MacPhail

CENTER FOR MUSIC

MacPhail Music for Life™

2019-20 Evaluation Results

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Contents

Figures

Introduction

Since 2005, the Music for Life™ program at the MacPhail Center for Music has been offering music classes for older adults to provide them the opportunity to learn and practice music skills and socialize with other adults in a group setting. MacPhail Teaching Artists lead Music for Life™ sessions at senior living facilities in the Twin Cities metro area; MacPhail partners with more than 30 locations to offer these sessions. In addition to these sessions, MacPhail offers registration-based classes at a limited number of sites; these sites are in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Apple Valley.

MacPhail partnered with Wilder Research to conduct an evaluation of their activities in program year 2019-2020.

Methods

Wilder Research worked with the MacPhail Center for Music to develop a survey to gather perspectives from Music for Life™ participants at the end of their participation in the program. The survey asked questions about participants' satisfaction with the program; the impact the program had made on participants' emotional and physical health, socialization, and musical skills; their favorite aspects of the program; and areas for program improvement. Seventy-four participants completed a survey at the end of the program.

Wilder and MacPhail also worked together to develop a survey of Teaching Artists involved in the program. This survey gathered insights from Teaching Artists about their perceptions of the program, how MacPhail supports them as teachers, and what more MacPhail could do to equip them to serve program participants. Seven of 11 Teaching Artists completed a survey, for a response rate of 64%.

Evaluation results

Participant survey results

Participant characteristics

Music for Life™ participants were asked to share a little bit about themselves when completing their survey. More than three in four (77%) respondents identified as female, with the remaining 23% identifying as male. The vast majority of respondents were white (93%).

Nearly eight in 10 participants were age 65 or older (Figure 1). The average age was 70 years old.

1. Music for Life™ participant age (N=73)

Age group	Percentage
Younger than 55	7%
55-64	14%
65-74	51%
75-84	27%
85+	1%
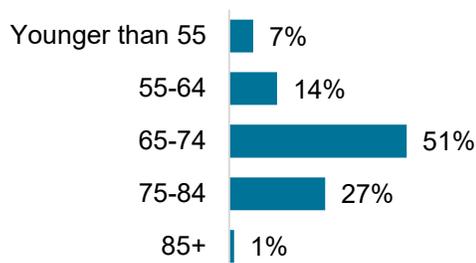
The majority of respondents participated in the Giving Voice class (68%) and Voices of Experience (23%; Figure 2).

2. Type of Music for Life™ class participants were involved in (N=74)

Class	Percentage
Giving Voice	68%
Voices of Experience	23%
Unwrapping Music: Film Scores & Theatricality	4%
MMFL Voice Class 1	3%
MMFL Voice Class 2	1%
Unwrapping Music: 1960's Music, Poetry and Activism	1%
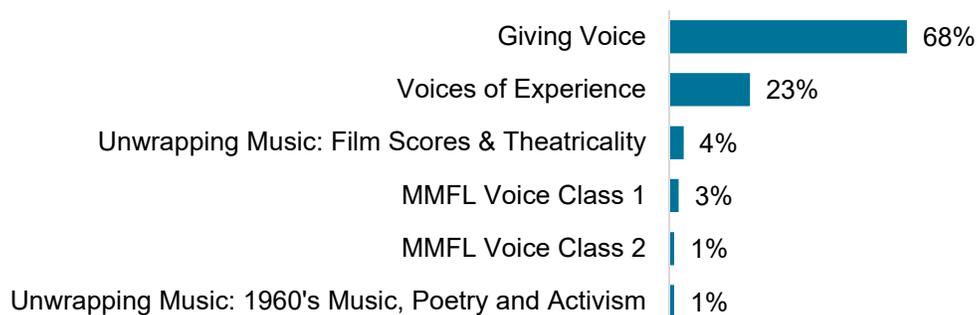
Rationale for participation

Participants were asked about their previous experiences with music and Music for Life™ and why they decided to participate in Music for Life™. Over 70% of respondents had participated in a Music for Life™ class previously and decided to return to the program (Figure 3).

