



# ARTS-IN-CORRECTIONS: County Jails Project



## California Lawyers for the Arts

in collaboration with Dr. Larry Brewster of the University of San Francisco, the William James Association, Fresno Arts Council, Community Works West, Jail Guitar Doors, Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, Nevada County Arts Council, and Yuba Sutter Arts Council

Revised April 11, 2018

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## **Introduction**

California Lawyers for the Arts became involved in advocacy to restore California's stellar Arts-in-Corrections programs in 2011, just as the US Supreme Court was requiring the state to reduce severe overcrowding in the state's prisons. In addition to having the nation's largest state prison population, California also claimed one of the highest recidivism rates in the country at nearly 70%. We worked actively with Dr. Larry Brewster of the University of San Francisco and the William James Association to conduct a collaborative demonstration project in several state prisons that involved pre and post surveys of the students. Based on the evidence we gathered at that time, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) was persuaded to provide the California Arts Council with a \$2.5 million contract in 2014 for a two-year pilot project providing arts programs in up to 19 state prisons.

CLA's Arts in Corrections Initiative, which has received major funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the Quentin Hancock Fund, the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation and the Art for Justice Fund, brings a new level of awareness and appreciation for the value of effective arts programming in correctional facilities. The goal of this multi-year study is to measure the behavioral and attitudinal changes experienced by residents in county jails throughout California and the impact on their lives through self-reported surveys administered at the end of sequential art classes. A third year of support from the NEA Locals program is supporting outreach to additional counties in California and the development of a tool kit for national distribution.

In collaboration with art organizations in Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Nevada, Sutter, and Yuba Counties, we evaluated the results of the 10 to 18-week art classes attended by a total of 119 men and women. At the end of each program, the participants completed surveys that were designed by Dr. Larry Brewster of the University of San Francisco School of Public Administration. The art classes were held in Santa Cruz Main Jail, San Francisco County Jail – San Bruno Complex, MCJ Twin Towers Correctional Facility in Los Angeles, Fresno County Jail, Sacramento County Jail – Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center, Wayne Brown Correctional Facility in Nevada City, Sutter County Jail, and Yuba County Jail.

The residents engaged in the arts reported a number of attitudinal and behavioral changes that can improve their lives. In addition to helping the inmates and their institutions, these benefits can extend to their families, their communities, and the society to which they return. Artists engaged in this work benefit from having socially meaningful work that connects them to larger public policy issues.

A number of key individuals and organizations played vital roles in implementing this project by recruiting and selecting artists, scheduling programs with staff at the venues and facilitating the completion of the surveys. These essential administrative services were provided by Lilia Chavez of the Fresno Arts Council, Laurie Brooks of the William James Association (WJA), Amie Dowling of the University of San Francisco (USF) and Community Works West (CWW), Wayne Kramer and Margaret Kramer of Jail Guitar Doors (JGD), Shelly Willis and Erika Kraft of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission (SMAC), Eliza Tudor of the Nevada County Arts Council (NCAC), and David Read of the Yuba Sutter Arts Council.

The Fresno Arts Council recruited an experienced teacher, Steve Ono, to teach a beginning guitar course in the Fresno County Jail, coordinating with jail staff to secure instruments and to schedule the 18-week program. The William James Association brought teaching artist T.S. Anand into the Santa Cruz Main Jail to teach an 18-week, mixed-media collage program. The JGD teaching artist, Jason Heath, taught a 12-week, music and songwriting course in Los Angeles' largest jail, Twin Towers Correctional Facility.

In coordination with the USF and CWW, Amie Dowling taught a 12-week theatre and movement program twice a week in the San Francisco County Jail – San Bruno Complex that included USF students collaborating with the residents to create an original performance piece. While the “outside” students received college credit from USF, the “inside” students who enrolled in the Five Keys Charter School could receive credit towards their high school diplomas. The scripted, choreographed performances were documented in a series of short videos by the Bay Area Video Coalition.

After facilitating a required agreement with the County Board of Supervisors, SMAC collaborated with co-teachers Kim Scott and Andy Cunningham, who taught a 12-week drawing course at the Sacramento County Jail. Veteran actor, director and playwright John Deaderick taught a 12-week theatre class at the Wayne Brown Nevada County Correctional Facility. Artist Anthony Emmolo taught three 10-week pencil drawing classes at the Sutter County Prison. Finally, Rebecca Wallace taught a 10-week drawing class at Yuba County Jail in Marysville.

As principal researcher, Dr. Larry Brewster analyzed the results of the survey instruments. A Professor and Director of Public Administration at USF, Dr. Brewster has been evaluating arts programming in correctional institutions for decades. His seminal analysis of the efficacy of arts-in-corrections programs in 1983 showed the cost savings of reduced disciplinary incidents. His research assistant, Anisa Siddiqui, assisted with data entry and generation of the graphs and charts. The cover photos were provided by Radu Sava of the Nevada County Arts Council and show students in John Deaderick's theatre workshop at Wayne Brown Nevada County Correctional Facility. This report was completed under the direction of Alma Robinson, CLA Executive Director, with support from former Program Development Coordinator Weston Dombrowski, and Editorial Coordinator Ariel Heinicke.

