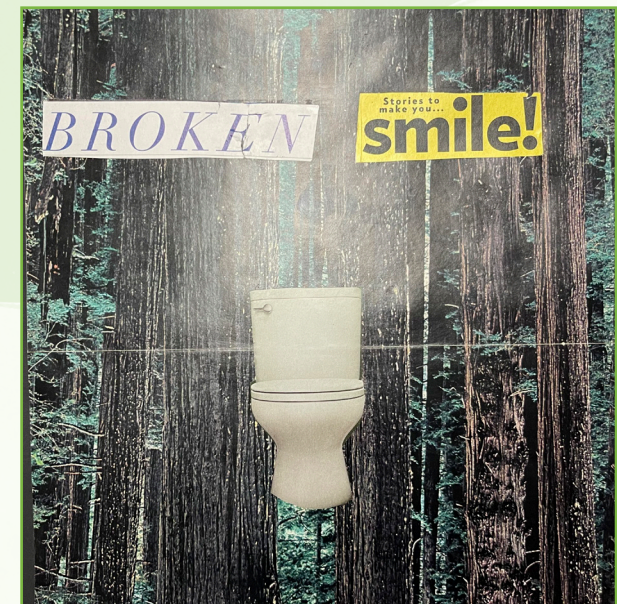
Project Spotlight: **Soundtrack of My Life**

Participants creatively reflect on their personal journey by designing a music album that represents their life. Using words and images, they craft a visual cover and a personalized play list—each 'song' title offering insight into meaningful experiences, emotions, or moments that helped shape who they are.

"Group sharing at the end of a project is important to me because they get past the intimidation and express something."

Volunteer, Rose Kostan-Schwartz

Research shows that group art activities **ease depression and anxiety in older adults**, leading to improved mental wellbeing later in life.*



98%

of AIP adult participants said that art-making is helpful to them and supports their mental health and wellness.



Our Mission: **Enhancing emotional wellness through creative expression**

BECOME A...

Community Partner

Art Impact Project partners with schools, community centers, and nonprofit service providers to deliver impactful art-based programming that complements and enriches existing services.

Together we can create safe, supportive spaces that foster emotional wellness and growth. If you are interested in exploring how our organizations can collaborate to deepen your impact, we'd love to start a conversation.



Volunteer Art Advocate

We need compassionate, creative-minded people like you! Volunteers support program logistics and engage alongside participants in meaningful art-making experiences—no art background required. With flexible time commitments and impactful opportunities, your involvement can uplift others while enriching your own life. Let us show you how rewarding it is to make a difference through art.



Donor

A gift—no matter the size—helps deliver powerful art programs that support emotional healing and personal growth.

By investing in our mission, you give individuals the tools to express their stories, build their resilience, and help them rediscover hope through the transformative power of art.

Make your impact today.



@artimpactproject

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