

Center for **ARTS IN MEDICINE**
UF COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Creating Healthy Communities:

Arts in Public Health Convening

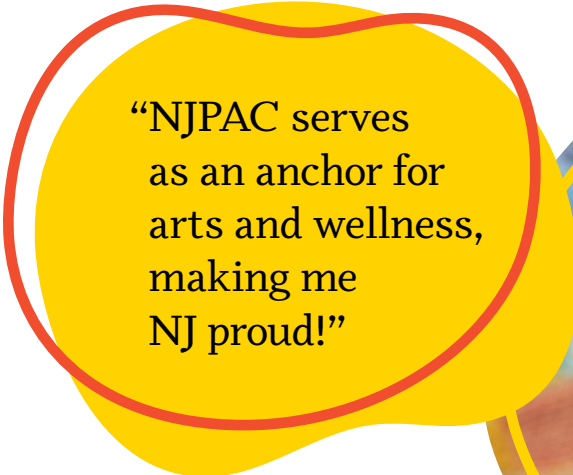
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THE STATE UNIVERSITY
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In October 2025, the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Convening brought together more than 530 people from across North America and beyond who are thinking, working and innovating at the intersections of arts and culture, public health and community development.

Presented by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine (UFCAM) and UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine, with longstanding foundational support from the Pabst Steinmetz Foundation and the Florida Division of Arts and Culture, the convening sought to amplify the power of arts and culture to connect communities and enhance health and well-being.

Creating Healthy Communities emerged from ArtPlace America's public health sector work, which occurred from 2017 to 2020. Since then, the CHC convening has grown into a central gathering for artists, arts organizations, public health and healthcare professionals, civic leaders and community organizers to collectively envision a healthier future through arts and culture. First held in 2019, the convening takes place every three years. The 2025 event was held October 14 - 16 at NJPAC in Newark, New Jersey.



“NJPAC serves as an anchor for arts and wellness, making me NJ proud!”



NJPAC and Performance Hypothesis partnered to provide a brief and impactful assessment of the attendee experience in relation to the convening's four overarching goals:



Convene with colleagues dedicated to creating healthier, more equitable communities through cross-sector collaboration in arts in public health.



Learn about the latest research and policy models, diverse and effective practices, and tools to advance the field.



Engage in dialogue, strategic thinking and learning in a vibrant, arts-infused setting.



Build partnerships and networks across diverse fields to address shared goals.

The assessment employed three data collection approaches to capture attendee insights:

1. One post-convening participant survey delivered to all participants (n=66).
2. One in-depth post-convening participant survey distributed to self-selected attendees who also completed the post-convening survey (n=11).
3. Two post-convening virtual focus groups held with self-selected attendees who also completed the post-convening survey (n=12).

This report synthesizes findings from these three sources. Together, these findings are designed to share learnings and inform the development of successful future CHC convenings.



Program

Schedules and Programming for the 2025 CHC Convening

Tuesday, October 14

1 - 4PM	ArtsRx Activities	Clement's Place: Jazz Jam GlassRoots: The Biggest Drip: Team Glassmaking Competition Montclair Art Museum: Meditative Neurographic Art The Newark Museum of Art: Multi-Media Mandala Newark Public Library: Sublime Pouches
1 - 4PM	Creating Healthy Communities Opening Reception	TD Jazz for Teens Performance: Jake Rea, Guitar Octavio Sosa, Tenor Sax Lukas Wormack, Bass

Wednesday, October 15

9 - 10AM	Coffee, tea, and on-site registration	
	Welcome Performance	The Young Picassos Steel Pan Band
10 - 10:45AM	Invocation Land Acknowledgement Welcome	Fred Johnson, Straz Center for the Performing Arts Donna Walker Kuhne, New Jersey Performing Arts Center John Schreiber, New Jersey Performing Arts Center Mayor Ras J. Baraka, City of Newark Aly Maier Lokuta, New Jersey Performing Arts Center Margie Pabst Steinmetz, The Pabst Steinmetz Foundation Jill Sonke, PhD, Stanford University, UF Center for Arts in Medicine
10:45 - 11:20AM	Keynote & Conversation: Story of Now Choosing Curiosity and Hope Over Fear	Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD, Urban Planning and Cultural Policy Expert Marjorie Paloma, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
11:20 - 11:35AM	Break Lobby Performance	Leah Hinton, NJPAC Teaching Artist
11:35 - 12:20PM	Responding to the Moment: Arts in Public Health in a Time of Change	Moderator: Jill Sonke, PhD Fred Johnson Nisha Sajnani, PhD, RDT-BC, Jameel Arts & Health Lab, New York University Tooshar Swain, Americans for the Arts Clyde Valentín, One Nation/One Project
12:20 - 1:30PM	Lunch Prudential Hall Lobby Performance	Johnny Knollwood & the Church of Mad Love
1:30 - 1:40PM	Performance	Alana Jackson, Spoken Word Artist, Arts in Public Health Strategist

1:40 - 2:30PM **Arts Participation as Health Behavior:**
Emerging Evidence and Insights

Presenter: Alexandra Rodriguez, PhD(c), MPH, UF Center for Arts in Medicine
Moderator: Nisha Sajjani, PhD, RDT-BC
Dr. AZA Allsop, Yale University, Center for Collective Healing
Dr. Torian Easterling, One Brooklyn Health
Ayesha Williams, The Laundromat Project

2:30 - 3:25PM **Arts, Culture and Social Drivers of Health**

Presenter & Moderator: Tasha Golden, PhD, Behavioral Scientist: Creativity and Wellbeing
Michelle Browder, Mothers of Gynecology
Larry Edmonds, San Diego American Indian Health Center
David Fakunle, PhD, Morgan State University

3:30 - 3:45PM **Break**
Lobby Performance

Leah Hinton, NJPAC Teaching Artist

3:45 - 4:45PM **Breakout Sessions**

Creative Connections:
Arts in Health Speed Networking

Building the Field of Neuroarts

Metrics Beyond Numbers:
Meaningful Evaluation Strategies

Mindfulness Moments

Conversation Space

Krystle Shakespeare, New Jersey Performing Arts Center
Jennifer Kuo, MPH, CHES, CA for the Arts
Katrina Pineda, UF Center for Arts in Medicine

Karen Alexander, Johns Hopkins International Arts & Mind Lab
Andrea Camp, NeuroArts Blueprint

Christina D. Eskridge, MPH, Elevate Theatre Company
Marcel W. Foster, MPH, & Brianna Smith, Performance Hypothesis
Penelope Douglas, CultureBanq & culture therapy
Ariel Reich, NYC Health & Hospitals, Dance for PD

Unmoderated space to connect with fellow attendees

4:45 - 5PM **Break**
Lobby Performance

Leah Hinton, NJPAC Teaching Artist

5 - 5:05PM **Performance**

Maurice Chestnut, Tap Artist

5:05 - 5:30PM **Group Sing**

Sing for Hope

7:30 - 8:30PM **Christina Courtin:**
A Carnegie Hall Well-Being Concert

Christina Courtin, Violin/vocals
Ian Koebner, Host
Michael LaValle, Bass
Chris Parker, Guitar
James Shipp, Vibraphone/percussion

Thursday, October 16

7:30 - 8:30AM **Breakfast**
Lobby Performance:

Merynda Adams, Harpist
Rebecca Harris, Violinist

“I left feeling energized, inspired, and full of ideas.”