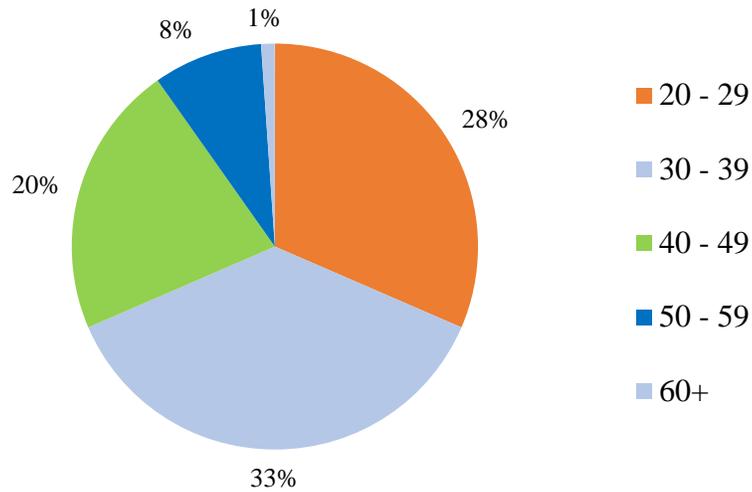
### **Participant Feedback and Demographics**

Beginning in the fall of 2015, participants in the art programs at the eight county jails in Fresno, Los Angeles, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Sacramento, Nevada, Sutter, and Yuba Counties completed surveys that provided feedback about their experiences so that we could evaluate the overall outcomes and effectiveness of their engagement with art.

Out of the total of 119 men and women who participated in these programs, over one-quarter (28%) of the participants were 20-29 years old, one-third (33%) were 30-39 years of age, 20% were between the ages of 40-49, and 8% were 50-59 years of age (Table 1). The average age of the participants was 36.

**Table 1**

What is Your Age?

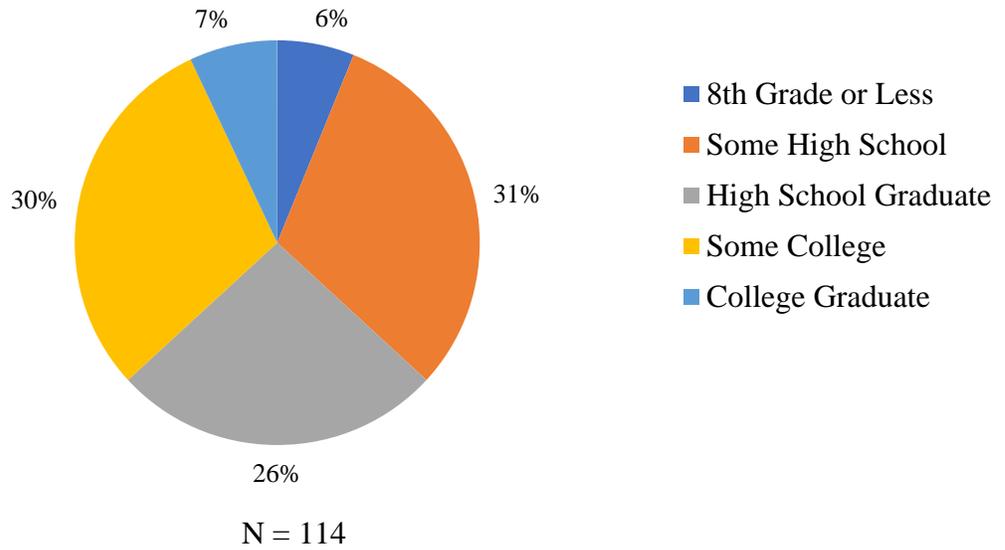


N = 102

Table 2 shows that 37% of the participants had some or no high school, 26% were high school graduates, 30% had completed some college, and 7% were college graduates. Table 3 shows that over one-third (40%) of all participants identified as Hispanic/Latin American, 24% identified as Caucasian, 14% as African American, 10% self-identified as "mixed race", 7% as Asian American/Pacific Islander, and 4% identified as Native American. Over one-third of the participants (40%) had been incarcerated for less than six months, 35% had been serving between six months to one year, and a quarter (25%) of participants had been serving between one and five years (Table 4).

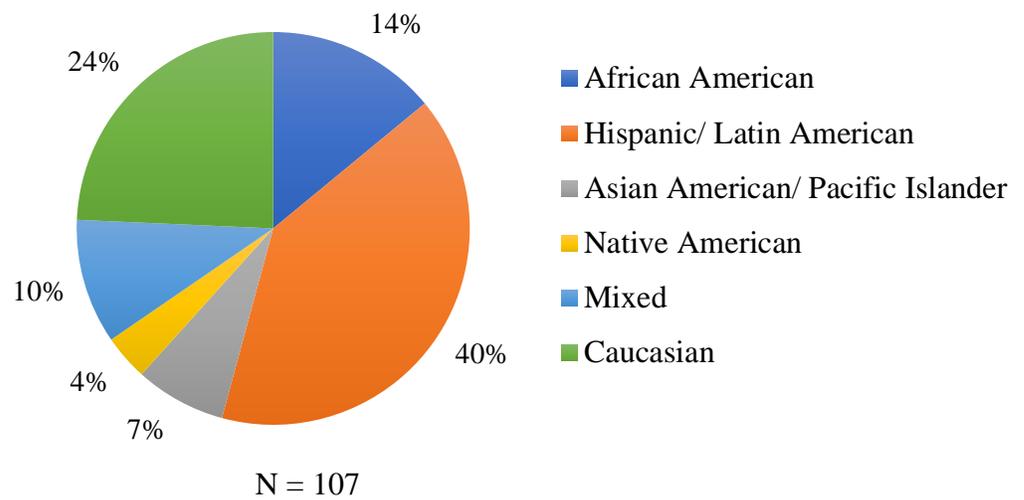
**Table 2**

What level of education have you completed?



