Seven Benefits of Arts & Crafts for Seniors: It’s Never Too Late to Create!

Did you know that for seniors, art benefits the mind, spirit and body? Arts and crafts can be a wonderful hobby, but they also have therapeutic benefits as well. The act of creating something has long been known to nourish the spirit but more recently, studies have shown that for older adults who participate in art programs, they have fewer doctor visits and lower healthcare costs, they use less medication, experience a lower rate of depression, and even have fewer risk factors for entering a nursing home.

Benefits of participating in an arts and crafts program include:

1. Recreation: whether making a homemade gift, decorating for a nursing home.
2. Self-expression: The act of creating a powerful way to share our lives with others. By making a work of art, we announce, “This is who I am. This is what I want to say.” Expressive art provides vivid access to memories, and is a useful starting point for reminiscence and life review.
3. Communication: People who have difficulty expressing themselves verbally are often able to communicate through visual means. For seniors dealing with the effects of a stroke, Alzheimer’s, or other condition that causes speech difficulty, visual art can provide an alternative way to connect.
4. Socialization: Seniors who participate in the arts are less likely to experience feelings of loneliness and isolation. Art is a way of introducing ourselves to others. People are more likely to “come out of their shells” during shared experiences of play, fun and spontaneity. Friendships grow during cooperative projects, or just from working side-by-side and discussing each other’s creations.
5. Intellectual stimulation: Communication through art media exercises the brain and promotes memory health. An art project can represent a stimulating challenge to be met, inviting us to stretch our minds and look at the world in a new way.
6. Emotional well-being: Creative activity taps into the emotions and allows us to more openly experience and express our feelings.
7. Physical benefits: Drawing, painting, wood-carving and assembling artwork are beneficial for coordination and small motor movements. Studies have also shown that creative activity lessens pain and even enhances the immune system.

Source: CaringNews.com

Celebrating the Arts at Brewster Place

Brewster has a long history of not only supporting the arts, but from its early beginnings 50 years ago has been home to great artists.

One such notable artist was Avis Chitwood, Brewster resident from 1964—1994, who taught etching and watercolor in the Art Department at Washburn University. She continued to create beautiful art well into her 90s.

Other more recent Brewster artists who have shown and sold their works include Betty Bowman, Bert Tyrrell, Alberta Cowles, Jan Burnett, and Dorthy Bennett.

Today, the artistry of Brewster Place residents continues to flourish. Art classes taught by Joline Kovarik, Brewster’s Arts & Crafts Coordinator, offer a great way for artists to develop their skills and connect with others who have a passion for art.

“Residents that have never had time in their former lives to use their creative side, now have time and place to do so,” says Joline. “You do not have to be a great artist to enjoy painting, wood-carving and just learning about art.”

Recently, a group of Brewster Place artists traveled to the Ensley Gardens at Lake Shawnee for a Plein Air painting day. “Plein Air” is a French expression which generally refers to painting in the open air. Brewster Place’s resident artists spent hours painting the beautiful flowers, structures and landscapes of the gardens.

Free Art Exhibit to Showcase Works of Seniors

As part of Brewster Place’s 50th anniversary celebration, the organization is hosting an Art Exhibition showcasing the artistic works of its residents.

Cally Kramlman, a local artist, will also showcase her work at the Brewster Art Exhibition. Cally’s grandmother, Mary Marsh, lived at Brewster Place and Cally has donated several of her paintings to Brewster Place.

The art exhibition will be held Sunday, August 17, from 2-5 pm. This will be a free event and open to the public.
Drury Place has a new name; more changes coming

Drury Place Retirement Apartments has housed many residents for over 35 years, and in 2014 will be undergoing many renovations, beginning with a new name – Arbor Court Retirement Community at Topeka. The retirement community is located at 4200 SW Drury Lane, one block west of 15th and Gage, directly across from the Gage Post Office.

What is now known as Arbor Court was one of the first independent retirement apartments in Topeka. It was uniquely designed with an open floor plan in the common areas, which provides a full view of first and second floors and a more community-like atmosphere for the residents. It is a small independent retirement community with 60 apartments. The majority of the apartments are one-bedroom. The remaining apartments are studios and 2-bedrooms. Each apartment has a complete kitchen and safety designed bathroom.