3.   First-time and returning participants (N=73)
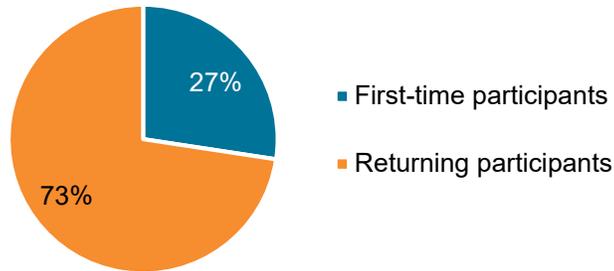
When new participants were asked why they decided to join a Music for Life™ course, many spoke about joining the class to learn more about music or that they wanted to bring someone in their life who has dementia or Alzheimer's to the class. In addition, a few participants mentioned they wanted the opportunity to sing in a choir, they were attracted to mission of the group, or they heard about it from someone who was already participating in the class.

> *I am a caregiver for a friend with dementia and I wanted to broaden our communication with one another. Therefore, [my partner] and I joined Giving Voice and it has been better than great. Personally, I believe that because of our participation in Giving Voice, [my partner's] dementia progression has slowed. Perhaps even stabilized to a degree.*

Participants who had previously participated in Music for Life™ were asked why they chose to take a class again. Respondents most commonly reported that they enjoyed the class previously, liked socializing with others in the class, and enjoyed the music they get to sing in Music for Life™ classes. The majority of participants (89%) reported that they plan to sign up for another Music for Life™ class. These participants noted that their enjoyment of the classes and the music is why they would like to continue their participation.

> *[I'd like to continue because of] the joy, happiness, and personal relationships that this choir brings.*

Participants find classes enjoyable and valuable

Overall, respondents were satisfied with the class they participated in and felt it suited both their expectations and interests. This high rate of satisfaction is also reflected in most respondents' plan to sign up for another Music for Life™ course and willingness to tell friends and acquaintances about the program.

Almost all respondents were satisfied with the class they participated in; 96% of respondents said they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the class (Figure 4). All respondents said the class content suited their interests (100%), and the vast majority of respondents said that the class content suited their expectations (96%; Figure 5).

4.   Overall satisfaction (N=73)

■ Very satisfied   ■ Somewhat satisfied   ■ Somewhat dissatisfied   ■ Very dissatisfied
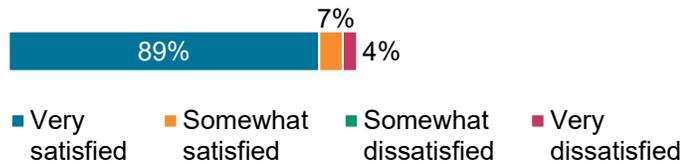
5.   Satisfaction with class content (N=74)

Did the content of the class suit your…

■ Yes   ■ No
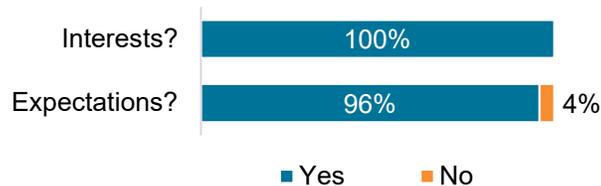
All respondents said they strongly agree or agree that they will recommend Music for Life™ to friends and acquaintances (Figure 6).

6.   Willingness to recommend classes (N=74)

■ Strongly agree   ■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly disagree

Note. Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Respondents were very positive about the Teaching Artist who led their class. All respondents reported that their Teaching Artist was kind and supportive (100% either "strongly agree" or "agree"), 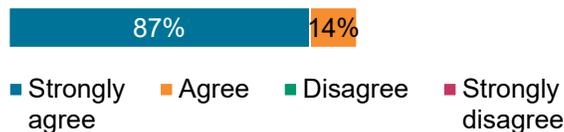and nearly all respondents said their Teaching Artist created a welcoming environment (99%), helped them learn new things about music and performing (96%), and helped participants create connections with one another (93%; Figure 7).