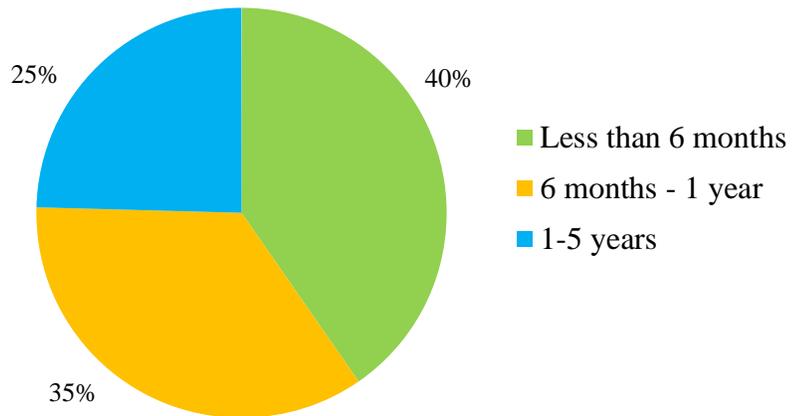
**Table 3**

You Identify As



**Table 4**

How long have you been incarcerated?

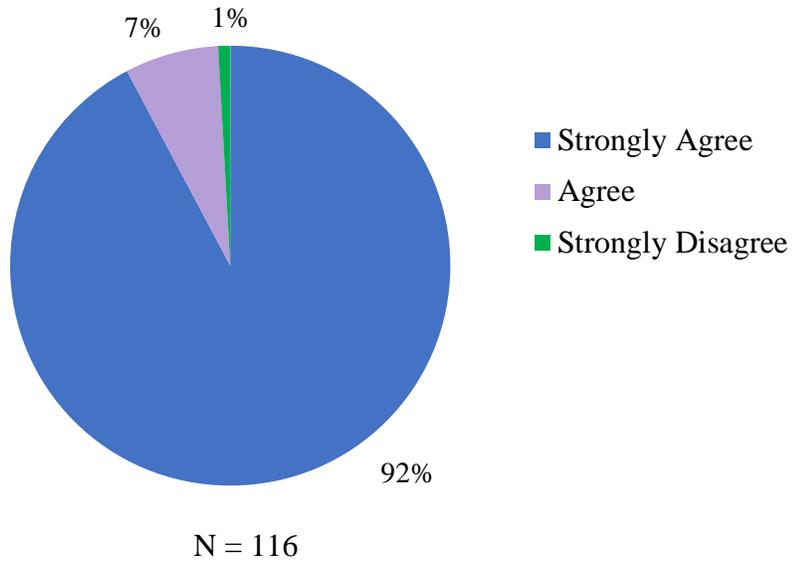


N = 114

Nearly every participant agreed that their art instructors treated them with respect (92% strongly agreed, 7% agreed) (Table 5). The majority of participants either strongly agreed (74%) or agreed (22%) that they looked forward to their art classes more than any other activity offered to them in jail (Table 6). Significantly, 97% of participants felt better about themselves as a result of the program (Table 7), while 94% of the participants said that the program provided a safe environment to explore their creativity (Table 8). The majority of participants agreed that the art program enabled them to communicate better with others (60% strongly agreed, 31% agreed) (Table 9).

