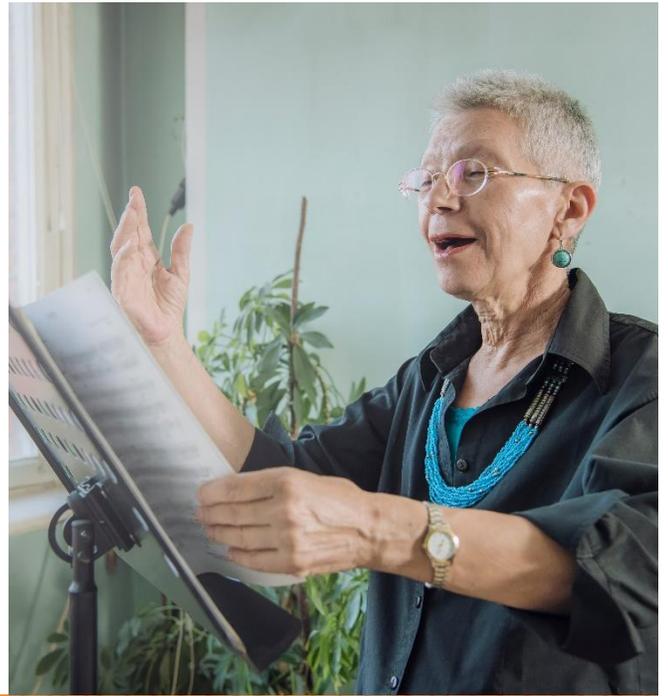


# MacPhail Music for Life™

## *2021-22 Evaluation Results*

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SEPTEMBER 2022

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# 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 2021-2022.

## 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-eight participants completed a survey at the end of their program.

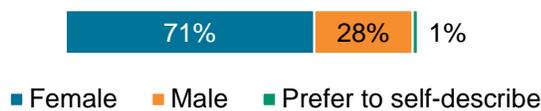
# Evaluation results

## Participant survey results

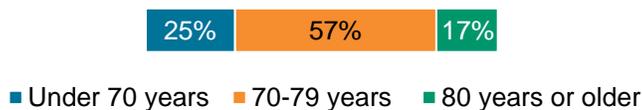
### Participant characteristics

Music for Life™ participants were asked to share a little bit about themselves when completing their survey. The majority of respondents identified as female (71%; Figure 1) and White (93%; the remaining 7% of respondents said they preferred to not disclose their race). The average age of respondents was 71 years old, with about 3 in 4 participants (74%) reporting that they were age 70 or older (Figure 2).

#### 1. Participant gender identity (n=68)

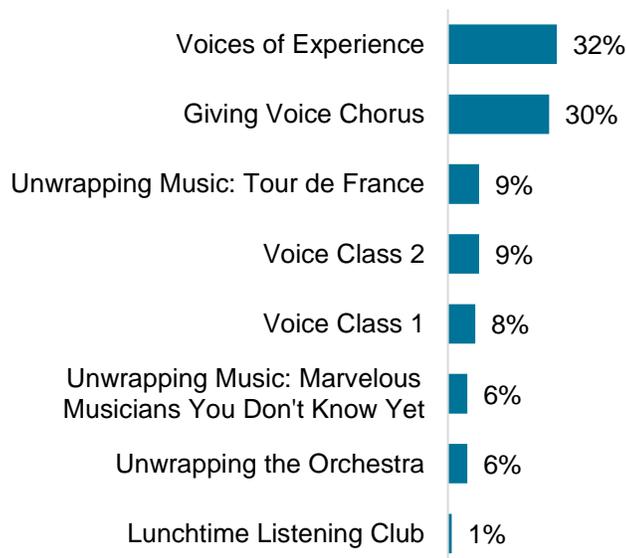


#### 2. Participant age (n=63)



Respondents most commonly participated in the Voices of Experience Choir (32%) and the Giving Voice Chorus (30%; Figure 3). While the survey asked about Piano for Beginners (in addition to the other classes listed in Figure 3), no respondents indicated that they took Piano for Beginners.