7. Satisfaction with Teaching Artist (N=74)

My teaching artist…

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Was kind and supportive.	85%	15%		
Created a welcoming environment for myself and others.	93%	5%	1%	
Helped me learn new things about music and performing.	69%	27%	4%	
Helped participants create connections with one another.	65%	28%	7%	
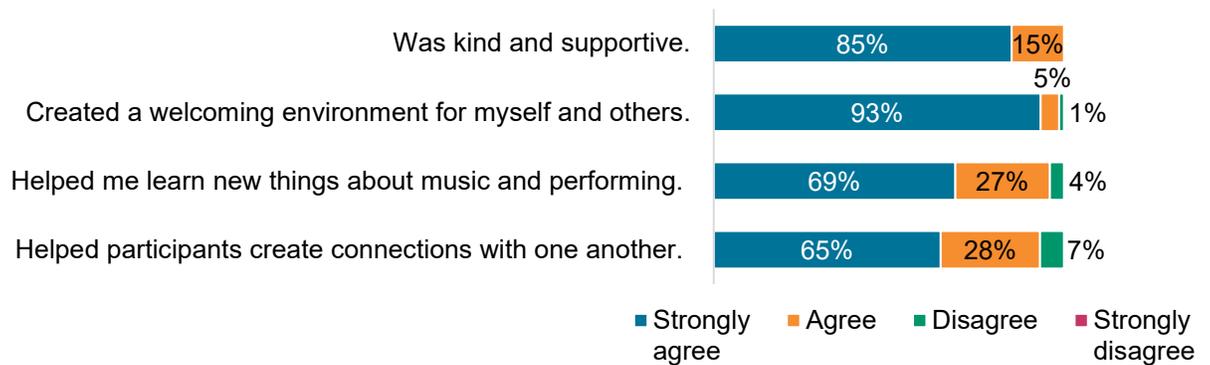
Participants develop music skills

Respondents reported developing their music skills through their participation in the Music for Life™ Program. Most participants reported learning more about music (72%), increasing their musical skills (72%) and growing in their appreciation of music (70%; Figure 8).

8. Accomplishments – musical (N=74)

What did you accomplish by participating in this music class?	%
I learned more about music.	72%
I increased my musical skills.	72%
I grew in my appreciation of music.	70%

Note. Respondents were asked to check up to three response options, leading to a total >100%.

Participants were asked what aspect of their Music for Life™ class was the most satisfying for them. Among the musical outcomes, they most commonly reported enjoying learning new music (41%), singing or playing familiar songs (34%), and learning musical techniques (27%; Figure 9). When asked in an open-ended question what participants most enjoyed about Music for Life™, respondents frequently mentioned the musical content and learning more about music and new musical techniques, such as proper techniques for choral singing.

> *I enjoy the weekly process of learning new music with this choir, and progressing from the initial realization that "this is challenging music", to saying "we did that well!" [The Teaching Artist] contributes strongly to what makes this enjoyable, and fun.*

9.   Best parts of participation – musical outcomes (N=74)

What are the most satisfying aspects of participating in MacPhail Music for Life™?	%
Learning new music	41%
Singing or playing familiar songs	34%
Learning musical techniques	27%

Note. Respondents were asked to check up to three response options, leading to a total >100.

Participants are happier and healthier because of their participation

Participants reported numerous benefits from participating in a Music for Life™ class in terms of their health, wellbeing, and social lives. Nearly nine in 10 participants said that they socialized with others (87%) and about three in four (74%) said they made new friends. Most students said the class improved their mood (69%). Over half of respondents reported being more mentally active (54%) and about a quarter of respondents reported being more physically active (27%; Figure 10).

10.   Accomplishments – non-musical (N=74)

What did you accomplish by participating in this music class?	%
I socialized with others.	87%
I made new friends.	74%
I improved my mood.	69%
I expressed myself in a creative way.	66%
I was more active mentally.	54%
I was more active physically.	27%

The most commonly reported aspect of participating in Music for Life™ that participants found most satisfying was the opportunity to sing and learn with new people (80%). Following this, respondents reported that they liked getting to know new people (34%), performing (28%), and expanding their social activities (26%; Figure 11).

