

# Young Changemakers: The Koffler Arts Studio Program in partnership with Recreate Place

## YEAR ONE

July 18, 2023

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koffler

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*\*All photos in this report are credited to Christine Lim*



# Project Overview and Goals

what this project is all about



# Young Changemakers The Koffler Arts Studio Program 2023-2025

Arts based programming for children.

For the project period, Recreate Place and Koffler Centre of the Arts will offer meaningful and immersive arts based programming at Thorncliffe Park School and Faywood Public School. Children will experience:

- Collaborative and interactive arts based activities with artists,
- Opportunities for creative self-expression, and
- The creation of art in public spaces.

*This project is generously supported by funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.*







# Young Changemakers

## The Koffler Studio Program 2023-2025

### Goals

#### **GENERAL PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:**

To explore the correlation between increased and more equitable access to high quality arts based programming and children's wellbeing.

To engage 4,140 children ages 8-12 (grades 3-5) in arts based programming.

To develop evaluation reports for year 1 and 2, and a final culminating report for year 3.

#### **INTERMEDIATE PROJECT OUTCOMES:**

This project is designed to improve participants':

- Sense of belonging
- Emotional wellbeing
- Connectedness



# Program Co-benefits

Young Changemakers is an educational program which touches on many areas of school life. In addition to our program goals, it is expected that other benefits and impacts important to children's wellbeing may also be realized. While these are not the focus of this project's evaluation, research has demonstrated these types of impacts from arts-based programming.

## Impacts for English Language Learners:

- language development
- reduced stress and anxiety re. settlement pressures

## Impacts for all children:

- creative inclination
- self-confidence
- sociability
- attitudes towards school
- academic performance



# Year One Highlights 2023

what happened in the first year of the Young Changemakers program



# Young Changemakers

## The Koffler Arts Studio Program

### 2023 Program Overview

Grade four classes were engaged from March through June in a series of Art Jams.

Artists worked with classes to engage students in hands-on art activities, culminating in onsite installations and a final celebration.

**6** classes engaged

**168** students

**6** teachers

**4** artists

**4** in class Art Jam per class

**4** classes took part in field trips

**1** student art celebration

**240** take-home art kits for grade 4 students (including 3 non-participating classes)



# Thorncliffe Park Public School

A diverse and engaged public school in one of Toronto's most dynamic communities.

## Thorncliffe Park Public School Population\*

- 1278 students in grades 1-5, representing 47 countries
- 1209 students have a primary language other than English
  - Primary languages spoken by students are: Arabic, Urdu, Pashto, Slovak, Dari, Farsi. and Hindi
- 10% of students have been in Canada <2 years and an additional 13% have been in Canada 3-5 years

## Thorncliffe Community Snapshot\*\*

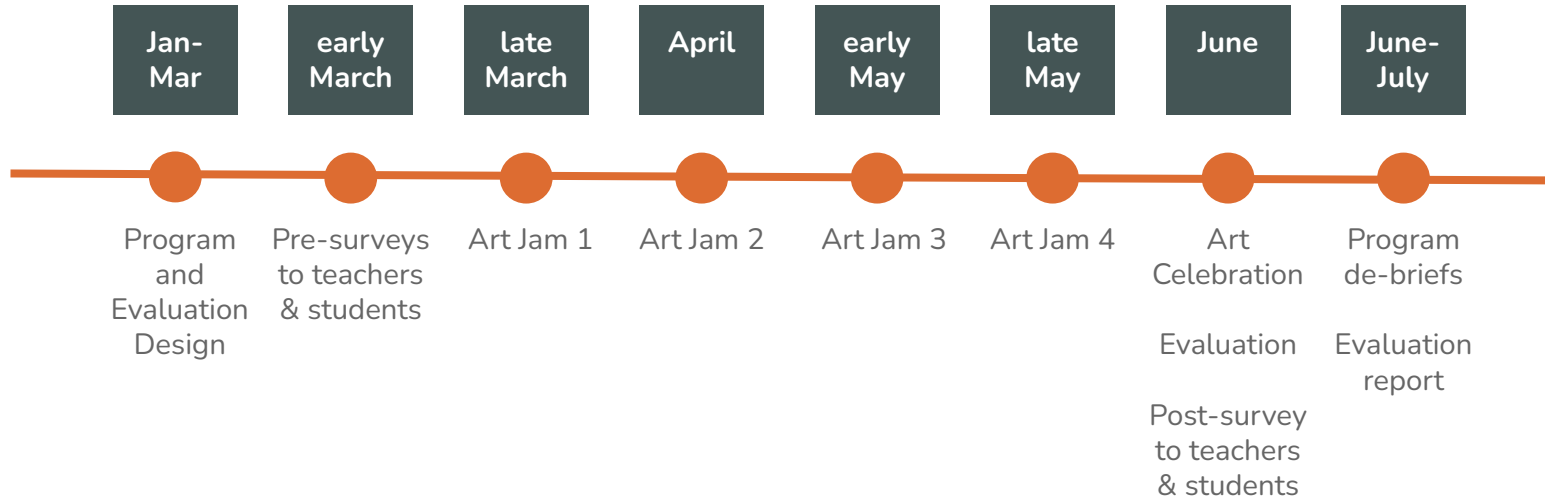
- An “arrival city” of 89% renters in a cluster of 34 apartment buildings with 40 languages spoken
- Children (0-14) make up 27% of the population (city rate is 15%) and youth (15-24) another 12%
- 45% of the community is considered low income or living in poverty, despite 41% of the population having a university degree (44% for the city of Toronto)