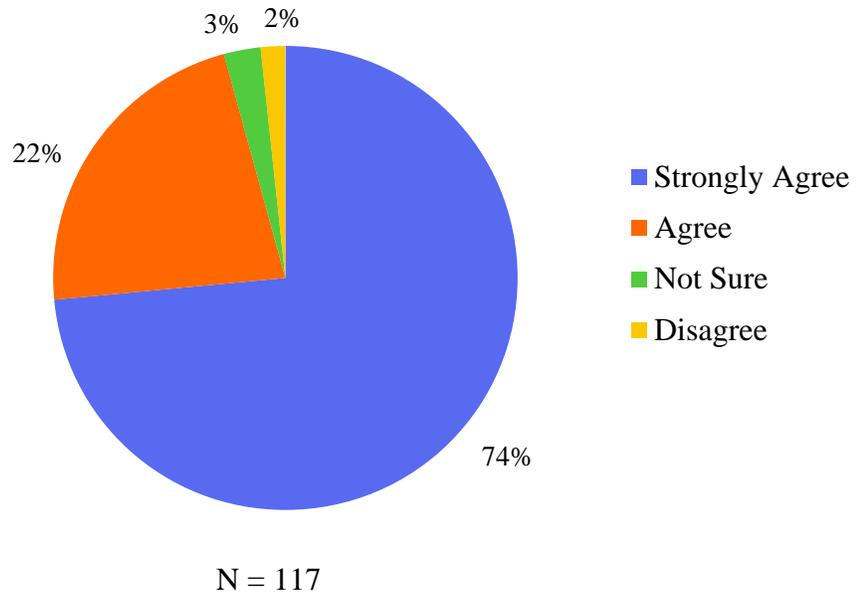
**Table 5**

Arts Instructors Show Respect For Each Student



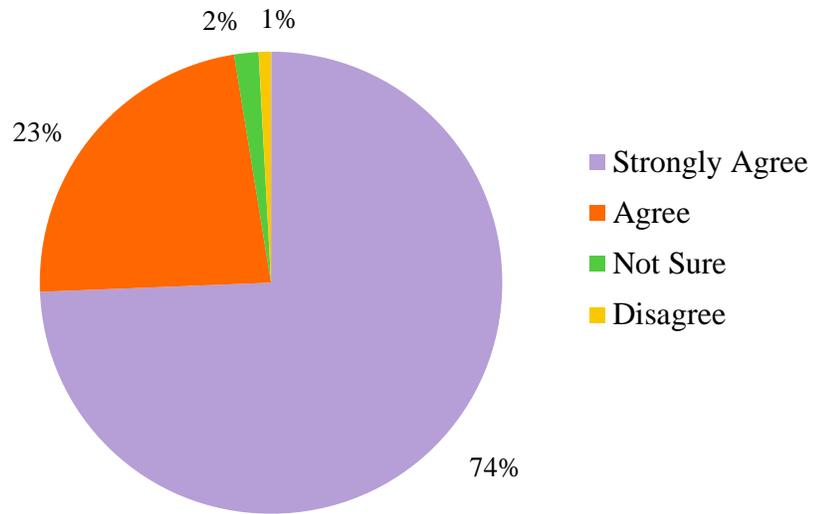
**Table 6**

I Look Forward To Art Classes More Than Any Other Activity



**Table 7**

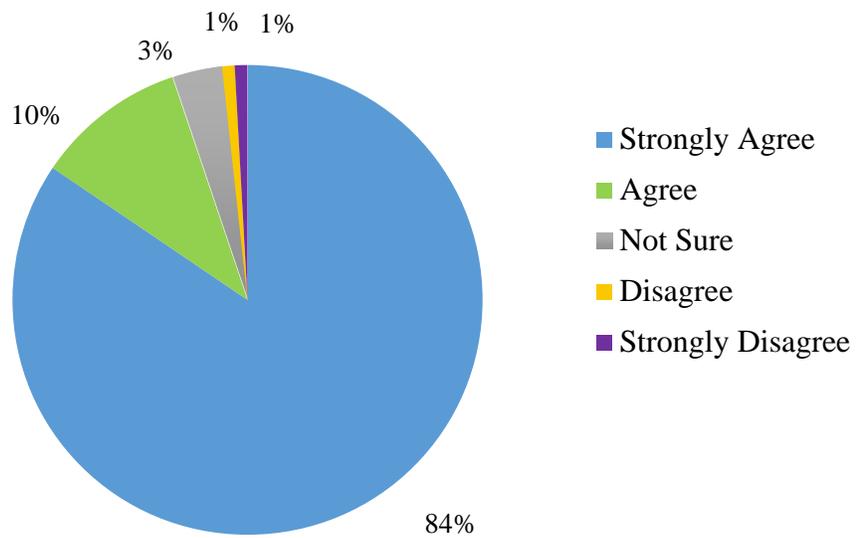
I Feel Better About Myself



N = 117

**Table 8**

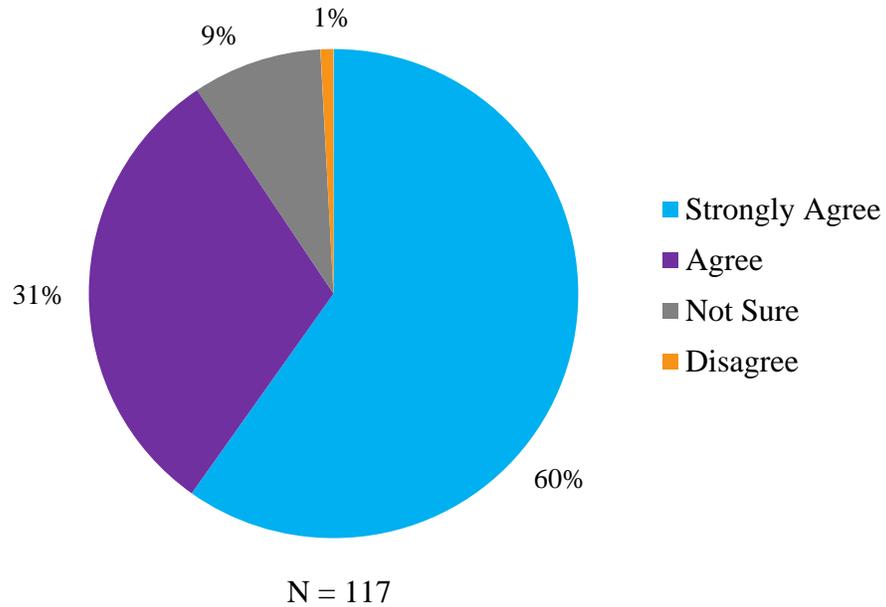
The Arts Program Provides a Safe Environment to Explore My Creativity



N = 116

**Table 9**

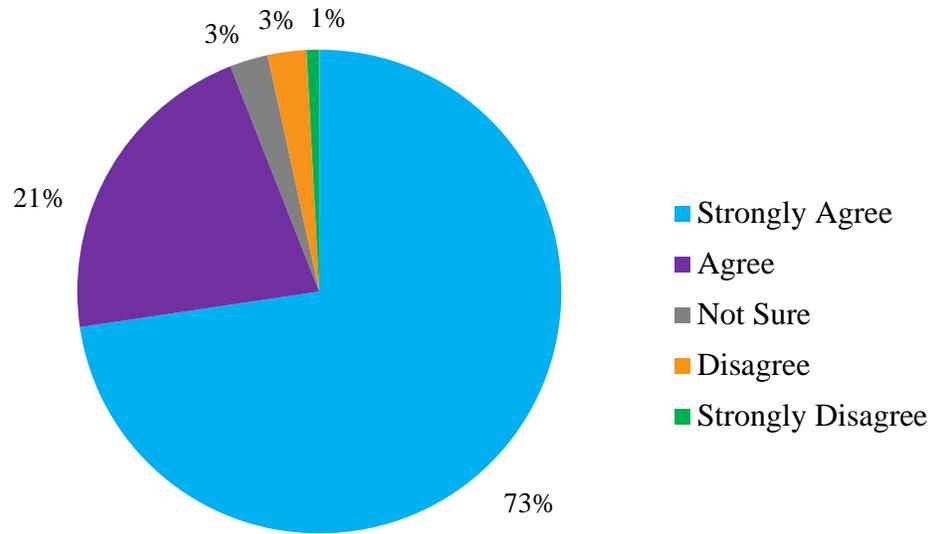
I Am Better Able to Communicate With Others



Ninety-four percent of participants reported that they felt less stress and frustration when working on their art (Table 10). A significant majority of respondents (88%) reported they were better able to express their emotions (Table 11), and equally important, 90% reported less racial tension in their classroom than elsewhere in the facility (Table 12). A large number (82%) found that the participants “interacted differently” inside the art program than elsewhere in the facility (Table 13).