11. Benefits of participation – Non-musical outcomes (N=74)

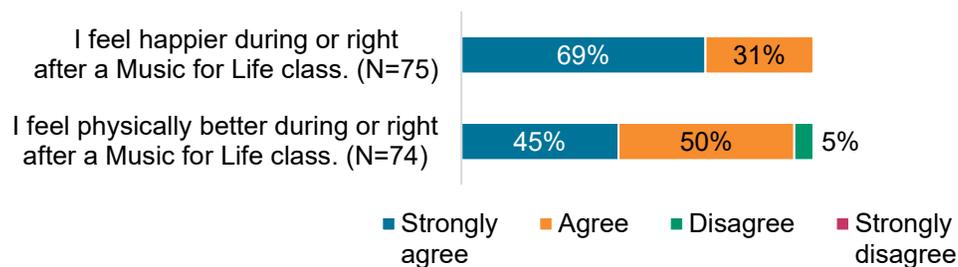| What are the most satisfying aspects of participating in MacPhail Music for Life™?	%
Singing or learning with other people.	80%
Getting to know new people.	34%
Performing	28%
Expanding my social activities	26%
Other	10%

Note. Respondents were asked to check all that apply, leading to a total >100%. "Other" responses included the opportunity to sing solos, seeing what an impact singing in a choir can make for people with Alzheimer's, and having a good activity to do with their loved one.

When asked what respondents most enjoyed about Music for Life™, they most commonly cited the social benefits they gained from the experience. Many participants said they enjoyed making music with others, the positive group environment, supporting participants who had dementia or Alzheimer's, and the opportunity to meet new people.

> *The joy of singing together with people who have dementia and their caregivers. As a caregiver, I can be with my spouse who has Alzheimer's in a supportive, friendly community. It gives us something we can do together and gives us purpose.*
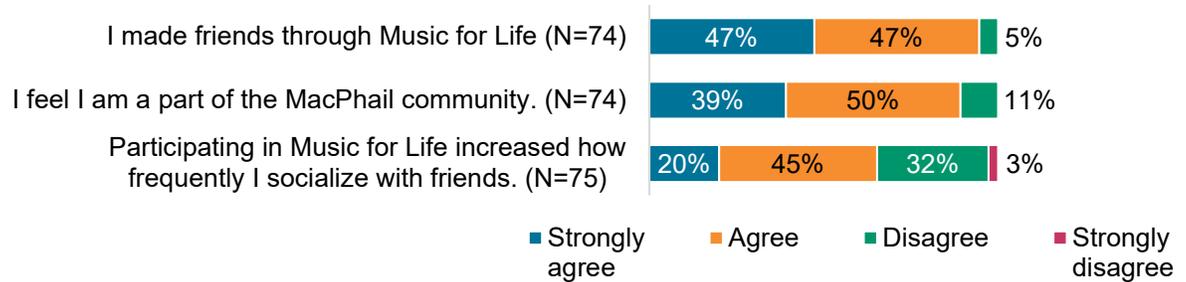
All respondents agreed or strongly agreed they felt happier during or right after a Music for Life™ class (100%). Almost all respondents agreed or strongly agreed they felt physically better during or right after a class (95%; Figure 12).

12. Impact of classes on participant happiness and on how participants feel physically

I feel happier during or right after a Music for Life class. (N=75): Strongly agree 69%, Agree 31%

I feel physically better during or right after a Music for Life class. (N=74): Strongly agree 45%, Agree 50%, Disagree 5%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Participants were positive about the impact that Music for Life™ had made on their social lives, as well as the community that they have been able to be a part of through their participation. Almost all participants (95%) reported that they made friends through participating in Music for Life™. Eighty-nine percent reported feeling like they are a part of the MacPhail community, and 65% reported that participating in Music for Life™ increased the frequency with which they socialize with friends (Figure 13).

13. Impact of classes on participant's socialization

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I made friends through Music for Life (N=74)	47%	47%	5%	
I feel I am a part of the MacPhail community. (N=74)	39%	50%	11%	
Participating in Music for Life increased how frequently I socialize with friends. (N=75)	20%	45%	32%	3%

Suggested improvements from participants

Music for Life™ participants were asked what would make the class better. Most respondents noted that the classes were good as they are.. Other suggestions included learning more new music in their class, Music for Life™ holding longer or more frequent classes, and a shortened the break between semesters. Although it is unrelated to the class itself, most of the respondents who did provide suggestions wanted better availability and affordability of parking spots.