\*<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Find-your/Schools/Facts-and-Figures/schno/1184>

\*\*<https://thorncliffehub.org/neighbourhood/>



# 2023 Program Timeline for the program year





# The Young Changemakers Program Framework

The program framework is designed to first introduce teachers and school administrators to the program goals, structure and approach. Secondly, we begin the student and artist collaboration process, through a series of engaging in-class sessions (called Art Jams). Classes may visit the AGO in an optional field trip. The program concludes with a final celebration.

A

## Teacher Engagement

Teachers meet with Recreate Place to explore program materials; including the Teacher Toolkit (which includes student activities such as *Community Stakeholder Mapping*, *Exploring Public Art*, and Take-home student led surveys); and Pre-Art Jam Teacher and Student Surveys.

B

## Art Jams

Classes work with artist(s) and explore:

- 1: Introductory art making; techniques & skill building activities.
- 2: Exploring & creating; students share their ideas & visions with artists for class art project.
3. Artist respond to student concepts and together they begin the collaborative art installation.
4. Students & artist co-create the art installation and suggest possible names.

C

## Field Trip

An optional art gallery field trip to the AGO is made available to all classes. In 2023.

D

## School Wide Art Celebration

Student celebration in the school yard with all participants, and distribution of take home art kits. Gallery tour led by students and artists for an audience of community stakeholders. On the tour, students showcase their art, the experience and key learnings. .



## “Roots of Thorncliffe” 2023

**Artist:** Roda Medhat

**Installation:** A textile installation (rug) in the school library.

Roda introduced students to a variety of activities where they reflected on their own experiences with textiles within their cultures. They explored different forms of weaving with materials and painting recycled fabric which they wove on their school fence. While creating art outdoors in their courtyard, the nature they saw became a key theme in their work. Students then made beautiful collages with images and plant materials that were incorporated into the designs of a colourful rug.

The final installation references the students' own visions, featuring images of local plants and animals, and connecting the indoor and outdoor spaces. The students are so proud that their work will be enjoyed by the whole school!

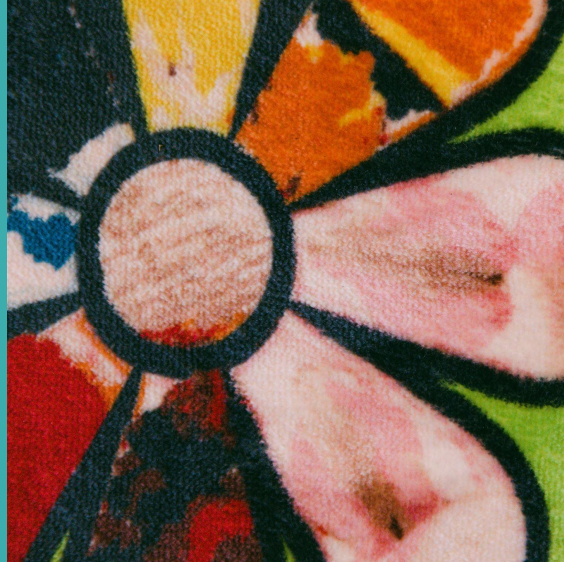




# Creating “Roots of Thorncliffe”



# Creating “Roots of Thorncliffe”







## “Spring Shine: A Collaboration with Nature” 2023

**Artists:** Christine Dewancker & Katie Strang of D & S Projects

**Installation:** Nature silhouettes on the windows in two busy hallways where 1000+ students, teachers and community members pass by daily

Christine and Katie led students in two classrooms through a series of indoor and outdoor activities designed to connect them to the natural world in their schoolground. These light and colour themed activities included the creation of ‘stained glass’ window displays made with tissue paper, shadow tracing and flower pressing.