#### 3. Music for Life™ class participants were involved in (n=88)



## 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™. About 3 in 4 respondents (76%) had participated in a Music for Life™ class previously and decided to return to the program (Figure 4).

### 4. First-time and returning participants (n=76)



■ First-time participant ■ Returning participant

Participants were asked how they heard about Music for Life™ and were given a list of options to choose from. Of the list, participants had most commonly heard of the class from friends, family, or acquaintances who had previously participated in a Music for Life™ class (Figure 5). A little more than 1 in 3 respondents (36%) mentioned another way they had heard of Music for Life™, such as through the Alzheimer's Association or through email lists that they subscribe to.

### 5. How participants heard of Music for Life™ (n=64)

	%
Friends, family, or acquaintances who <b>had</b> previously participated in Music for Life™	50%
Friends, family, or acquaintances who <b>had not</b> previously participated in Music for Life™	17%
Online search	14%
Social media (Facebook, etc.)	8%
Another way	36%

When respondents were asked why they decided to join a Music for Life™ course, they mentioned a number of reasons: that they like music and singing, that they expected to enjoy it based on the topic or instructor, and that it helped them to manage their dementia or memory loss issues. Numerous participants also mentioned that they appreciated the opportunity to safely take classes or participate in ensembles during the pandemic.

*I'm enjoying the journey of developing my singing voice. It's a good way to participate in music as we continue to navigate the pandemic.*

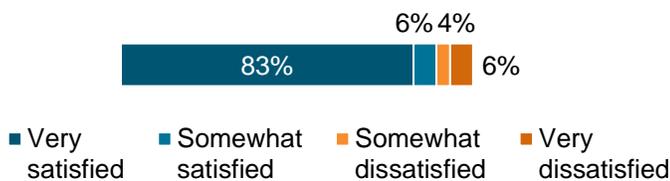
*My wife and I joined because it was a blessing to both of us who love to sing and have been kept from singing due to the COVID pandemic. I have followed the program on [social media] and was delighted when I learned that my wife, who has Alzheimer's, and I would be able to participate virtually.*

Almost 9 in 10 respondents (87%) reported that they plan to sign up for another Music for Life™ course. These participants noted that their enjoyment of the classes and the music and relationships with other members and teaching artists is why they would like to continue their participation. Of the respondents who said they might sign up for another course, some reasons included not having enough time to fully participate, not wanting to travel very far to attend a course, and not knowing what their own or their family member’s health status will be in the future.

### Participants find classes enjoyable and valuable

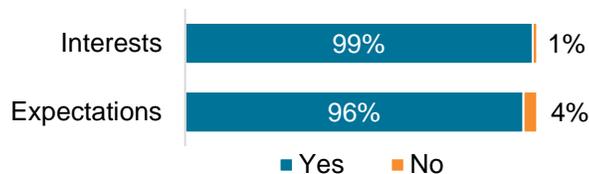
The large majority of respondents were satisfied with the course they participated in; about 9 in 10 respondents (89%) said that they were either satisfied or very satisfied overall (Figure 6). Almost all respondents (99%) said that the course suited their interests and likewise almost all respondents (96%) said that it suited their expectations (Figure 7).

#### 6. Overall satisfaction (n=78)



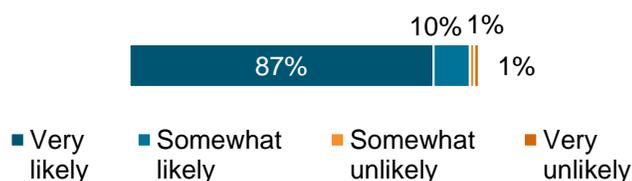
#### 7. Satisfaction with class content (n=78)

Did the content of the class suit your...