**Table 10**

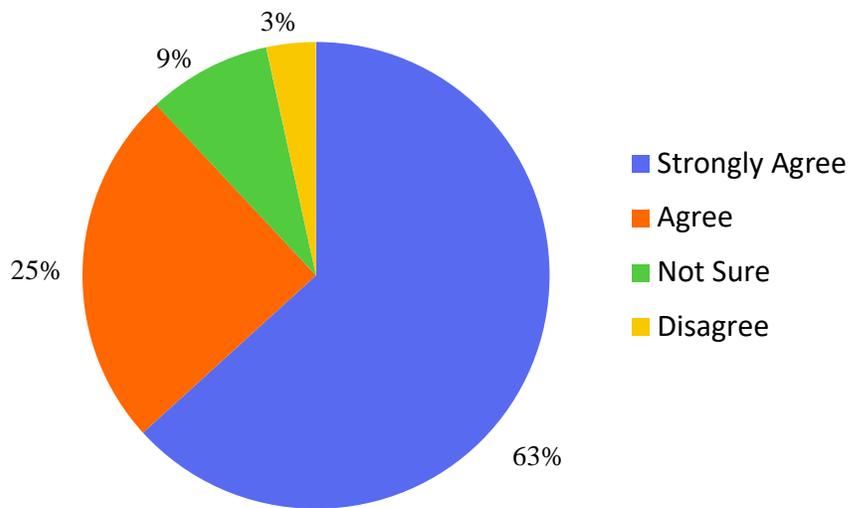
I am Less Stressed and Frustrated When Working on My Art