The Arbor Court staff is dedicated to preserving the quality of life for the residents, which is proven by the strong relationships they have with residents and family. The majority of the staff has been there for over ten years and continue to look forward to many years to come. “We have a new name, but our dedication and commitment to our residents remains the same,” stated Andrea Graham, Executive Director. “There is always an open invitation to come and visit our Arbor Court home.”

Drury Place has changed its name to Arbor Court, and features two levels of apartments that open up to a large open commons area.

Retirement On The Road

Many Americans who want to travel the country when they retire have decided to do it in an RV because it’s fun and affordable. And, the retirees who are full-time RVers (with no stationary home) are actually adding to their already-established nest egg retirement savings while they’re out there having fun. Every individual retirement financial situation is unique, based on estimated fixed income and the value of the nest egg. Planning is the key, so work the numbers! Monthly expenses for full-time RVing can fall well below the average retiree’s fixed income, without having to draw on the nest egg. When this is the case, full-time RVing can be comfortably affordable.

How is it done? Transition plans vary, but the goal is to: First, sell the house and all the replaceable “stuff” in it and put most of the proceeds into the nest egg. Then, buy a home on wheels and set out to see the country on the “vacation of a lifetime.”

Here are some basics to consider:

1. The home: Expenses to own & operate a “house on wheels” are a lot less than the cost of real estate taxes, maintenance and utilities on a house.
2. On the road: Combined expenses of camping fees and fuel are still less than the cost of hotels plus fuel for a car. Overall it’s a more affordable than trains, planes, taxis, hotels and constant restaurant meals.
3. Comfort: Wherever you go, you’re home…sleep in your own bed, enjoy home-cooked meals from your own kitchen and you’re sure the bathroom’s clean. And your pet is welcome.
4. Frugal lifestyle: Living within a fixed income budget is easy and healthy in an RV, discovering that the best things in life are free.
5. Convenience: Full-time RV traveling is a vacation without the hassle of schlepping suitcases, airport screenings & delays, rental cars, etc.
6. Ultimate Freedom: Set your own itinerary, go when & where you want and stay as long as you want.
7. Stay put for a while: Rent a site at a snow bird RV park in the Sun Belt for the six-month winter season.
8. Jobs on the road: Retirees who are

Senior news briefs

**SENIOR COMMUNITY MINISTRIES** – Aug 1, 2pm, Wanamaker Road Baptist Church, 2700 SW Wanamaker Rd. For seniors and those who care for and about them. A Musical Afternoon with young area cellists Jonathan Black and Patrick Sandquist. Refreshments. 272-9323.

**LIFEFEEST** – Aug. 8, 6pm, Covenant Baptist Church, 5440 SW 37th St. Seniors ministering to seniors – celebrating with fellowship, fun, food, learning & entertainment. Featuring Terry and Melissa Wright’s music. If transportation is needed, call 354-4994 or 478-1729.

**HARVESTER’S PROGRAM FOR SENIOR CITIZENS** – every second Saturday, at Christian Lord Ministries, 2421 SE California. Call 266-4979.

**VIP LUNCHEON FOR SENIORS** – Every Fri., Noon, North Topeka Baptist Church, 123 NW Gordon. FREE lunch with Christian fellowship, devotions & entertainment provided by Topeka North Outreach. For Info: 286-1370.

**A GOOD YARN CLUB** – 2nd & 4th Sat., 9-11am, Wanamaker Rd Baptist Church, 2700 SW Wanamaker. Knitting & Crocheting for Local Charities, free yarn, needles, hooks & patterns. All welcome. 215-4889, ddhenrikson@cox.net

**GRANDPARENT/RELATIVE CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP** – 3rd Tue., 6:30-8pm, 2nd floor meeting room, St. Francis Hosp, 1700 SW 7th. Join for support, information, etc. Sharla, 286-2329; Jennie (English/Spanish) 231-0763.