This series of activities culminated with the co-creation of a window installation that translated students pressed flower cyanotypes into a display of colourful, translucent pieces on windows. As the light passes through, the images cast beautiful, playful shadows onto the surface visible as children pass by. These pieces can be viewed from both indoors and the adjacent courtyards.



# Creating “Spring Shine: A Collaboration with Nature”





# Creating “Spring Shine: A Collaboration with Nature”





## “The Nature of Art and The Art of Nature” 2023

**Artist:** Kseniya Tsoy

**Installation:** A whimsical and playful welcoming installation on the fence at the front of the school.

Kseniya worked with students to first create shapes and images using circle segments. Students were inspired by the plants and animals on their schoolground, which they integrated into their final designs.

Kseniya then translated the student shapes into larger cutout panels, which the students enjoyed painting together.

Installing these on the front fence, with the addition of “hello” signs in multiple languages has created a welcoming and inclusive space for the children and their families. Students were thrilled to have this front and centre at their school.

Students were also engaged in building and painting birdhouses to welcome wildlife to their school. They created beautiful clay sculptures, adding seeds and leaving these for the birds – welcoming both the community and the natural environment to their school. .





# Creating “The Nature of Art and The Art of Nature”



# Creating “The Nature of Art and The Art of Nature”







## The Closing Celebration

In early June, students, teachers, artist and project partners gathered outdoors to celebrate the incredible art installations the students had created together.

They shared highlights of the program, memorable moments, and celebrated over freezies. The gathering was an opportunity for students to see how collectively, they played a role in transforming their school grounds with beautiful art.

Students each received an art kit to take home and continue making art.

12 students participated in a guided tour and led visiting community members, including the Toronto District School Board Chair, the area Superintendent, and core members of the TDSB Sustainability Team through the school, sharing their art work and highlights of the experience.. It was a memorable moment for all!



# The Celebration





# The Celebration







# Resources

A collection of resources were developed to support the Art Jams, including both a teacher toolkit and an evaluation toolkit, along with supporting materials.

**Young Changemakers:**  
The Koffler Arts Studio Program  
in partnership with Recreate Place

**Impact Evaluation Activities  
Toolkit**

Prepared by: Christine Martin  
DRAFT: March 09, 2023  
Last Updated: May 15, 2023

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**Young Changemakers:**  
**The Koffler Art Studio Program**

**Teacher Toolkit**



**March 2023**

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# Impact Evaluation Year One 2023

impact of the first year of programming

“An impact evaluation provides information about the observed changes or ‘impacts’ produced by an intervention.”

—Better Evaluation



# Guiding Research Questions

To what extent does access to enriched arts experiences, and, more specifically, participation in The Young Changemakers: Koffler Arts Studio Program, contribute to children's overall connections, emotional wellbeing and feelings of confidence?

How does the program impact participants' creative inclinations, self-confidence, and sociability?





# Theory of Change Overview

The intended impact of the Young Changemakers Program has been visualized using a simplified Theory of Change framework.

A **Theory of Change** is a logic model that articulates what an organization or program is trying to achieve and how they will get there. The focus is on long term impact or goals that you aim for your target group to achieve for themselves, over time. Your program plays a contributing role towards these impact, alongside others, but do not “make” the target group achieve.

This project includes an evaluation approach designed to collect evidence to assess the impact of the program on intermediate outcomes. This understanding also helps to validate (or invalidate) the hypothesis proposed in the Theory of Change.

**Long-term goals** are the broader social change a project or organisation is trying to work towards the target group achieving, in this case, students.

**Intermediate outcomes** are the short-term changes, benefits, and effects that result from what the program does, contributing to the long-term goal.

**Activities** are the things an organisation or projects does in delivering their work.

**Evidence and evaluation** are the information (qualitative and/or quantitative) you have or collect the support the testing and measurement of the theory of change.