Other activities for MacPhail to provide

Participants were asked whether or not there were additional types of classes they would like to see MacPhail offer. Their suggestions included:

■ Intergenerational classes and choirs

■ Jazz classes and choirs

■ Cabaret classes

■ A Capella choirs

■ Classes for differently abled participants

■ Instrument classes for participants with dementia

Teaching Artist feedback

Strengths of the program

Teaching Artists were asked what they consider to be the greatest successes of the Music for Life™ program in an open-ended question. They commonly mentioned the continual growth of interest in the programs by participants, the ability to provide participants with social connections, and providing participants with an engaging activity.

> *[The biggest successes are] just that human need for connection and that human need to make music. It's a form of expression and oftentimes our seniors feel lonely or forgotten. Bringing them music helps them to feel more joyful and more productive.*
>
> *[The biggest successes are] enthusiasm and repeat registrations from students!*

Results indicate that community was not just formed among participants, but also with Teaching Artists. All Teaching Artists agreed or strongly agreed that they have made connections with participants (Figure 14).

14. Teaching Artist sense of community

	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I made connections with participants in my Music for Life™ class.	7	6	1	0	0

When asked how the Music for Life™ program benefits participants, Teaching Artists responded that by using music, the program was able to build community for a population that can often be isolated. Teaching Artists also said that the program provides a mentally and physically engaging experience for participants.

> *It helps people to connect with each other using music. Music is food for their souls and it's a joy to work with these seniors in experiencing the joy of music. They deserve that connection with the instructor and each other and music is a great way to help them experience it.*
>
> *Music for Life brings music to a population that really needs it (sometimes the most). Music as a medium helps create community in a space where our participants and residents can [otherwise] feel so isolated. It is also grounding; this can have a large positive impact, especially for those in memory care.*

Support and training for Teaching Artists

Teaching Artists reported that the training and peer mentoring program were both helpful. All Teaching Artists agreed or strongly agreed that group training taught them activities to build community and that they successfully used these activities in class. They also all agreed or strongly agreed that group training taught them how to be aware of how health issues might impact older adults' participation in classes. Most Teaching Artists also reported that peer mentoring taught them activities to build community among participants (Figure 15).

15. Teaching Artists' perspectives of training

	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
MacPhail provides the support I need to grow as a Teaching Artist.	7	5	2	0	0
Group training taught me activities to use in my class to help build community among participants.	7	3	4	0	0
Group training taught me to be aware of how health issues might impact older adults' participation in the classes.	6	4	2	0	0
I've been able to successfully use the activities I learned about in group training.	6	3	3	0	0
Peer mentoring taught me activities to use in my class to help build community among participants.	5	4	1	0	0

Note: "Not applicable" responses were removed from each question's total responses, leading to different Ns across questions.

Opportunities for improvement

Teaching Artists were asked what the primary areas of improvement are for the Music for Life™ program. Teaching Artists suggested doing a training with music therapists and watching other instructors to get new ideas for their own teaching. They also suggested getting more equipment for instructors, such as iPads, and increasing the number of staff members to increase their capacity. They also recommended diversifying how classes are advertised, including a suggestion that MacPhail rely less heavily on online advertising.

When asked how Music for Life™ could better serve older adults of diverse backgrounds, Teaching Artists most often suggested hiring staff from different cultural communities and providing diversity training for current staff members. They also suggested reaching out to different cultural communities; as an example, they mentioned the possibility of MacPhail hosting a complimentary class followed by a listening session to hear more from that community. Teaching Artists recommended incorporating more culturally relevant music for different communities and not focusing on just Western music.

All Teaching Artists agreed or strongly agreed that MacPhail provided the support the need to grow as a Teaching Artist (Figure 16). When asked how MacPhail could better support them in your work, many Teaching Artists reported there was nothing MacPhail could do better or that they already feel supported by MacPhail. Some Teaching Artists suggested salary increases and MacPhail allowing more time for class preparation. Teaching Artists also suggested different trainings, such as training on best practices for working with participants for have dementia or Alzheimer's and training around technology, especially in light of the recent reliance on using technology due to COVID-19.

16. Support for Teaching Artists

	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
MacPhail provides the support I need to grow as a Teaching Artist.	7	5	2	0	0

Overall, Teaching Artists were very positive about their work with MacPhail and the Music for Life™ program. They reported feeling supported by MacPhail and benefiting from training provided to them, and having made real connections with the older adults they serve.