8:30 - 8:55AM	Invocation Welcome	Fred Johnson Jill Sonke, PhD
8:55 - 9:55AM	Investing in Well-being: The Economic Case for Arts in Health	Presenter: David Erickson, Federal Reserve Bank of New York Moderator: Randy Cohen, Americans for the Arts Yazmany Arboleda, NYC Civic Engagement Commission Barbara M. Bickart, New Jersey Economic Development Authority Fox Spears, First Peoples Fund
9:55 - 10:15AM	Break Lobby Performance	Merynda Adams, Harpist Rebecca Harris, Violinist
10:15-10:20AM	Performance	Ysabel González, New Jersey Performing Arts Center
10:20 - 11:20AM	Arts Prescribing in North America: What's Working, What's Next	Presenter: Dr. Kate Mulligan, Canadian Commonwealth Fund, City College of New York Moderator: Tracy Parris-Benjamin, LMSW, FHELA, The Outcomes Architect Michael Bobbitt, Mass Cultural Council Aly Maier Lokuta
12:20 - 1:50PM	Breakout Sessions	
	What Matters to You? Social Prescribing 101	Jennifer Evins, United Arts of Central Florida Julia Hotz, The Connection Cure Tracy Parris-Benjamin, LMSW, FHELA Dr. Alan Siegel, Social Prescribing USA
	Let's Get it Started: Building Your Art Prescribing Pilot	Tasha Golden, PhD Aly Maier Lokuta
	Advancing Arts Prescribing through Policy and Advocacy	Chris Appleton, SocialRx Deborah Cullinan, Stanford University Alexandra Rodriguez, PhD(c), MPH
	Arts for Every Body: Groundbreaking Findings on a National Scale	Jill Sonke, PhD Clyde Valentin
2 - 2:15PM	Performance	I am Kenny J Soul Line Dance
2:15 - 2:50PM	Keynote: Artistic Intelligence, Empathy and the Other Side of Fear	Marc Bamuthi Joseph , Spoken Word Artist, Writer & Librettist, Cultural Strategist
2:50 - 3PM	Closing Remarks	Jill Sonke, PhD Aly Maier Lokuta
	Closing Performance	Fred Johnson
3 - 4PM	Informal Networking	



The Creating Healthy Communities Convening was made possible with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Pabst Steinmetz Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Florida Division of Arts and Culture, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, The Music Man Foundation, the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, Performance Hypothesis and the S. Dillard & Adrienne Kirby Family Philanthropic Fund.



NJPAC Arts & Well-Being is made possible through foundational support from RWJBarnabas Health, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey and Women@NJPAC. Additional support provided by Merck Foundation, New Jersey Department of Corrections, The Music Man Foundation, Celia Lipton Farris and Victor W. Farris Foundation Home Community Fund, Gilead Sciences, M&T Bank, JPMorgan Chase, Vitaquest International, S. Dillard & Adrienne Kirby Family Philanthropic Fund and Lyft



“It was nothing short of amazing. From being in community and connecting with others to expanding my knowledge around arts prescribing, I left feeling full, inspired, and motivated.”

“It was as an audience member at Creating Healthy Communities that I finally grasped a term that encapsulates my art and mission: **social cohesion and well-being.**”

“Being able to attend the Creating Healthy Communities Convening is the **best thing** that could have happened to me at this moment!”

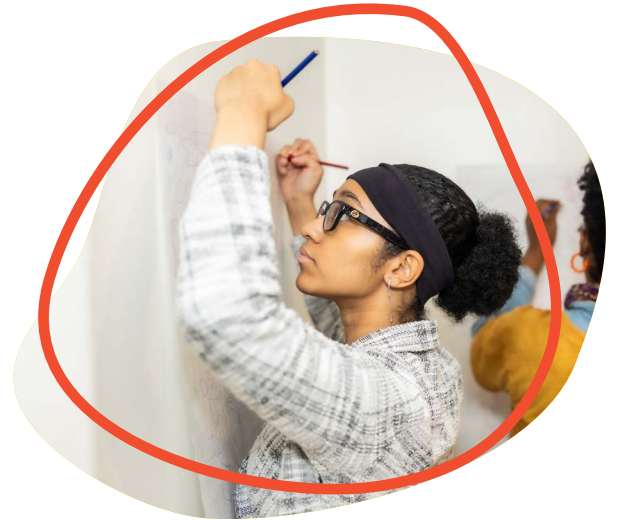
Reflections from Attendees

“That was fantastic. I’m leaving with fuel and **inspiration and ideas and excitement.**”

“I’m still floating after spending two and a half joy-filled days at the CHC Convening. **What a magical experience!**”



Findings



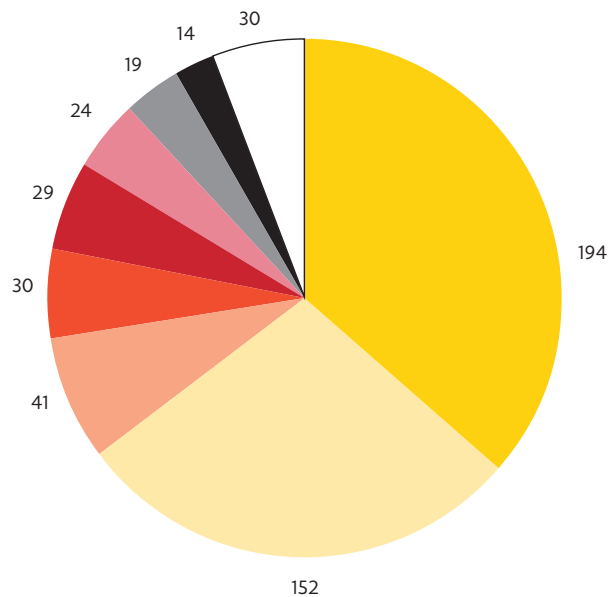
Goal One

Convene with colleagues dedicated to creating healthier, more equitable communities through cross-sector collaboration in arts in public health.