# Theory of Change

## Young Changemakers

### LONG-TERM GOAL

The broader long-term goal for the Young Changemakers program is **improved wellbeing for participating students.** This is the intended impact that the program is working towards supporting.

### INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

As shorter-term, intermediate outcomes that contribute to this long-term goal, this program is specifically focused on three primary intermediate outcomes of increasing student:

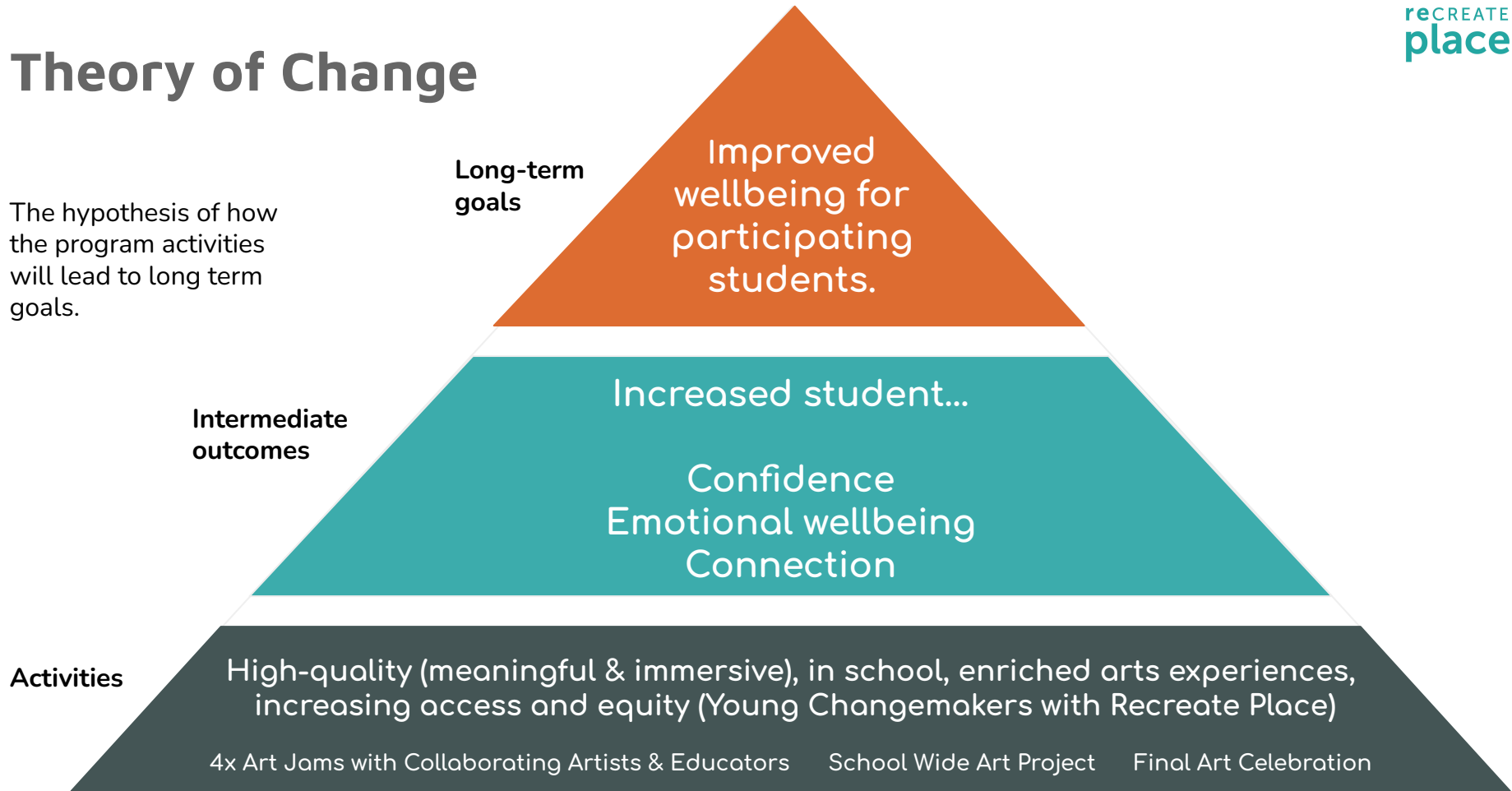
- **Confidence:** Feelings of empowerment, pride and self-esteem, and the ability to accomplish things and solve problems at school and in art.
- **Emotional wellbeing:** A sense of contentment, satisfaction, engagement and happiness in life and at school.
- **Connection:** Experiences and feelings of belonging and acceptance with others, along with connection to the class and school community and environment.