> *I am so grateful for MacPhail Music for Life…As a teacher and artist I have many, many jobs. But the work I get to do with MacPhail never feels like work and is always fulfilling.*

Issues for consideration

Staff at MacPhail who are involved in program design and implementation should consider the suggestions given by survey respondents mentioned above. Given the findings of this evaluation, Wilder Research also recommends the following.
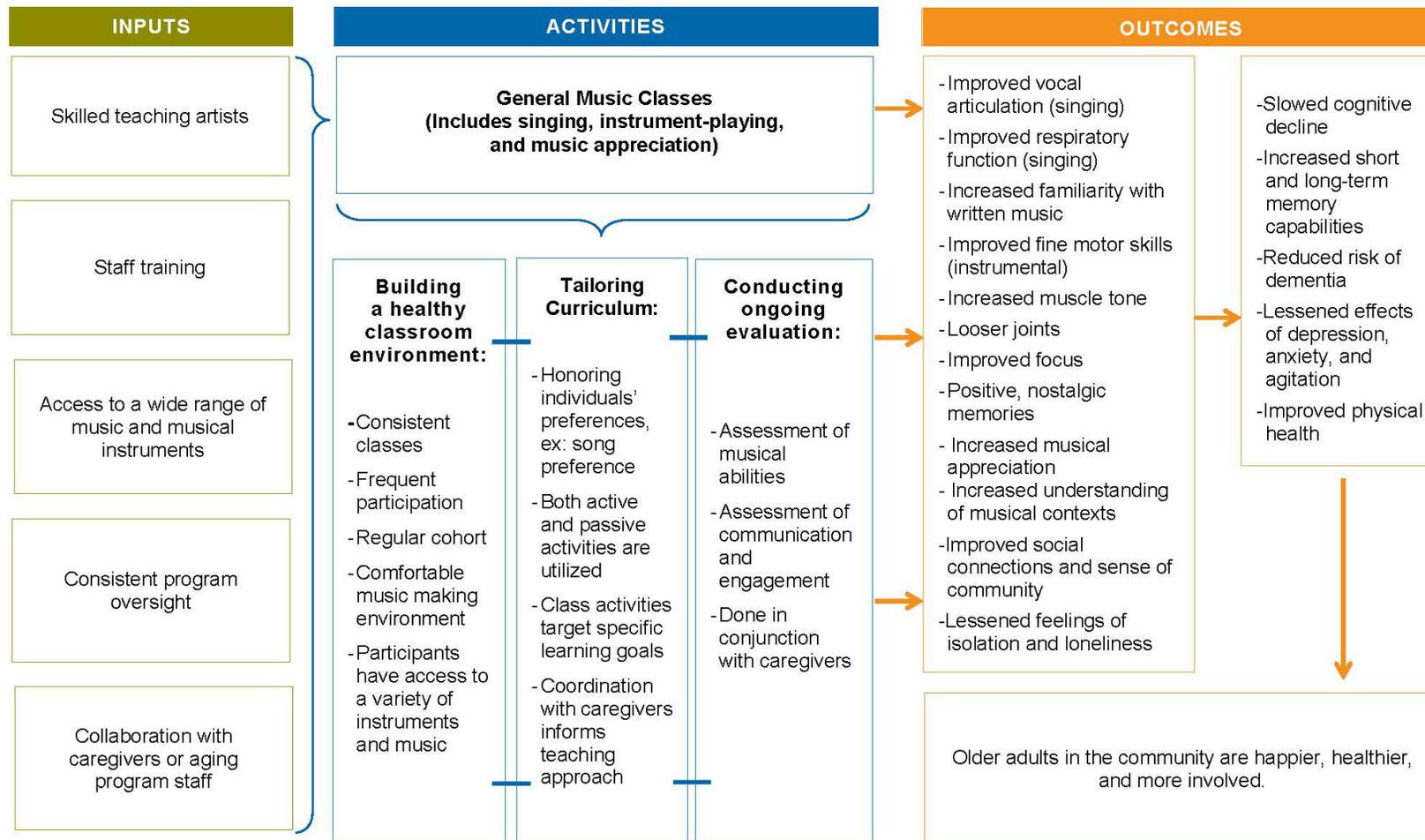
- **Continue to encourage participants to share their experiences with friends, family, and acquaintances.** Respondents frequently noted hearing about Music for Life™ from their social networks.