N = 117

**Table 11**

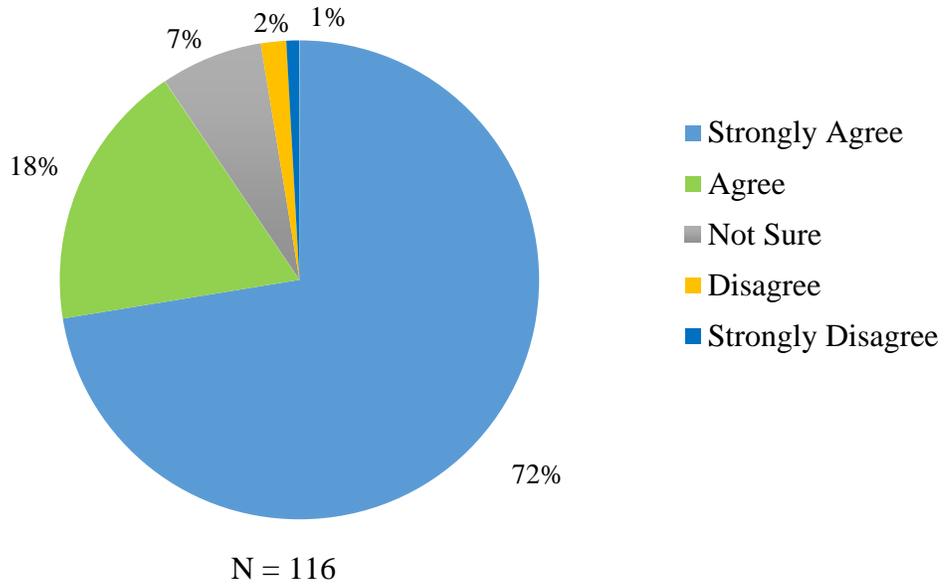
I am Better Able to Express My Emotions



N = 117

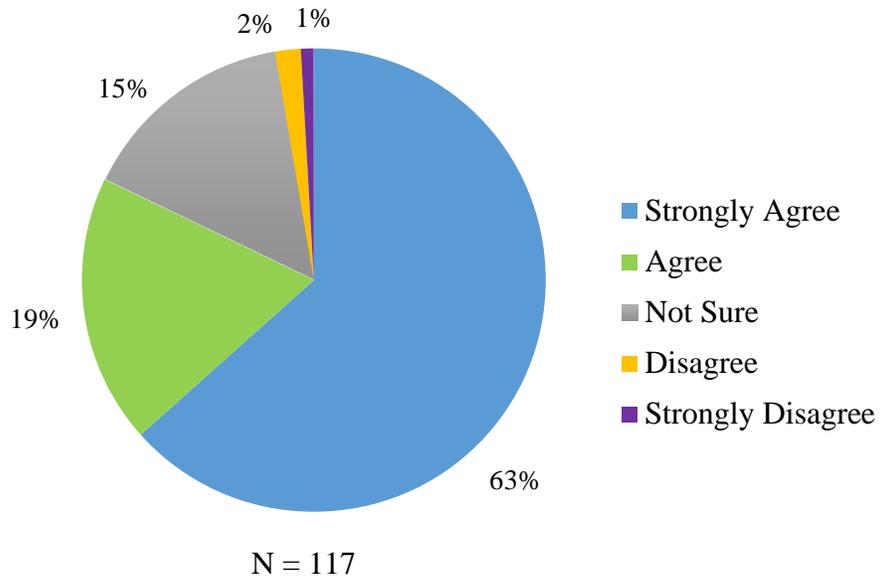
**Table 12**

There is Less Racial Tension in the Arts Program Than Elsewhere in the Facility



**Table 13**

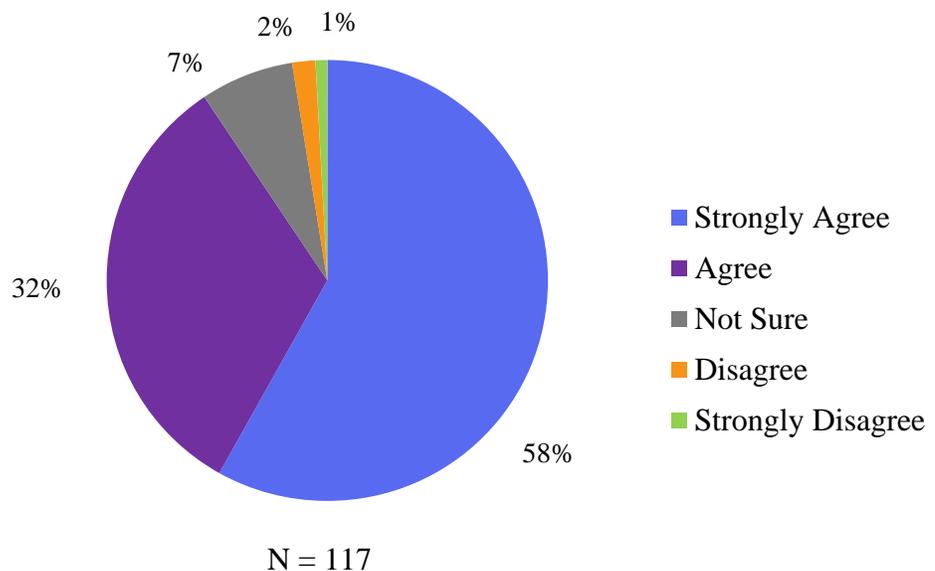
Participants Interact Differently Inside the Arts Program Than Elsewhere



The responses to the surveys also demonstrate that these programs help to change the participants' behavior and attitudes toward one another and jail staff, with 90% reporting that they enjoyed better relationships with other residents since their involvement in the art program (Table 14) and 78% reporting that they enjoyed a better relationship with staff (Table 15). Finally, 92% reported that they tried "things in the art program that I never expected" (Table 16). In other words, the program enabled most of the participants to explore their artistic and creative potential, which can in turn, promote intellectual flexibility and enhanced problem-solving skills as well as greater confidence and self-esteem.

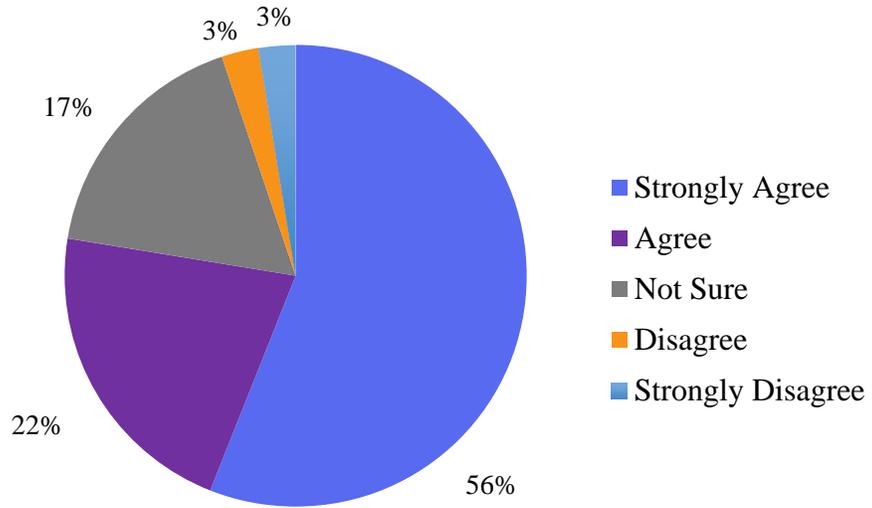
**Table 14**

I Enjoy Better Relationships With Other Inmates Since My Involvement in the Arts Program



**Table 15**

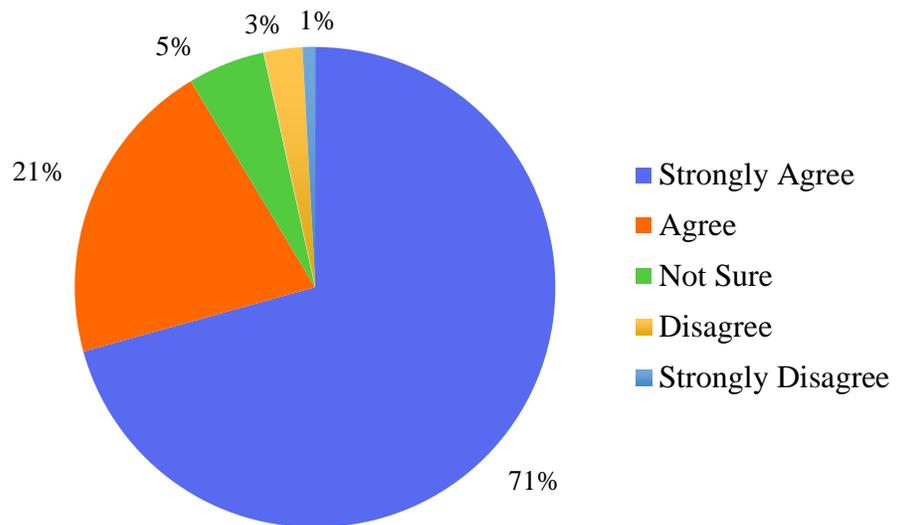
I Enjoy Better Relationships With Staff Since My Involvement in the Arts Program



N = 116

**Table 16**

I Have Tried Things in the Arts Program That I Never Expected



N = 116

## Conclusions

The overwhelming majority of the participants showed through their responses that the art programs they engaged in could be potentially life changing as they learned to feel better about themselves and others. They felt respected by their teachers, and they were able to express their emotions and communicate better with others. In the art classes, they experienced safer, less racially charged environments. Their engagement with making art reduced the tension and frustration often associated with their life experiences, including incarceration.

Asked, "How do you feel when you are in the art space?" one participant responded, "I am free to be myself and not intimidated," while another respondent shared "I feel like I am doing something good for me". When asked, "What changes have you made in your life as a result of the arts program?" one respondent wrote that he was "more positive and confident," one shared that he had "the desire to strive," and another respondent declared "I want to go to school."