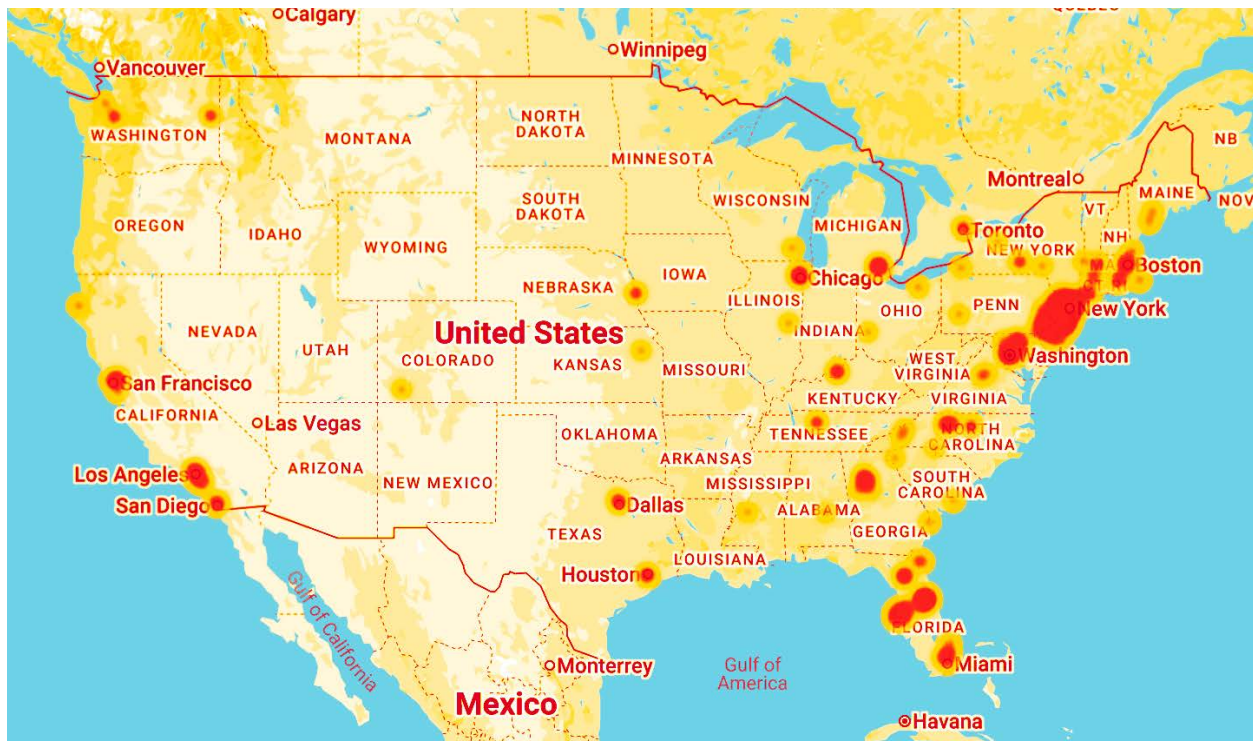
Key Takeaways: The convening successfully drew colleagues from a variety of fields and areas of interest yet 41% of survey respondents believed that there were perspectives, organizations or groups not present that should have been. More specifically, there is an opportunity to engage additional healthcare professionals and program recipients and increase the diversity of perspectives in future events.

Convening attendees by primary domain of work or interest (n=533)



Attendees represented 31 states and five countries
(US, UK, Singapore, Canada and Australia)

Heatmap of attendee locations across the US



What perspectives, organizations, or groups do you believe should have been present / would you suggest including in the next convening?

More Healthcare Professionals

- “Nurses all the way. They are our keystone to connecting patients with artists.”
- “As a therapist, I’d love to have more mental health representatives.”
- “It would be great to have some more people representing health care billing and policy.”



Recipients of Arts in Health Programming

- “Patient perspectives would be interesting.”
- “The recipients of **arts prescribing**, letting us know what is working, what is not and what they would like more of.”
- “Perspective on disability particularly from disabled folks.”

More Diverse Perspectives

- “Funders... the organizations that have been successful in finding funding, presenting how they began to develop a program and how they found funding or were challenged to find funding.”
- “We need more elders, herbalists, spiritual leaders.”
- “Disabilities organizations. I would have loved to hear their perspectives as artists.”



Arts prescribing:

Integrating arts and culture referrals into systems of health and social care where people are receiving referrals for community resources aligned with social determinant of health needs.





Goal Two

Learn about the latest research and policy models, diverse and effective practices, and tools to advance the field.



Key Takeaways: The vast majority of attendees gained new, relevant and actionable information at the convening. Fundamental learnings centered on impact measurement, the breadth and depth of existing evidence and the importance of collaboration. Concurrently, participants expressed a desire to gain more direct information including funding sources and additional practice-centered case studies.

89%

of survey respondents gained new information.

98%

felt the new information was relevant to their field.

79%

considered the new information to be actionable.

What key ideas or key learnings stood out most to you during the Creating Healthy Communities convening?

Impact Measurement

- “The data for the health impact of the arts ... is compelling and I’m eager to try to use it to compel my org and other funders to devote more resources to this space. The data is valuable for making this case to MD-audiences.”
- “Art can be used as a tool for evaluation.”
- “No numbers without a story, no story without numbers.”
- “The general population ... doesn’t quite know what we know about the impact of arts on health and arts on the communities.”

Existing Evidence Around Arts and Health Including Social Prescribing

- “One of the biggest takeaways for me was seeing how deeply the arts can serve as a bridge between wellness, storytelling, and public health. It reaffirmed that healing isn’t just clinical — it’s cultural.”
- “[The] **social prescribing** concept was new to me and very impactful. The conference highlighted how the arts are the social drivers of health and is a treatment.”
- “The sessions on **neuroarts** were deeply affirming ... it was powerful to see science now validating what I have long observed — that artistic engagement can transform health outcomes.”
- “A great deal has been done to bring arts in healing to the forefront.”

Collaboration is Pivotal

- “Collaboration is key. There is power in the collective.”
- “Seeing so many sectors come together — from public health professionals to artists and educators — showed me how powerful collective creativity truly is.”
- “Start small, find partners.”
- “Work with other local organizations and agencies to create more access to wellness through the arts.”

“It was so inspiring and empowering.”

Social prescribing: A model that enables health care providers and social service professionals to connect individuals with non-clinical supports and community resources that address individual and community needs based on the social determinants of health.

Neuroarts: The study of how arts and aesthetics impact the human brain.

How might you use what you have learned in your own life, community, or organization?

Foster Relationships & Establish Partnerships

- “As a nurse, I see many opportunities and ways to uplift the arts in health initiative by recruiting nurses as key players for creating healthier communities.”
- “Made connections with new colleagues ... opened new ideas.”
- “As I returned home, I decided to reach out to several local organizations ... My intention is to adapt a movement program for each of these organizations.”
- “[I] want to build more partnerships across sectors so that wellness and culture can be experienced, not just discussed.”

Apply New Knowledge to Current Role

- “We are actively designing a social prescribing pilot. Aly and Tasha's breakout session was the base for my pitch at my org.”
- “My performing arts organization is just beginning to explore what an Arts, Health, & Wellness pilot could look like. This conference was helpful for me to better understand arts in health in a community/public health context.”
- “Using art to address social drivers of health and to evaluate.”
- “This convening inspired me to integrate neuroarts-informed strategies more intentionally into my wellness education programs.”

Engage in the Arts & Encourage Others

- “Doodle my delights each day. Incorporate art more in my community by inviting people to do artsy things and create more art myself.”
- “Participate more in the arts.”
- “I will continue to encourage my clients, community, and loved ones to use arts as a necessary tool for health.”



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How might you use what you have learned in your own life, community, or organization?

“I will continue to encourage my clients, community and loved ones to use arts as a necessary tool for health.”


What else would you have liked to learn about / what other information or resources could have made the Convening more impactful?

Direct, Actionable Information & Resources

- “Many of the panels felt inspiring, but not information heavy.”
- “Most of the conversations, regardless of topic, felt like it was more about the power of the arts than concrete findings ... what I need is the facts and figures to directly engage with health systems to fund arts activities.”
- “I appreciate the care and depth of the presentations and discussions. I would have appreciated more workshopping on how to apply those important concepts and perspectives in action.”
- “Tools/learnings to take-away and apply to my work.”

