

WFWP NJ USA: Painting with a Purpose - Art and Mental Health Activity

Katarina Connery
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"People often think that politics moves the world, but that is not the case. It is culture and art that move the world. It is affection, not reason, that touches people in their innermost being. When hearts become receptive, ideologies and political regimes can change."

Art isn't just beautiful to behold or have the power to evoke deep thoughts, but this quote from WFWP Founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, reminds us of the many benefits of the arts. Art can move the world! There have been many research studies on the benefits of the arts. Students engaged in arts education tend to have higher GPAs and lower dropout rates. One research study showed that a high concentration of the arts in a city is related to higher civic engagement and a more connected community. Another research study showed that exposure to the arts for just two hours every week can improve mental health and overall well-being ([Source](#)). These positive benefits apply for both passive engagement, such as watching, looking at, or listening to artistic expressions, and active engagement, such as creating artistic pieces in song, dance, music, painting, or drawing.



With that in mind, on June 8, the WFWP chapter in New Jersey initiated a program for the community to access the arts: Painting with a Purpose. The purpose was relaxing time together, delicious food, engaging conversations, and each person brought home a beautiful creation of their own, a beach scene suitable for summer. Under the guidance of a skilled instructor, each person went through the steps of creating the sky, ocean, sand, and trees. For some it was their first experience painting on a canvas and others it was a wonderful time to just relax and paint and enjoy the environment. Several families came to enjoy it together as well!

We hope that by being able to enjoy the arts through actively engaging their creativity, everyone was able to experience some of the amazing mental health benefits and bring a positive attitude into the rest of their day. If anyone ends up hanging up their artwork, perhaps they will remember that happy day at the library together and bring back peaceful memories.