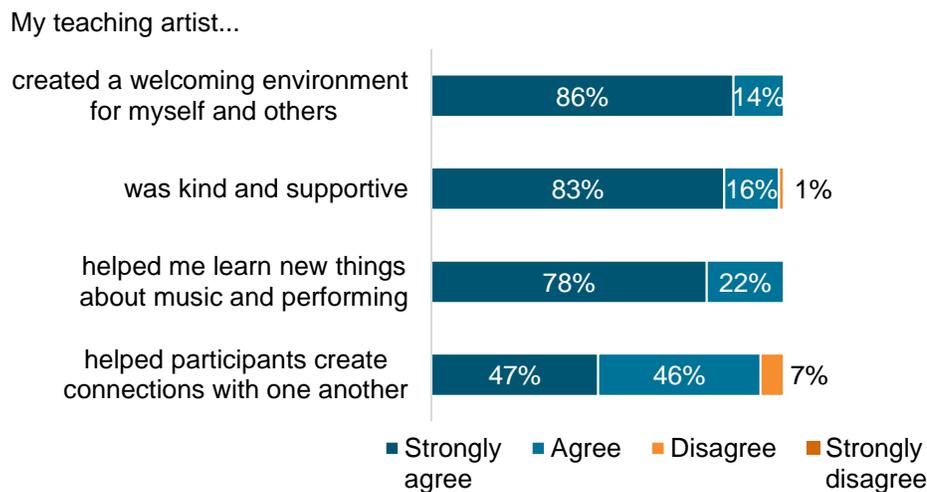
The large majority of respondents (97%) said that it is likely or very likely that they will recommend the Music for Life™ program to a friend or family member (Figure 8).

#### 8. Likelihood of recommending program (n=78)



Respondents were very positive about the teaching artists who led their class. All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their teaching artist created a welcoming environment for them and others and that they helped them learn new things about music and performing (Figure 9). Nearly all respondents said that their teaching artist was kind and supportive and that helped participants create connections with one another. While this feedback is overwhelmingly positive, one area for improvement is ensuring that teaching artists help to create connections between participants, with a substantially smaller percentage of respondents saying that they strongly agreed with this statement.

## 9. Satisfaction with teaching artists (n=76-78)



## Participants develop music skills

Respondents reported developing their music skills through their participation in the Music for Life™ program. The majority of participants reported learning more about music (68%), increasing their musical skills (56%) and growing in their appreciation of music (56%; Figure 10).

## 10. Accomplishments – musical (n=78)

What did you accomplish by participating in this music class?	%
I learned more about music	68%
I increased my musical skills	56%
I grew in my appreciation of music	56%

Note: Percentages add to more than 100 because participants could select multiple response options.

Further, participants were asked what aspect of their Music for Life™ class was the most satisfying for them. Among the musical outcomes, they reported enjoying learning new music (59%), learning musical techniques (37%), and singing or playing familiar songs (26%; Figure 11).

### 11. Best parts of participation – musical outcomes (n=78)

<b>What are the most satisfying aspects of participating in MacPhail Music for Life™?</b>	<b>%</b>
Learning new music	59%
Learning musical techniques	37%
Singing or playing familiar songs	26%

Note: Percentages add to more than 100 because participants could select multiple response options.

### *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, well-being, and social lives. They commonly reported that through their participation in Music for Life™, they socialized with others (63%), improved their mood (60%), were more active mentally (56%), and expressed themselves in a creative way (53%; Figure 12). Less frequently, they reported that participation in music classes allowed them to make new friends (41%) and be more physically active (14%).

### 12. Accomplishments – non-musical (n=78)

<b>What did you accomplish by participating in this music class?</b>	<b>%</b>
I socialized with others	63%
I improved my mood	60%
I was more active mentally	56%
I expressed myself in a creative way	53%
I made new friends	41%
I was more active physically	14%

Note: Percentages add to more than 100 because participants could select multiple response options.

The aspect of Music for Life™ that participants found most satisfying was the opportunity to sing and learn with other people (75%; Figure 13). Following this, respondents reported that they liked expanding their social activities (19%), performing (17%), and getting to know new people (15%). Participants were given an option to write in other satisfying aspects of their participation; responses included learning about the history of the music and various composers as well as being treated like “serious singers.”