Andy Cunningham, one of the teaching artists at the Sacramento County Jail shared these notes about his experience:

"All in all there was a certain sort of calm in the room that was both a space for artistic investigation and internal solace. Many of the students came into the class not knowing each other, hackles up and quiet, but left the class having crossed barriers of culture and society. It was amazing to see what an art class with limited facilities and supplies can generate in both a physical form like drawing and the nonphysical form such as communication and bonds across the prison yard with inmates and deputies."

Lieutenant Robbie Bringolf of the Wayne Brown Correctional Facility in Nevada County shared his thoughts on the program:

"...This project brought different groups of inmates together who might previously have had nothing in common with one another; this class left them as friends. I can only imagine breaking down the social barriers among inmates will serve to reduce instances of violence among involved populations. I am very impressed with this program and hope to be able to find funding to continue with something similar in the near future."

Art programs like these invite participants to explore and express their creativity, while enjoying feelings of social inclusion, rather than exclusion. These programs, like many other arts programs inside prison walls, take offenders down a path that leads to a new and positive sense of greater humanity.

### **Outreach Activities and Next Steps**

CLA staff presented findings from this study at the Region 7 Training Symposium of the Correctional Education Association in Sacramento in 2017. Using the art classes at the Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center in Sacramento as a case study, the panel also included an art teacher, who described the benefits of the program for the participants, and the Sacramento Metropolitan Art Commission program administrator, who discussed the process of working with the County Board of Supervisors, the Sheriff's Department and the facility staff. With funding from the national Art for Justice Fund for 2018, CLA staff will share the results of this study at statewide Art for Justice Forums in Michigan, Texas, Alabama, California, Georgia and New York. Presentations at the biennial conference of Shakespeare in Prisons and at the spring meeting of the California Arts Councils are also scheduled for 2018.

Appendix A provides a comprehensive list of all the teaching artists, collaborating organizations and venues involved in this project. Appendix B is a copy of the evaluation surveys that were completed by the students. Appendix C, "In Their Own Words," is a compilation of subjective comments that were written in response to open ended questions on the survey.

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## Appendix A

### Organizations/Venues

William James Association  
Santa Cruz Main Jail  
259 Water Street  
Santa Cruz, CA  
95060

Teaching Artist:	T.S. Anand
Type of Arts Program:	Visual Arts – Mixed-media Collage
Start Date:	12/16/15
Total # of classes:	18
Total # of weeks:	18
Classes per week:	1
End date:	3/30/16
Total # of Respondents:	9

Fresno Arts Council  
Fresno County Jail  
1225 M St.  
Fresno, CA 98721

Teaching Artist:	Steve Ono
Type of Arts Program:	Beginning Guitar
Start Date:	3/29/16
Total # of classes:	18
Total # of weeks:	18
Classes per week:	1
End date:	7/26/16
Total # of Respondents:	7

Community Works West  
SF County Jail #5 – San Bruno Complex  
1 Moreland Dr.  
San Bruno, CA 94066

Teaching Artist: Amie Dowling  
Type of Arts Program: Theater/Movement  
Start Date: 9/11/15  
Total # of classes: 24  
Total # of weeks: 12  
Classes per week: 2  
End Date: 12/4/15  
Total # of Respondents: 12

Jail Guitar Doors  
MCJ/Twin Towers Correctional Facility  
450 Bauchet St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Teaching Artist: Jason Heath  
Type of Arts Program: Music/Songwriting  
Start Date: 3/30/16  
Total # of classes: 12  
Total # of weeks: 12  
Classes per week: 1  
End Date: 6/1/16  
Total # of Respondents: 31

Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission  
Sacramento County Jail – Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center  
12500 Bruceville Road  
Elk Grove, CA 95757

Teaching Artist: Andy Cunningham and Kim Scott  
Type of Arts Program: Drawing  
Start Date: 9/6/16  
Total # of classes: 12  
Total # of weeks: 12  
Classes per week: 1  
End Date: 11/29/16  
Total # of Respondents: 5

Nevada County Arts Council  
Wayne Brown Nevada County Correctional Facility  
925 Maidu Ave.  
Nevada City, CA 95959

Teaching Artist: John Deaderick  
Type of Arts Program: Theatre  
Start Date: 6/19/17  
Total # of classes: 12  
Total # of weeks: 12  
Classes per week: 1  
End Date: 8/18/17  
Total # of Respondents: 15

Yuba Sutter Arts Council  
Sutter County Jail  
1077 Civic Center Blvd.  
Yuba City, CA 95993

Teaching Artist: Anthony Emmolo  
Type of Arts Program: Drawing  
Start Date: 10/23/17  
Total # of classes: 37  
Total # of weeks: 10  
Classes per week: 1  
End Date: 1/18/18  
Total # of Respondents: 19

Yuba Sutter Arts Council  
Yuba County Jail  
215 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Marysville, CA 95901

Teaching Artist: Rebecca Wallace  
Type of Arts Program: Drawing  
Start Date: 10/18/17  
Total # of classes: 10  
Total # of weeks: 10  
Classes per week: 1  
End Date: 12/20/17  
Total # of Respondents: 21

## Appendix B

### Arts in Corrections — Participant Survey

Thank you for participating in this program evaluation. Your feedback is very important to us. Your answers are confidential and will help us improve the program. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Thank you.

Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the Arts Program and its impact on your life.