- **Pursue opportunities to diversify class participants.** The vast majority of Music for Life™ participants identify as white. MacPhail should continue its efforts to diversify its participant makeup and to ensure classes are welcoming and accessible to all. This includes hiring more Teaching Artists of color, doing more outreach to different communities, and taking feedback from different communities to drive class content.

- **Consider expanding class offerings.** As mentioned above, participants suggested a variety of other class types for MacPhail to add to their offerings. These include classes and choirs with a focus on a particular genre of music, like jazz or A Capella, or classes for specific groups of people, like instrument-focused classes for those with dementia or classes that are otherwise more accessible for differently abled participants.

- **Consider additional training opportunities to provide to Teaching Artists.** Teaching Artists expressed an interest in receiving additional training. This included training to ensure classes are welcoming to participants of different backgrounds, in best practices for serving older adults with dementia or Alzheimer's, and technology training.

- **Consider ways to improve participant satisfaction with parking.** This could include providing parking vouchers to participants, determining ways to reserve parking spaces for participants, and holding classes at sites that have plenty of free or low-cost parking options.

Appendix

A. Logic model

Overview: The MacPhail Music for Life program aims to provide music education to older adults, giving them an outlet of creative expression, connecting them with other older adults who share their passions, and providing the opportunity to improve their physical and mental health conditions through musical activity. They do so with classes specifically focused on singing, learning to play instruments or improving their instrumental abilities, and music appreciation.

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES

INPUTS

- Skilled teaching artists
- Staff training
- Access to a wide range of music and musical instruments
- Consistent program oversight
- Collaboration with caregivers or aging program staff

ACTIVITIES

General Music Classes
(Includes singing, instrument-playing, and music appreciation)

Building a healthy classroom environment:
- Consistent classes
- Frequent participation
- Regular cohort
- Comfortable music making environment
- Participants have access to a variety of instruments and music

Tailoring Curriculum:
- Honoring individuals' preferences, ex: song preference
- Both active and passive activities are utilized
- Class activities target specific learning goals
- Coordination with caregivers informs teaching approach

Conducting ongoing evaluation:
- Assessment of musical abilities
- Assessment of communication and engagement
- Done in conjunction with caregivers

OUTCOMES

- Improved vocal articulation (singing)
- Improved respiratory function (singing)
- Increased familiarity with written music
- Improved fine motor skills (instrumental)
- Increased muscle tone
- Looser joints
- Improved focus
- Positive, nostalgic memories
- Increased musical appreciation
- Increased understanding of musical contexts
- Improved social connections and sense of community
- Lessened feelings of isolation and loneliness

- Slowed cognitive decline
- Increased short and long-term memory capabilities
- Reduced risk of dementia
- Lessened effects of depression, anxiety, and agitation
- Improved physical health

Older adults in the community are happier, healthier, and more involved.

MacPhail Music for Life™ Participant **Post-Test**

Thank you for participating in MacPhail Music for Life™ classes! The teaching artists and staff at MacPhail appreciate your time completing this brief survey as we end our year together. Please check the appropriate boxes.

Name: _____   Date: _____

What MacPhail class did you participate in?

☐[1] Beginning Ukulele

☐[2] Cabaret Singers

☐[3] Giving Voice

☐[4] I Love a Piano 2

☐[5] MMFL Voice Class 1

☐[6] MMFL Voice Class 2

☐[7] Ukulele Jam

☐[8] Unwrapping Music: Broadway Showtunes

☐[9] Unwrapping Music: American Music from 1920-1950

☐[10] Voices of Experience

At what site did you participate?