### 13. Benefits of participation – Non-musical outcomes (n=78)

What are the most satisfying aspects of participating in MacPhail Music for Life™?	%
Singing or learning with other people	75%
Expanding my social activities	19%
Performing	17%
Getting to know new people	15%
Physical warm-ups	4%
Other	8%

Note: Percentages add to more than 100 because participants could select multiple response options

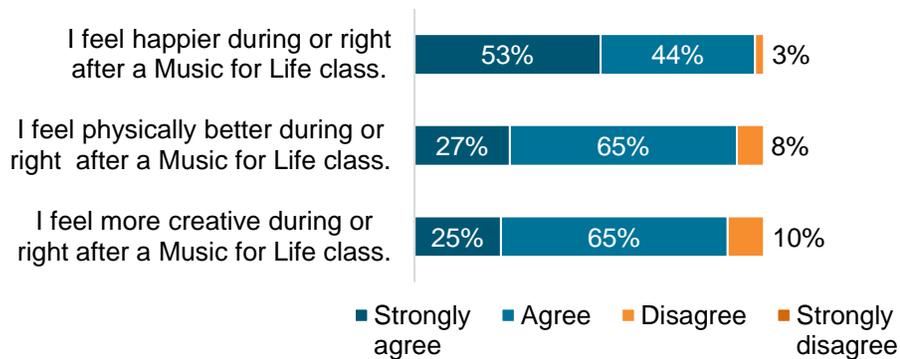
When asked what they most enjoyed about Music for Life™, many respondents said that the classes and rehearsals gave them a chance to do something musical and creative in a group setting, as well as an opportunity to challenge themselves and learn something new. Respondents commonly spoke about their appreciation for all of the staff involved in the program.

*The contagious enthusiasm and talent of the director and her staff—the people and their personalities were a big plus. I appreciated the way they reached out and encouraged each and every participant to feel included.*

*I enjoyed practicing and learning to vocalize new music and perform it in a supportive environment with encouraging and helpful suggestions for improvement from instructors and classmates.*

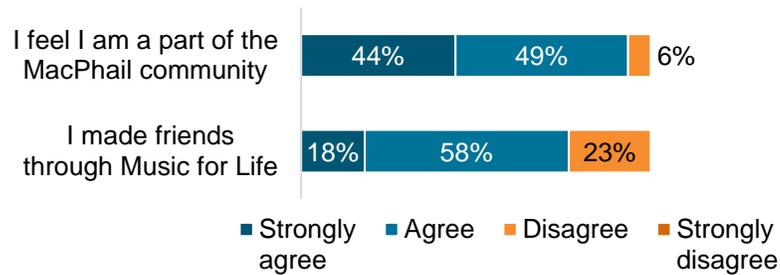
Almost all respondents in the fall semester agreed or strongly agreed they felt happier (97%), physically better (92%), and more creative (90%) during or right after a class (Figure 14).

### 14. Impact of classes on participant happiness and on how participants feel physically (n=77)



Participants were positive about the impact that Music for Life™ had on their social lives and the community that they have been able to be a part of through their participation. Almost all participants agreed or strongly agreed that they feel they are a part of the MacPhail community (93%; Figure 15). About 3 in 4 respondents (76%) agreed or strongly agreed that they made friends through Music for Life™.

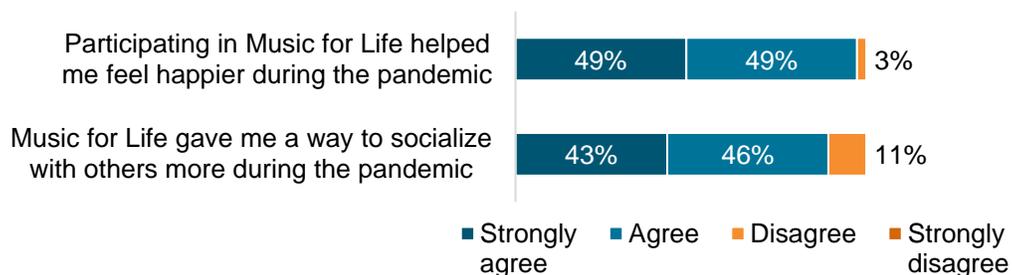
### 15. Impact of classes on participant’s sense of social connection (n=77)