1=Strongly Agree      2=Agree    3=Not Sure    4=Disagree      5=Strongly Disagree

*(Please circle the appropriate number)*

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel better about myself.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I look forward to art classes more than any other activity...                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Arts instructors show respect for each student.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The arts program provides a safe environment for me to explore my creativity.....              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I am better able to communicate with others.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I am less stressed and frustrated when working on my art...                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I am better able to express my emotions.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I have tried things in the arts program that I never expected...                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. People interact differently inside the arts program than elsewhere                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. There is less racial tension in the arts program than elsewhere in the facility.....          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I enjoy better relationships with other inmates since my involvement in the arts program..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I enjoy better relationships with jail staff since my involvement in the arts program.....    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. What is your age? _____   |   |   |   |   |   |

14. What level of education have you completed?

- a. 8th Grade or less
- b. Some High School
- c. High School Graduate
- d. Some College
- e. College Graduate

15. How long have you been incarcerated?

- a. Less than 6 months
- b. 6 months – 1 year
- c. 1-5 years
- d. 5+ years

16. You are: (you may circle more than one)

- a. African American
- b. Hispanic/Latin American
- c. Asian American/Pacific Islander
- d. Caucasian
- e. Native American
- f. Middle Eastern American

17. How would you describe your interactions with others during class? In what ways are they similar or different to other interactions in the facility?

18. Who or what influenced your decision to participate in the arts program?

19. How do you feel when you are in the art space (e.g. class, art studio)? How is it similar or different from other physical spaces in the facility?

20. What change(s) have you made in your life as a result of the arts program?

21. What, if anything, would you change about the arts program?

Thank you!

## Appendix C

### In Their Own Words

The following comments were written by arts program participants in response to several open-ended questions on the survey that was administered during the first two phases of the county jail demonstration project from November, 2015 to January, 2018.

How do you feel when you are in the art space? How is it different or similar to other physical spaces in the facility?

*There is a sense of peace in art class  
Free to be myself and not intimidated  
Happy, relaxed, no tension or judgement  
Good, respected and cared for  
Feel free and more creative to express ideas  
I feel well understood  
Makes me feel like I'm not in jail  
It's like awesome it's like I'm on cloud nine*

How would you describe your interactions with others during class? In what ways are they similar or different to other interactions in the facility?

*We are not very social, but we have connected through this class  
I gave positive input and helped others with their art and encourage them  
I interact with inmates I would not normally talk to  
Collaboration, compromise, healthy communication  
Special unity that isn't found anywhere else in the jail  
Everyone is more open because art is a universal language that everyone shares  
Get to know them on a more personal level  
I feel I understand each person more*

What changes have you made in your life as a result of the arts program?

*Patience and to look at things differently  
Treating people with respect  
Interested in making art  
Try new things  
Realistic goals  
Learned people skills and interaction  
Believing in myself  
More kind and God fearing  
More positive and confident*

*More prone to teamwork and write actively*  
*Learning more advanced practices*  
*Write music in my free time*  
*I've learned to laugh more*  
*I want to go to school*  
*How to handle stress*  
*I try to find more peace amongst those who have the same passion*  
*I'm going to start art and change my attitude problem*  
*I'm more open to work in front of more than 15 people!!*  
*I discovered myself being a creative mother*  
*I've become more outgoing and cheerful*

**What, if anything, would you change about the arts program?**

*Snacks/Food (2 respondents)*  
*More classes/hours (28)*  
*Nothing or n/a (57)*  
*Practice time between the week with the guitar and drums*  
*More instruments (3)*  
*Not Sure (7)*  
*More artist ideas, maybe a group project*  
*More activities, this is a chance to learn new talents and give us motivation for a better life*  
*Nothing at all, just let us keep the guitars*  
*Make the class longer, that way we can do a play*  
*More funding*

## Appendix D

### Sample Memorandum of Understanding

California Lawyers for the Arts (CLA) a nonprofit corporation, and the \_\_\_\_\_ Arts Council (AC), agree to collaborate to provide arts programming for residents at the \_\_\_\_\_ County Jail, under the auspices of the CLA Arts in Corrections County Jail Demonstration Project, beginning \_\_\_\_\_ and extending through \_\_\_\_\_. The purpose of this collaboration is to recruit high quality teaching artists to teach classes in the \_\_\_\_\_ County Jail, provide oversight and support to those artists as they develop their programs, and evaluate the project as part of a statewide evaluation of arts programs in county jails.

#### Roles

CLA will provide evaluation materials, including a survey instrument, previous reports, and project follow up information to be presented to the \_\_\_\_\_ County Sheriff's Department that demonstrates the results of the project.

AC will provide the following through this collaboration: selection of the artist for the pilot project, pay the artist for services and supplies, and community publicity to gain attention for the artistic expressions of the students (must be coordinated with the Public Information Office of the \_\_\_\_\_ County Jail). In addition AC will provide a representative to attend relevant meetings at the jail, observe ongoing classes as needed to monitor the program, and, as appropriate, coordinate a closing event to celebrate the achievements of the students.

#### Fiscal Arrangements

AC will bill CLA for services related to this project at the agreed upon flat rate administrative fee of \$\_\_\_\_\_. In addition, AC will be responsible for paying the artist working under this agreement \$\_\_\_\_\_/hour for ten to twelve three-hour sessions (which includes travel, class and preparation time), and supplies of up to \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the program. CLA will reimburse AC upon receipt of invoices for services and supplies, in addition to the administrative fee. AC can invoice CLA as often as monthly.

#### Benefits

The benefits of this collaboration will be that the CLA's specialized experience through its Arts in Corrections Initiative will be shared with AC in order to develop AC's capacity to leverage additional resources for community arts programs. Through this project, CLA and AC agree to work together toward the goal of developing the expertise at AC to be able to independently apply for funds for the project in future years.

The growing network of participating organizations will also provide mutual support as they work together to provide information to local elected officials and to statewide professional associations about the benefits of the arts programs.

#### Alternative Dispute Resolution

In the event of any misunderstandings arising from this agreement, the organizations agree to use mediation services provided by a mutually selected, neutral provider to work out an amicable resolution.

\_\_\_\_\_  
AC Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
CLA Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date