☐[1] Minneapolis

☐[2] St. Paul

☐[3] Apple Valley

1. Was this your first MacPhail Music for Life™ course?

    ☐[1] Yes → What made you decide to join the class?_____

    ☐[2] No → What made you decide to participate in the class again? _____

2. What did you accomplish by participating in this music class? (Check all that apply)

    ☐[1] I learned more about music

    ☐[2] I increased my musical skills

    ☐[3] I made new friends

    ☐[4] I socialized with others

    ☐[5] I was more active physically

    ☐[6] I was more active mentally

    ☐[7] I improved my mood

    ☐[8] I expressed myself in a creative way

    ☐[9] I grew in my appreciation of music

    ☐[10] Other: _____

3. What are the most satisfying aspects of participation in MacPhail Music for Life™? *(Check up to 3)*

   ☐ 1 Learning musical techniques

   ☐ 2 Learning new music

   ☐ 3 Singing or playing familiar songs

   ☐ 4 Physical warm-ups

   ☐ 5 Singing or learning with other people

   ☐ 6 Performing

   ☐ 7 Expanding my social activities

   ☐ 8 Getting to know new people

   ☐ 9 Other:_____

4. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. I feel happier during or right after a Music for Life class.	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
b. I feel physically better during or right after a Music for Life class.	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
c. I made friends through Music for Life.	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
d. Participating in Music for Life increased how frequently I socialize with friends.	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
e. My Teaching Artist was kind and supportive.	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
f. My Teaching Artist helped me learn new things about music and performing.	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
g. My Teaching Artist created a welcoming environment for myself and others.	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
h. My Teaching Artist helped participants create connections with one another.	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
i. I would recommend Music for Life to my friends and acquaintances.	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
j. I feel I am a part of the MacPhail community.	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1

5. Did the content of the class, including the choice of music, suit your expectations?

   ☐ 1 Yes

   ☐ 2 No   If no, what was missing? _____

6. Did the content of the class, including the choice of music, suit your interests?

   ☐¹ Yes

   ☐² No   If no, what was missing? _____

7. What did you enjoy most about MacPhail Music for Life™?

   _____

   _____

8. What could make the class better? (Ex: ways to make it more convenient to participate, different class content, etc.)

   _____

   _____

9. What other types of classes or activities should MacPhail provide?

   _____

   _____

10. Overall, how satisfied are you with the class?

    ☐¹ Very satisfied

    ☐² Somewhat satisfied

    ☐³ Somewhat dissatisfied

    ☐⁴ Very dissatisfied

11. Do you plan to sign up for another MacPhail Music for Life™ course in the future?

    ☐¹ Yes

    ☐² Maybe

    ☐³ No

    ☐⁻⁸ I don't know

    Why?

    _____

    _____

12. Please share any other comments you might have about MacPhail Music for Life™ here.

    _____

    _____

    _____

Now, we'd like to know a little more about you.

13. With what gender do you identify?
    ☐¹ Female
    ☐² Male
    ☐³ Prefer to self-describe: _____
    ☐⁴ Prefer not to answer

14. What is your age (in years)? _____

15. How do you identify your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply.)
    ☐¹ American Indian, Native American or Alaska Native
    ☐² Asian American or Asian
    ☐³ Black, African American or African
    ☐⁴ Hispanic or Latinx
    ☐⁵ White or Caucasian
    ☐⁶ Multi-racial or other (please describe: _____)
    ☐⁷ Prefer not to answer

MacPhail Music for Life™ Teaching Artist Survey
Spring 2020

Name: _____

Wilder Research is working with the MacPhail Center of Music to evaluate its Music for Life™ program. We are asking you, as a Teaching Artist, to share your thoughts and feelings about the program.

1. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
a. Group training taught me activities to use in my class to help build community among participants.	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1	☐-9
b. I've been able to successfully use the activities I learned about in group training.	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1	☐-9
c. I made connections with participants in my Music for Life classes.	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1	☐-9
d. Group training taught me to be aware of how health issues might impact older adults' participation in the classes.	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1	☐-9
e. Peer mentoring taught me activities to use in my class to help build community among participants.	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1	☐-9
f. MacPhail provides the support I need to grow as a Teaching Artist.	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1	☐-9

2. How does the Music for Life™ program benefit its participants?

_____

_____

_____

3. What do you think are the biggest successes of Music for Life™ to date?

_____

_____

_____

4. What do you think are the primary areas for improvement? How could these improvements be made?

_____

_____

_____

5. How could Music for Life™ better serve older adults of diverse backgrounds?

_____

_____

_____

6. How could MacPhail better support you in your work?

_____

_____

_____

7. Please provide any other comments here:

_____

_____

_____

Thank you!