### Music for Life™ helped participants cope with the pandemic

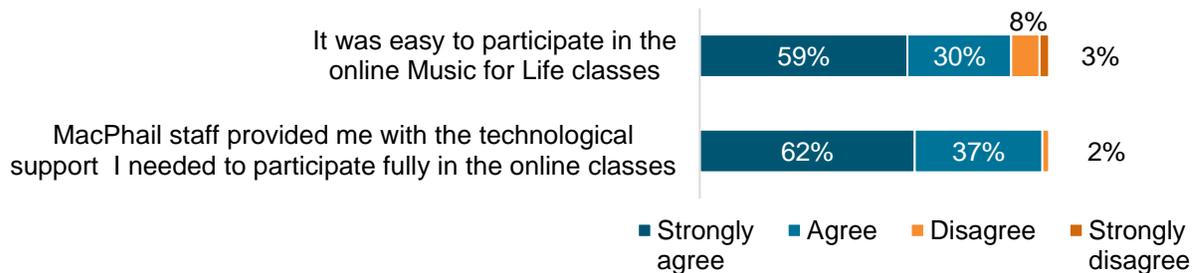
Online participants were asked questions about whether or not the program had helped them cope with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and if MacPhail had provided them with the support they needed to continue to participate in an online format. Almost all participants agreed or strongly agreed that participating in Music for Life™ helped them feel happier (98%) and gave them a way to socialize with others more (89%) during the pandemic (Figure 16).

### 16. Impact of classes on participant’s happiness and socialization during the COVID-19 pandemic (n=37)



Almost all respondents who took an online Music for Life™ class agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy for them to participate in the class (89%; Figure 17). Similarly, nearly all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that MacPhail staff provided them with the technological support they needed to participate fully in an online class or rehearsal (99%).

### 17. Perceptions of online Music for Life™ classes (n=37-52)



Note: Percentages add to more than 100 due to rounding.

### Suggested improvements from participants

Music for Life™ participants were asked what would make the class better. Many respondents used the opportunity to share that the classes were good as they were or to say that they had no suggestions. Those who did provide suggestions said that they wanted to sing music that was new to them and that they wanted to sing more challenging music. A few respondents mentioned still wanting to do some kind of performance, despite COVID-related health concerns.

*It's hard to come up with any suggestions. It was really well done in all respects. I like the choice of music and the way that it is presented to the chorus—in a friendly, low-stress manner.*

Many respondents talked about issues related to the pandemic, praising MacPhail staff and teaching artists for how they navigated it while simultaneously saying that wanted to sing in person or sing without masks. One respondent suggested that MacPhail pursue hybrid course models moving forward, saying:

*As we continue to navigate life with COVID it would be great to be able to make the class available on-site and online at the same time. This would allow participants who are comfortable with the classroom setting to experience it while still supporting those who prefer to attend online.*

### 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. Most commonly, participants said they thought MacPhail offered a nice variety of classes and did not have suggestions. Those who offered suggestions requested that MacPhail offer classes on jazz and music originating outside of North America and Europe. Others said they wanted classes on more general topics, like music history and music theory.