Funding Sources

- “Funding models for arts in health and arts-based social prescribing.”
- “How to appeal to funders as an independent artist, non-profit organization, and/or higher education institution.”
- “More information about the initial proposal ... to get the program launched.”
- “Alternate funding models that work.”
- “I would’ve loved to explore more tangible strategies for funding and sustaining creative wellness initiatives — specifically how artists, cultural leaders, and public health organizations can co-design measurable impact together.”



“I have found
my people
and place!”

Case Studies & Real-World Examples

- “Actual practices and business models.”
- “More case studies or hands-on workshops showing how arts-based health programs are implemented and evaluated in real communities would have been incredibly valuable.”
- “Using the arts for protesting and raising awareness for public health threats e.g. AIDS movement.”
- “This convening focused a little more heavily on the performing arts and the creating areas. It would be interesting to learn more about the social groups, library groups, walking clubs, etc., and how outdoor spaces are an important part of this work.”
- “Ways to engage policy makers.”



“I was moved,
challenged, and found
a new community
and a new language”





Goal Three

Engage in dialogue, strategic thinking and learning in a vibrant, arts-infused setting.



Key Takeaways: The opportunity to connect, incorporating arts activities and being in an uplifting space with like-minded colleagues was particularly important to the participant experience in the 2025 Convening. Evaluation participants also identified two opportunities for improvements in future events: enhanced accessibility and additional application-based learning.

[Note: Captioning was available in all convening spaces. On Day 2 there was a technical failure that resulted in a lack of captioning for 90 minutes of the morning plenary session. This feedback illustrates the need for enhanced communication about available accommodations and, when needed, technical challenges.]

What was the most meaningful part of the Creating Healthy Communities Convening?

Connection & Community

- “The most impactful part was being surrounded by like-minded [people] building relationships and exchanging ideas with others who view wellness through a creative lens was energizing.”
- “Witnessing how many people from different sectors — artists, educators, health leaders, and community advocates — came together with shared intention. There was a real sense of alignment and purpose in the room”
- “Being in community and having a collective creative experience.”



Incorporating The Arts

- “It was powerful to be in a space where art, storytelling, and community wellness were not just discussed — they were felt.”
- “Integrating Fred [Johnson] and the artists was the icing on this cake.”
- “I loved the wellness concert and first day with different activities.”
- “By rooting the work in research, alongside such amazing artistic activations (the performers outside and in lobbies, line dancing on the stage, spoken word poetry) ... the balance of art and research was really felt.”
- “It’s really hard to choose just one. Marc Bamuthi’s performance, words, and message not only brought together in one piece the convening, it also left me inspired, grounded, and ready to continue advocating for the arts in my community.”

Being in a Revitalizing & Uplifting Space

- “Being in a validating space and with like-minded individuals.”
- “My self-esteem soared! We often overlook the immense value we bring as artists to our community, overshadowed by the stigma that art is merely entertainment.”
- “Feeling inspired by people who are dedicating to realizing this vision and recognize the power of the arts.”
- “The celebration and confidence of vision for this work was very powerful.”
- “Being so inspired by every individual I met.”

“I left feeling hopeful — which today, is a rare gift.”



What improvements would you suggest to enhance the next Convening?

Enhanced Accessibility

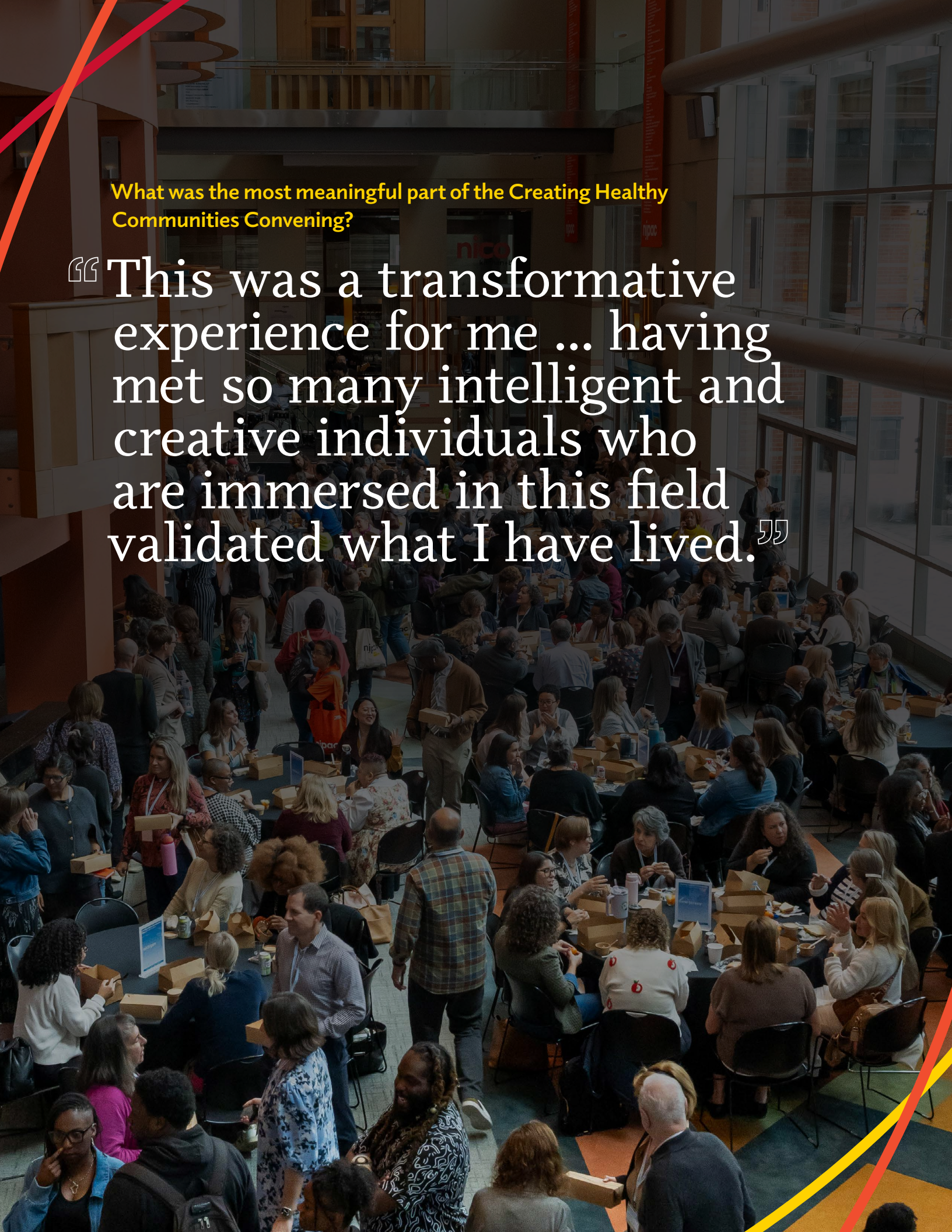
- “Captioning was only available in the main space - and for day 2, it wasn’t available for much of the morning ... Accessibility felt really lacking. Presentations were hard to read - using inaccessible colors and fonts. In the breakout rooms, screens could not be seen unless you were sitting in the very front of the room.”
- “As someone who wears eyeglasses, the low lighting in the theater during the main sessions really impacted my eyesight and made it difficult to capture notes, and it was jarring to leave the theater and enter other spaces that were bright and well-lit. I would’ve preferred for the house lights to be up during the presentations and panels.”