### ACTIVITIES

The focus of the program activities is to offer **high-quality (meaningful & immersive), enriched arts experiences, increasing access and equity by embedding this program into the school day and connecting all activities to curriculum.** Specifically, these include Art Jams with collaborating artists and educators,

# Theory of Change

The hypothesis of how the program activities will lead to long term goals.









# Evaluation Approaches

Impact evaluation was designed to include a range of approaches intended to measure change in the three intermediate outcomes, in ways that would work for both students and teachers. Year One was seen as a prototyping year, to apply and adapt a range of research-based methods while garnering valuable insights.

- Surveys with both teachers and students
- “Closing circle” reflection activities with student after each session
- Observations and documentation by facilitators during programming activities
- Post-program de-briefs with key stakeholders.

Young Changemakers:  
The Koffler Arts Studio Program  
in partnership with Recreate Place

Program De-Brief Guide  
with Teachers, Artists and other  
Stakeholders

 Calm	 Proud
	

TEACHER SURVEY

Teacher Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Students \_\_\_\_\_

PART ONE: Class Snapshot

1. How do you feel the Art Jams impacted your students' general enjoyment at school?
2. How do you feel that the Art Jams have fostered student relationships in your class?



# Impact Highlights

Insights from evaluation approaches were synthesized to identify key learnings and impact.

In summary, the Art Jams:

- had an overall positive and lasting impact on students
  - **they affected beneficial change towards the intended intermediate outcomes of increased student confidence, emotional wellbeing and connection**
  - they enhanced student skills and related confidence
  - they expanded student awareness of public art
- were very much enjoyed by students
  - they fostered nature connections for students
  - they were something students were excited to share with family
- Impacted the whole school community
  - they had a positive impact on teachers
  - had a valuable ripple effect at the school

# Positive impact

Teacher feedback and overall evaluation results demonstrated how the art jams were an experience that supported students to grow and thrive.

Students gained new skills, sometimes overcoming initial uncertainty and lack of confidence. Their belief in their abilities grew.

Students gained new perspectives and awareness around public art.

I [first] thought we were going to do small things but we did so many collaborative and amazing art projects it was so exciting. I learned so many new skills. -student

I have no doubt that the students will always remember this. -teacher

I look at all of our places differently now. I can see everything as a place for art. -student

# Student engagement

Students largely found the Art Jams very enjoyable and something they looked forward to, ensuring they were at school for the sessions.

They were excited to share their experiences with family and to do more art.

Students really appreciated being outside and connecting with nature.

The weeks that the art jams were scheduled has had a positive impact on the students. They looked forward to seeing and working with the artist.

-teacher

[I would love to invite] my little brother to an Art Jam. I taught him how to do this art project!

-student

I liked the leaf drawing because I got to learn more about nature.

-student

# School-wide benefit

The program had a ripple effect that benefitted the whole school community.

Teachers were inspired to bring nature more into their practice and became champions for the Art Jams. A school-wide survey by one teacher, exploring the overall school improvement plan, highlighted a desire for more seating and colours!

Bringing the program to Thorncliffe helped to build connections with the school board and stakeholders, resulting in the valued addition of 16 benches and stumps, thus catalyzing more effective use of the outdoor space.

I will go back to an earlier practice of incorporating more 'nature time" in my art projects.

-teacher

Students used this experience to design a school-wide survey for the school improvement plan [improving outdoor space and integrating public art].