Additional Hands-On/Application-Based Learning

- “Add application-based workshops.”
- “Audience Q&A popcorn style during the panel discussions. Getting to ask questions directly to the panelists.”
- “It was a LOT of sitting and listening. It would be nice for it to be more interactive, or even have more opportunities to get up.”
- “I gained far more from ... the breakout sessions, and connecting 1:1 with conference attendees because I could take away with tangible data, actionable steps, and resources.”

“I would love to see more interactive breakout sessions or creative labs where attendees can design solutions together.”





What was the most meaningful part of the **Creating Healthy Communities Convening?**

“This was a transformative experience for me ... having met so many intelligent and creative individuals who are immersed in this field validated what I have lived.”



Goal Four

Build partnerships and networks across diverse fields to address shared goals.



Key Takeaways: CHC has become an essential convener in the arts in health space — over 90% of participants established new connections by attending the convening and felt that these networks will contribute to expanded learning opportunities, new partnerships and continued development of the field. In addition, participants identified several practical ways that CHC can continue to foster post-convening network development. These include facilitating regular online touch points and developing an online information sharing platform.

91%

said they established new connections as a result of attending the Creating Communities Convening.



“The arts aren’t just a reflection of healthy communities — they help create them.”

How might you use these connections in your own life, community, or organization?

Continue Conversations & Pursue New Partnerships

- “Employment! Shared projects.”
- “I plan to continue meeting with the people I already knew to see what kind of exciting work we can do together.”
- “Possible new clients, new partnerships, maybe funding sources.”
- “We are engaging many of the contacts as we design our social prescribing pilot.”

Uplift & Learn from Colleagues

- “Speakers for special events.”
- “I am already connecting with them for advice, support, and generating sustainable ideas.”
- “Talking to each other about our work, sharing resources.”
- “I would love for the people I’ve met and I to create supportive systems where we could share ideas and have input in a friendly and productive way as to uplift initiatives and create social support within the artists network.”


How do you plan to foster these new connections?

Emails, Texts, & Social Media

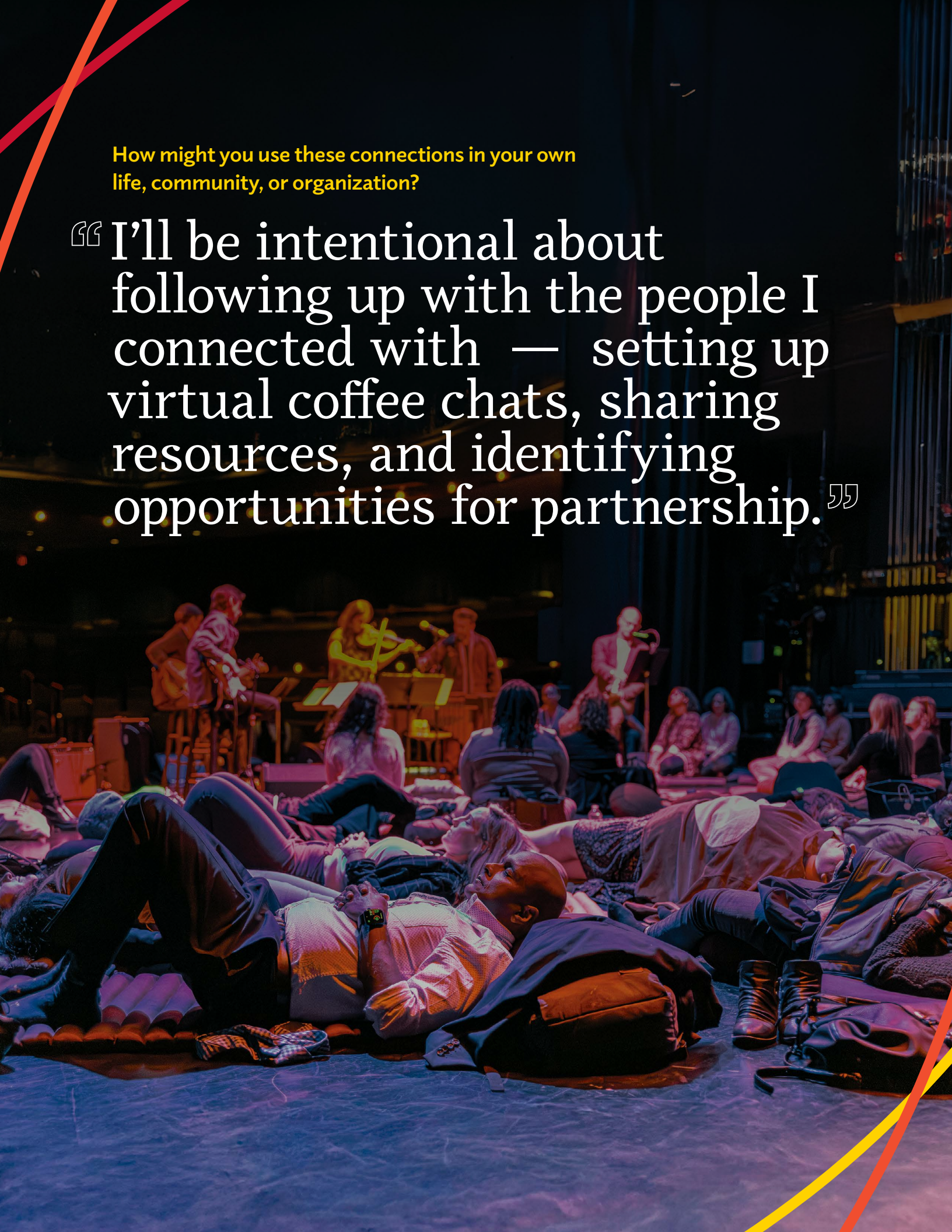
- “I have connected with them through email and through my professional social media.”
- “After connecting on LinkedIn and social media, I plan to schedule follow up calls and meetings to discuss partnerships.”
- “Exchange resources via email.”

Meetings & Collaborative Projects

- “Scheduling follow-ups to discuss future collaborations.”
- “The connections I made in my region are already planning a debrief.”
- “We are talking about maybe doing monthly Zooms to share ideas.”



“We continued our conversations via text — a meeting is on the calendar!”



How might you use these connections in your own life, community, or organization?

“I’ll be intentional about following up with the people I connected with — setting up virtual coffee chats, sharing resources, and identifying opportunities for partnership.”

Please describe the ways in which CHC leadership can support with maintaining connections developed at the convening.

Regular Zoom/Virtual Meetings

- “Quarterly sessions on specific topics or highlighting work in the field would be so useful.”
- “Perhaps creating Zoom social hours but based on the art discipline, similar to how the lunch tables were arranged on the second day.”
- “Office hours would be amazing. Being able to drop in and ask theoretical or process questions would be so helpful.”
- “Consistent spaces for continued collaboration — such as quarterly Zoom social hours, an online community platform, or a shared directory of participants.”

Newsletters

- “Regular newsletters.”
- “Updates via newsletters with what participants are doing ... I think could be amazing. Like an alumni newsletter.”
- “Monthly highlighting active projects, funding opportunities, and community spotlights would also help keep this powerful network alive and growing.”
- “Definitely newsletters.”
- “We are talking about maybe doing monthly Zooms to share ideas.”

Online Information-Sharing Platform

- “Community board online for connecting and discussions.”
- “Starting a collective so we can continue to share progress and opportunities.”
- “Spotlighting collaboration opportunities.”
- “Maybe some sort of a ‘I have this offer ...’ [or] ‘I need help with this ...’ type of board.”

“I’m returning
with dreams about
the future.”





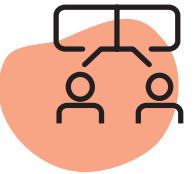

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Methodology

To inform the development of a relevant and actionable data collection strategy, Performance Hypothesis conferred with NJPAC leadership and the regional and national CHC Steering Committees in September 2025.

Inputs from the two steering committee meetings, as they pertain to each of the convening’s four goals, are summarized in Table 1 and reflected in the data collection tools employed in this evaluation.

Table 1: CHC Steering Committee guidance on how to assess CHC Goals

CHC Goals	Inputs from Regional Steering Committee Members	Inputs from National Steering Committee Members
 <p>Convene</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather details about attendees (e.g., field of work/discipline and size of organization) • Understand who else should have been in attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand which sectors are included and which are missing among convening attendees
 <p>Learn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what attendees hope to gain and actual takeaways • Explore how informed people feel • Identify resources and information needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gauge expected vs. actual learnings • Understand what attendees hope to gain (e.g., tools and practices) and actual takeaways • Specific learning related to social prescribing from a non-clinical perspective • What policy aspects are people interested in and what are their specific needs?
 <p>Engage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand supports needed to maintain and strengthen relationships established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe how we best talk about the research in community settings. Explore what resonates • How to be the best arts in health ambassadors: how to share, when and with whom • Learn how people/orgs are navigating the current political climate: changes in words, actions, future directions
 <p>Build</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture partnerships / relationships established • Understand the type of collaborations attendees are interested in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture individual stories, specific examples • Assess networks that came out of prior convenings • Explore stumbling blocks that hinder program implementation

Based on the guidance summarized on the previous page, Performance Hypothesis developed and deployed four data collection tools to capture participant insights:

1. Four mid-convening pulse checks.
2. One brief post-convening participant survey.
3. One in-depth post-convening participant survey.
4. One post-convening participant focus group (Table 2).

Please note that the data collected in the mid-convening pulse checks were not included in the evaluation findings.

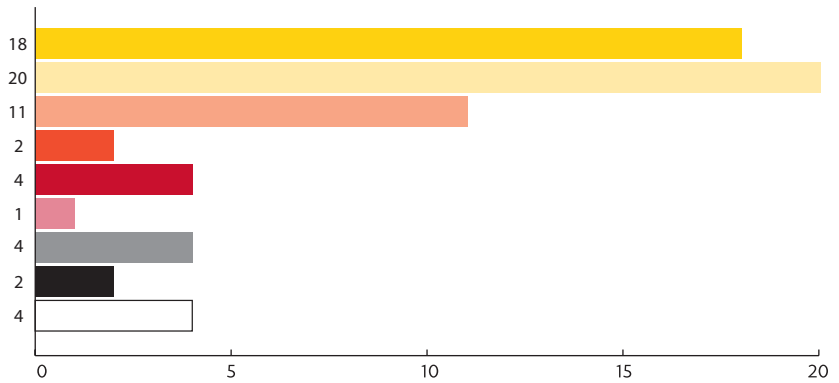
Table 2: Data Collection Strategy

	Post-Convening Survey	In-Depth Post-Convening Survey	Post-Convening Focus Group
Goal Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning, engaging and building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning, engaging and building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging and building
Deployment Cadence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available to all participants at the end of days one, two and three (October 14 - 16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available to all participants at the end of days one, two and three (October 14 - 16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within three weeks of CHC Convening (by November 6)
Distribution Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic • Guidebook and Microsoft Forms • Administered by CHC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic • Microsoft Forms • Administered by PH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online • Zoom • Administered by PH
Participant Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$30

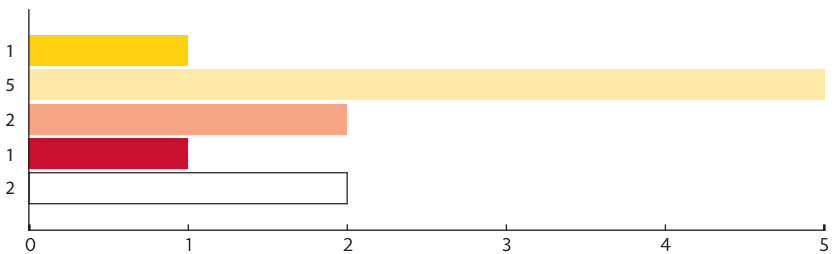
Evaluation Participants by Primary Domain of Work or Interest



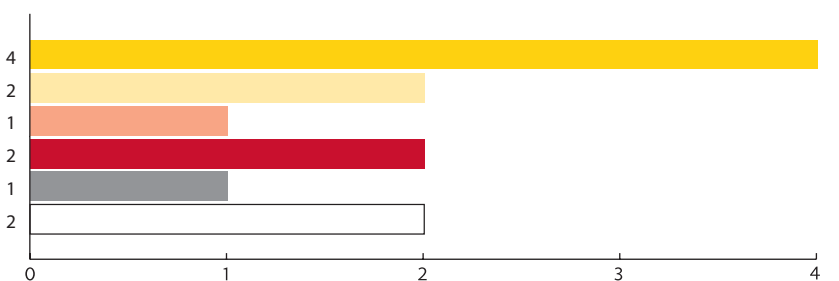
Brief post-convening survey participants (n=66)



Post-convening in-depth survey participants (n=11)