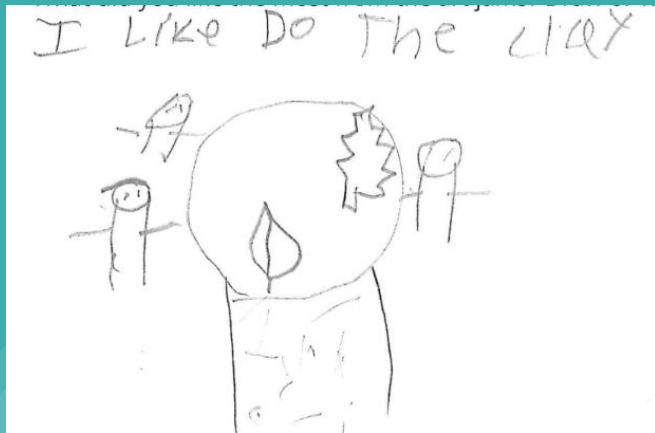
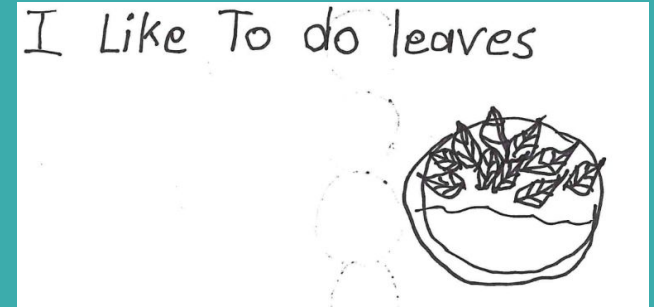
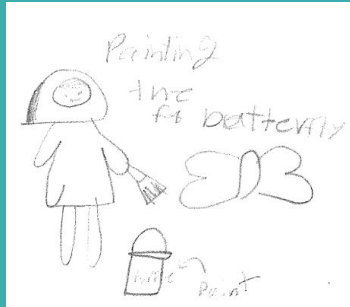
-principal

Benches! woo! Hoo!  
say no more!

-teacher



# Some favourite Art Jam experiences



## Intermediate outcome #1

### More confidence

This includes feelings of empowerment, pride and self-esteem, and the ability to accomplish things and solve problems at school and in art.

Students were largely proud of their projects and eager to share them with others. Many struggled with feeling they could come up with good ideas but the Art Jams gave them time to practice in an open-ended context.

Over time, problem-solving skills for some were enhanced through persistence. Confidence around making art grew, with the support of the leaders and sharing with others.

I felt a pride emanating from many of them as they saw their work as being "worthy of public display [as public art]. This generated some incredible confidence.

-teacher

I feel calm because before I did it, I didn't know I could do it. What if I mess up? But afterwards I felt calm because I did a great job!

-student

## Intermediate outcome #2

# Improved emotional well-being

This encompasses a sense of contentment, satisfaction, engagement and happiness in life and at school.

Most students reported that art jams were fun and they looked forward to them, describing feelings of happiness and calm with art jams. Some did feel bored at times, with a few feeling frustration at times.

Students with challenges such as attendance, engagement and lack of English were still engaged, even surprising some teachers

I felt so much joy today!

-student

Students were laughing, smiling and working together like they are at a party and making things for the party. They had fun.

-teacher

## Intermediate outcome #3

# Better connections

This involves experiences and feelings of belonging and acceptance with others, along with connection to the class and school community and environment.

Students appreciated working in groups, which fostered sharing and cooperation, although some mostly stayed with their current friends.

They loved the visiting adult presence, from artists to the TDSB carpentry team. This adult support built their comfort in speaking with trusted adults, something they need in their lives.

The students really valued being outside and how it connected them to nature, others and gave them freedom. They became more aware of the school grounds, with a desire to improve them for everyone.

The common art experience was a vehicle to talk more freely, or with peers that aren't that aren't in their usual friend circles. -teacher

I liked teamwork and how we helped each other with ideas.  
-student



# Additional Insights

Through the course of the program and evaluation, a few additional learnings emerged that are important to note.

- Cultural understanding is critical. For instance, a high proportion of Muslim students at the school meant that fasting during the month of Ramadan impacted engagement and attendance.
- Students did not have 'painting clothes' and so many students needed long-sleeved painting shirts provided to them.
- Students felt proud to have their art displayed for others. However, for some students, art products that are short lived (e.g. chalk, clay & bird seed) are disappointing when they don't last.
- Being clear with instructions and intentions for an activity helps students feel more satisfaction, happiness and fun and is a foundation for student success



## Additional Insights (continued)

- The iterative approach inherent in this program was valued by teachers and the principal.
- Conversational session debrief with students proved very effective for gathering impact evaluation data, while Pre- and post-surveys with students were not as effective. Methods that explore feelings and reasons, and allow students to explain their meaning without time pressure or the ability to form thoughts on paper, are most valuable.
- Any external program like this must take into consideration the time and attention limitations faced by teachers and administrators
- Working with a a large proportion of English learners, and students with other needs adds an additional element of planning and requirements for inclusive practices