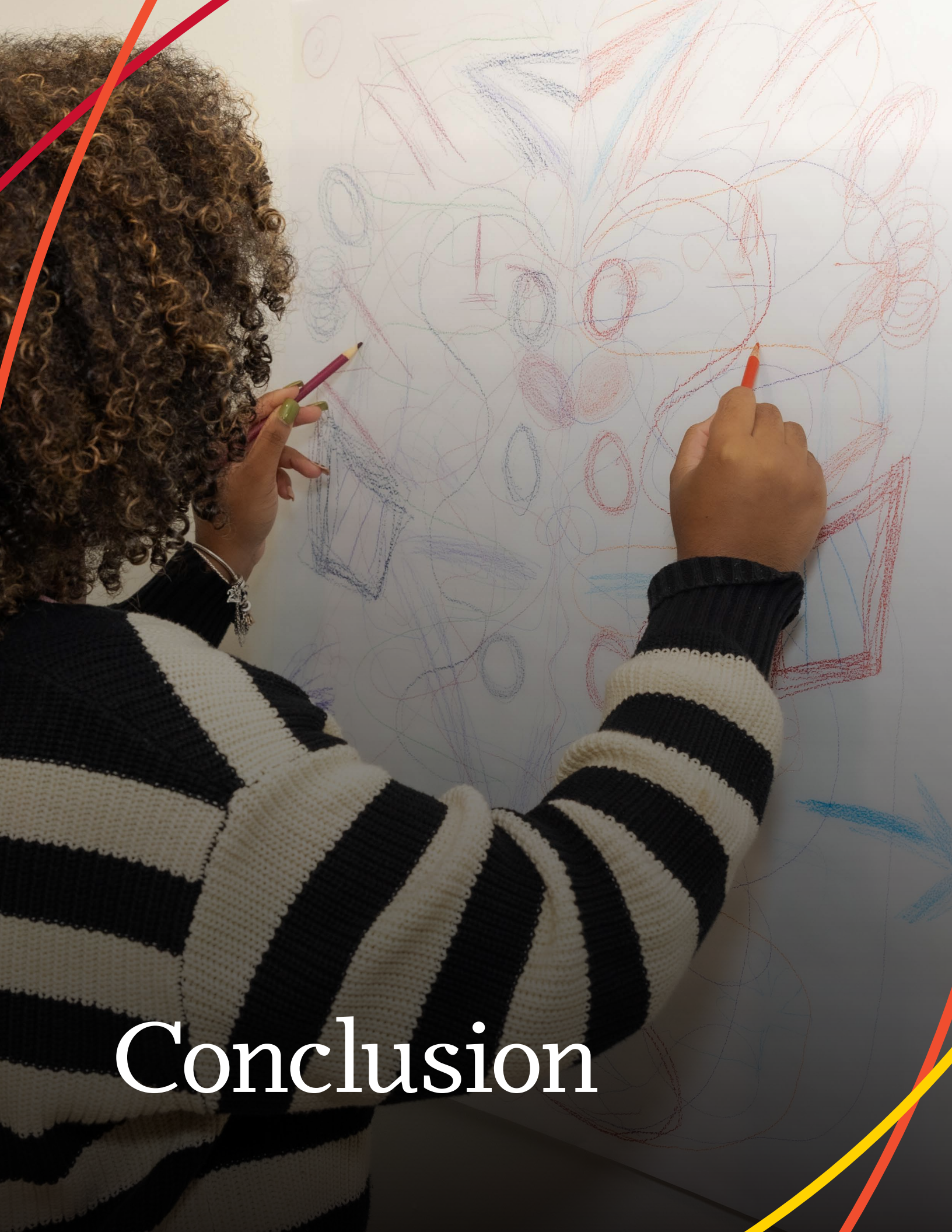


Virtual focus group survey participants (n=12)



The post-convening survey data collected through Guidebook and Microsoft Forms were merged in Excel by aligning variable names and response options across both datasets. The in-depth post-convening survey data was also managed and analyzed with Excel.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze closed-ended survey questions while the qualitative data gathered through open-ended survey questions and the focus group underwent a Rapid Qualitative Analysis (RQA) to extract key findings.



Conclusion

In relation to the convening's goals, the 2025 event successfully delivered a meaningful and impactful attendee experience, though additional improvements could be made to ensure continual growth and relevance.

Goals and associated learnings are included below.



Convene: The convening drew colleagues from a variety of fields and areas of interest. There is an opportunity to engage additional healthcare professionals, program recipients and increase the diversity of perspectives in future events.



Learn: Fundamental learnings centered on impact measurement, the breadth and depth of existing evidence and the importance of collaboration. Concurrently, participants expressed a desire to gain more direct and actionable information including funding sources and additional practice-centered case studies.



Engage: The opportunity to connect, incorporating arts activities and being in an uplifting space with like-minded colleagues was particularly important to the participant experience in the 2025 convening. Evaluation participants identified two opportunities for improvements in future events: enhanced accessibility and additional application-based learning.



Build: CHC has become an essential convener in the arts in health space and connections made at CHC contribute to expanded learning opportunities, new partnerships and continued development of the field. CHC can continue to foster post-convening network development by facilitating regular online touch points and developing an online information sharing platform.

“Inspiring and a wonderful reminder that there are many good people in this world, doing good things!”



A note from Aly

In the fall of 2024, Jill and I sat down to begin to imagine what would become the 2025 Creating Healthy Communities Convening.

In the midst of those early conversations, I came across a term I had never encountered before: **collective effervescence** — Émile Durkheim’s concept for the electric, almost ineffable energy that emerges when a community gathers together, moves together, feels together. I remember thinking: **that is what this convening needs to be.**

We are living through genuinely difficult moments — a time that demands a great deal of us, and asks us to hold even more. And yet, it is precisely in moments like these that **the power of arts and culture becomes undeniable.** Art connects us across difference. It inspires us when we are depleted. It translates what feels too large or too painful for ordinary language. And perhaps most importantly, it invites us to **imagine — together — the future we are working toward.** That is no small thing. Right now, that is everything.

Our gathering at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in October 2025 was proof of that. More than 530 people from 31 states and five countries came together to learn, build, and make something greater than the sum of their parts. When our Arts Center’s CEO John Schreiber called it “**the happiest conference**” he had ever attended, it felt like confirmation of something everyone in that room had already felt in their bones and in their spirit.

None of it would have been possible without the people who breathed life into it. To our performers and speakers who showed up with courage and creativity, to our staff and volunteers who gave countless hours to make every detail sing, and to every single attendee who arrived with open minds and generous hearts — **thank you.** You are the collective effervescence. **You are the reason this work matters, and the reason we will keep doing it.**

With gratitude,



Aly Maier Lokuta
Assistant Vice President, Arts & Well-Being
New Jersey Performing Arts Center



Responding to the Moment: Arts in Public Health in a Time of C

Moderator:
Dr. Jill Sonke

with
Fred Johnson, Dr. Nisha Sajnani,
Tooshar Swain, Clyde Valentin

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Alana Jackson, *Spoken Word Artist, Arts in Public Health Strategist*

Andrew Binger, *Program Officer & Community Partnerships, New Jersey State Council on the Arts*

Clyde Valentín, *Co-Founder, One Nation/One Project*

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Dr. Kate Mulligan, *Canadian Commonwealth Fund Harkness Fellow in Health Care Policy and Practice, CCNY*

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Ellen Oh, *Director of Interdisciplinary Arts Programs, Stanford Arts*

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Georgia Gempler, *Program Manager, Health & Wellbeing, National League of Cities*

Hannah Drake, *Co-Founder, (Un)Known Project*

Ian Keobner, *PhD, Associate Professor and Endowed Chair, Arts & Health at Mason Gross School of Art, Rutgers University*

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Karen Alexander, *MPA, International Arts + Mind Lab, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine*

Kate Villa, *Arts and Wellbeing Consultant Curator, Lincoln Center*

Margery Pabst Steinmetz, *Author, Philanthropist, Co-Founder, Pabst Steinmetz Foundation*

Martine Philippe, *Director, City of Dallas: Office of Arts and Culture*

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Producers

Producer: **Marissa Finkelstein**, *Program Manager, Arts & Well-Being, New Jersey Performing Arts Center*

Executive Producer: **Dr. Jill Sonke**, *Director of Research Initiatives, UF Center for Arts in Medicine*

Executive Producer: **Aly Maier Lokuta**, *MA, Assistant Vice President, Arts & Well-Being, New Jersey Performing Arts Center*



About the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine

The University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine is a national leader in advancing the arts in health through education, research, and community engagement. Housed within the College of the Arts, the Center offers undergraduate and graduate certificates in Arts in Medicine, as well as a Master of Arts in Arts in Medicine. Through interdisciplinary academic programs, applied research, and strategic partnerships — including with UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine — the Center prepares students to lead in healthcare, public health, and community settings. The Center leads and supports research on the health impacts of arts engagement and contributes to policy development through initiatives like the EpiArts Lab and the Creating Healthy Communities project. The Center’s work informs policy development and expands the role of the arts in improving health outcomes and community wellbeing nationally and globally.

About the New Jersey Performing Arts Center

New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, New Jersey, is the most diverse performing arts center in the country, and the anchor cultural institution for both the city of Newark and the state of New Jersey. It is an artistic, cultural, educational and civic center where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. NJPAC brings communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state’s and the world’s best artists, while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC Arts & Well-Being develops initiatives and programs that amplify the health benefits of the arts and measure the impact of the Arts Center on community health and well-being. NJPAC has attracted more than 12 million visitors (including more than two million children) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents. Visit njpac.org for more information.



“Feeling inspired
by the energy and
generosity in every
space today.”

About UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine

From humble beginnings, UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine has grown into one of the largest comprehensive arts in healthcare programs in existence. Starting with two volunteer visual artists working on the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit, Arts in Medicine now has eight administrators and 18 paid artists in all art disciplines working in six separate buildings throughout the UF Health system in Gainesville, FL. Our programs are designed to transform the hospital experience for patients, visitors, caregivers and staff and to promote health and wellness through the arts within the community.

While Arts in Medicine's main focus has been on applying the arts to patient care, we are also dedicated to expanding our reach beyond the hospital walls. Other developing aspects of the program include:

Education: Course work in arts in healthcare for art, medical and nursing students

Research: Partnering with clinicians to develop and implement quantitative studies that demonstrate the effects of arts in health care

Collaborations: Involve partnering with community arts organizations and other hospital departments to bring the message of the arts and wellness to the larger community

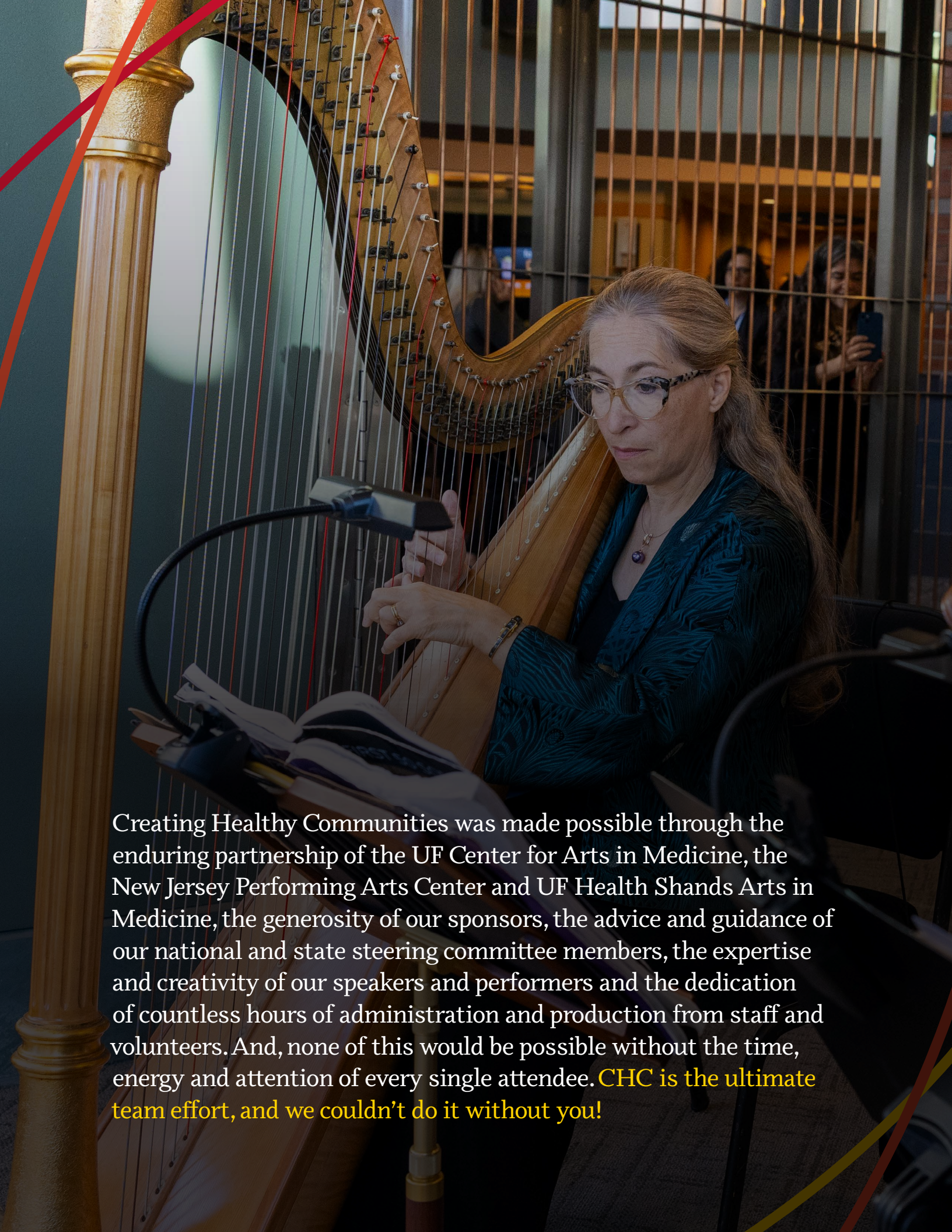
About Performance Hypothesis

Performance Hypothesis is an Atlanta-based arts and wellbeing consulting group. Since 2021, Performance Hypothesis has championed award-winning arts and wellbeing research, evaluation, policy efforts, and convenings.

Anchored in collaboration, Performance Hypothesis championed the nation's first arts and mental health legislation in history, Georgia's House Resolution 1007, with unanimous support from the legislature. The firm has supported strategic planning initiatives Emory University and the Segerstrom Center for the Arts. As a team of arts and wellbeing expert, Performance Hypothesis has co-lead research and evaluation with Creative Forces®, NEA-funded research on the impact of dance for people living with Parkinson's, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Music as Medicine initiative to use live music to address people living with Alzheimer's, arts and mental health programs for incarcerated youth with The Jimmy Carter Presidential Center, theater for vaccine confidence programming ('Equitable Vaccines,' with funding from the CDC and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation), and several other national initiatives.

Finally, Performance Hypothesis co-directed Healing Arts Atlanta for 1000+ attendees in 12 different venues across the region in 2024, currently leads the Atlanta Arts and Wellbeing Series with 20+ collaborating institutions, and has led workshops/key notes with the Nordic-Baltic Arts in Healthcare Summit, California State University in Long Beach Lauda Lecture, Maine Arts Council, and many others.

[View Data Collection Instruments](#)



Creating Healthy Communities was made possible through the enduring partnership of the UF Center for Arts in Medicine, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine, the generosity of our sponsors, the advice and guidance of our national and state steering committee members, the expertise and creativity of our speakers and performers and the dedication of countless hours of administration and production from staff and volunteers. And, none of this would be possible without the time, energy and attention of every single attendee. **CHC is the ultimate team effort, and we couldn't do it without you!**



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