## Next Steps for Year Two

Building on the learnings and insights from this first year, and in response to stakeholder feedback, there are some key areas Recreate Place will address to make the next year even better:

- Begin the program earlier, ideally starting in the fall with teachers at both schools
- Account for cultural holidays and plan accordingly.
- Continue to modify/adjust program activities, timing and approach.
- Continue to work with grade fours, and explore how to engage the full school in meaningful ways.
- Modify the evaluation approach to address challenges and better assess impact
- Build on program and organizational connections at Thorncliffe and at the Toronto District School Board, including informing the School Improvement Plan, supporting broader outdoor education and sustainability initiatives, and arts based programming (ie. artist in residencies).
- Ensure equitable access to programming - build accommodations into activities to support integration and inclusion of all children, including children in specialized education classes (ie. Learning Disability Class and ESL).



# Thank You!

Thank you to:

- The Ontario Trillium Foundation for their generous support
- The Koffler Center of the Arts: Staff team and Board
- Our collaborating artists: Kensiya Tsoy, Roda Medhat, Christine Dewancker and Katie Strang of D+S Projects
- The wonderful teachers, students, Custodians, Librarians, and Principal Christine Harvey Kerr from Thorncliffe Public School
- The Toronto District School Board and Facilities Team: Landscape Architect Karen Dobrucki and the talented carpentry team
- Christine Martin, Evaluator and Researcher
- Shelley Kavanagh, Art Therapist







# Appendices

# Additional Information

Program Evaluation Framework

Student Voices

Teacher Voices



# Program Evaluation Principles

Guiding principles by which program evaluation approaches will be designed.

- Employs a diversity of approaches to measuring impact
- Evaluation is focused on a class as a whole rather than individual students
- Student evaluation approaches are created for ESL learners
- Consider potential for use of methods at the school post-projects (e.g. for
- Includes collection of demographic information that supports impact evaluation by the project team
- Considers sharing methods that could live with the school after, so they ongoing pedagogical reflection and light-touch evaluation (formative and summative work))
- Supports OTF reporting



# Student Voices

## Additional quotes from students

"It made me proud to see my art up where everyone can see it".

"I had the time to really go slowly and make art. I had cool ideas to make cool things."

"I feel like my drawing is better" (from a boy who wasn't engaged at all!)

"I feel calm because before I did it, I didn't know I could do it. What if I mess up? But afterwards I felt calm because I did a great job!"

"We went outside, and drew what we felt. It was ok to be different."

"I loved being outside and doing art because it was more calm. the Wind made it nice and it helps you connect with nature"

"I like art because it lets me express my emotions. So I got to express that I was happy when we went outside"

"Today was better because we worked together"



# Teacher Voices

## Additional quotes from teachers

"[This was] a special opportunity for myself and my class to work with artists. I would participate in this again if it were offered."

"The concept of installation art left a lasting impression on our kids and some parents."

"[I] saw the kids being so proud - a sense of belonging and pride that they have contributed to this collective art piece."

"Some students struggled with this because they were not confident in sharing their thoughts and opinions. The art jams gave them some opportunities to practice share their ideas."

" They need more adults to come into their life. They want to talk to everyone. They have so many questions.

"Having "real artists" come to our class was greatly enjoyed by the students. they (many) were eager to share and talk to the artists."

" They loved even cleaning up, washing the brushes and working together with all kind and helpful adults was a good experience for them."



# Research and Resources

There are numerous research projects, articles and publications on the benefits of integrating arts with education. Below are a few resources that support these ideas:

Arts Education Partnership and National Art Education Association (2019), *VISUAL ARTS MATTER How Visual Arts Education Helps Students Learn, Achieve and Thrive*. Retrieved from [https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Visual\\_Arts\\_Matter.pdf](https://www.ecs.org/wp-content/uploads/Visual_Arts_Matter.pdf)

Brian Kisida, Daniel H. Bowen, 2019, *New evidence of the benefits of arts education*. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/new-evidence-of-the-benefits-of-arts-education/>

Kayleigh A. Abbott, Matthew J. Shanahan & Richard W. J. Neufeld, (2013) *Artistic Tasks Outperform Nonartistic Tasks for Stress Reduction*. Retrieved from <https://www.aep-arts.org/resources-by-topic/>

National Endowment for the Arts, (2012), *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies*. Retrieved from <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>



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