## Issues for consideration

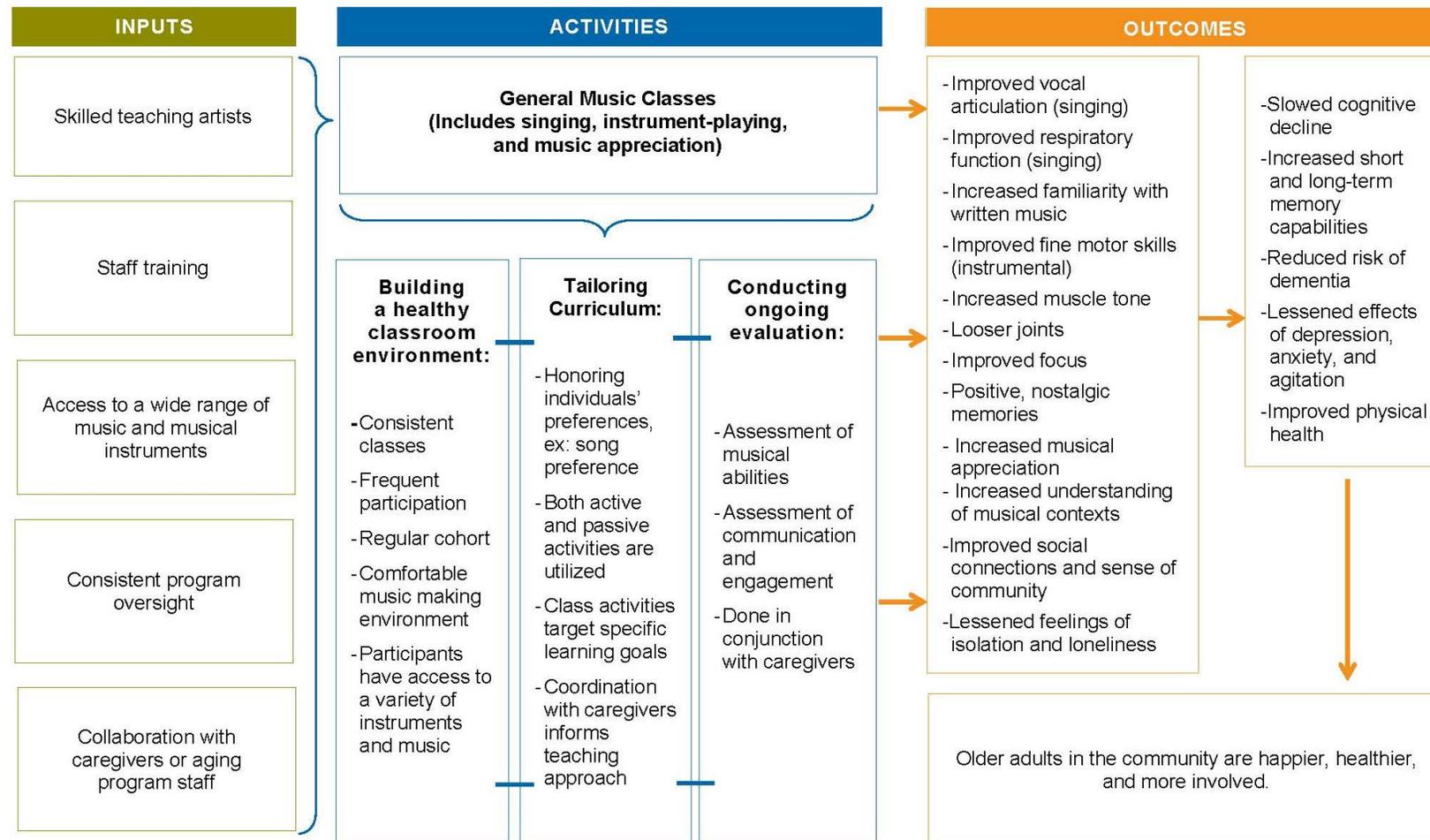
Staff at MacPhail who are involved in program design and implementation should consider the suggestions given by survey respondents mentioned above. Given the findings of this evaluation, Wilder Research recommends the following:

- **Continue to be responsive to participants' needs while delivering programming as participants navigate COVID-19.** Participants agreed that the program made them happier and gave them an opportunity to socialize while navigating the pandemic, and also lauded MacPhail staff and teaching artists for navigating the COVID-19 so well. One participant suggested that MacPhail pursue hybrid course models, with participants taking part online and in-person simultaneously.
- **Consider ways to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion more fully into the program.** Program participants reported enjoying music from different backgrounds and a few said they wanted to learn music that originates from outside North America and Europe. A few program participants said that increased diversity of course participants could help improve the Music for Life™ program.
- **Pursue opportunities to serve more participants of color and low-income participants.** Similar to last year's evaluation, the vast majority of Music for Life™ participants identify as White. MacPhail should dedicate time and resources to identifying ways to provide programming to older adults of color and low-income individuals.
- **Continue offering technical support to program participants.** In this year's evaluation, almost all respondents who took a class online agreed that they received helpful technical support from MacPhail to fully participate online (compared to last year's evaluation, in which more than 1 in 3 participants strongly disagreed that MacPhail provided with this kind of support). This indicates that MacPhail made strong improvements in terms of technical support for online participants from last year to this year.

# 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.



## B. 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 time together. Please check the appropriate boxes.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What MacPhail class did you participate in?

- <sup>1</sup> Broadway Sing Along Series
- <sup>2</sup> Giving Voice Chorus
- <sup>3</sup> Voice Class 2
- <sup>4</sup> Songs of Pride & Empowerment: Understanding Racial Justice
- <sup>5</sup> Successful Sight Singing
- <sup>6</sup> Unwrapping Music: Musicians Who Changed the World
- <sup>7</sup> Unwrapping Dance Music: The Rhythm Is Gonna Get You
- <sup>8</sup> Voices of Experience Choir

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

<sup>1</sup> Yes → What made you decide to join the class? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>2</sup> No → What made you decide to participate in the class again? \_\_\_\_\_

(If No) When have you previously participated in Music for Life™? *(Check all that apply)*

- <sup>1</sup> Fall 2021
- <sup>2</sup> Spring 2021
- <sup>3</sup> Fall 2020
- <sup>4</sup> Spring 2020
- <sup>5</sup> Fall 2019
- <sup>6</sup> Spring 2019
- <sup>7</sup> Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- <sup>1</sup> I learned more about music
- <sup>2</sup> I increased my musical skills
- <sup>3</sup> I made new friends
- <sup>4</sup> I socialized with others
- <sup>5</sup> I was more active physically
- <sup>6</sup> I was more active mentally
- <sup>7</sup> I improved my mood
- <sup>8</sup> I expressed myself in a creative way
- <sup>9</sup> I grew in my appreciation of music
- <sup>10</sup> Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- <sup>1</sup> Learning musical techniques
- <sup>2</sup> Learning new music
- <sup>3</sup> Singing or playing familiar songs
- <sup>4</sup> Physical warm-ups
- <sup>5</sup> Singing or learning with other people
- <sup>6</sup> Performing
- <sup>7</sup> Expanding my social activities
- <sup>8</sup> Getting to know new people
- <sup>9</sup> Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
a. I feel happier during or right after a Music for Life™ class.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
b. I feel physically better during or right after a Music for Life™ class.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
c. I feel more creative during or right after a Music for Life™ class.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
d. I made friends through Music for Life™.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
e. Participating in Music for Life™ increased how frequently I socialize with friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>

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

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
a. My Teaching Artist was kind and supportive.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
b. My Teaching Artist helped me learn new things about music and performing.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
c. My Teaching Artist created a welcoming environment for myself and others.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
d. My Teaching Artist helped participants create connections with one another.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
e. I would recommend Music for Life™ to my friends and acquaintances.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
f. I feel I am a part of the MacPhail community.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>

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

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
a. It was easy to participate in the online Music for Life™ classes.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
b. Music for Life™ gave me a way to socialize with others more during the pandemic.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>
c. Participating in Music for Life™ helped me feel happier during the pandemic.	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>

8. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statement.

MacPhail staff provided me with the technological support I needed to participate fully in the online classes.

<sub>1</sub> Strongly agree

<sub>2</sub> Agree

<sub>3</sub> Disagree

<sub>4</sub> Strongly disagree

<sub>-8</sub> Not applicable

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

<sub>1</sub> Yes

<sub>2</sub> No → If no, what was missing? \_\_\_\_\_

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

<sub>1</sub> Yes

<sub>2</sub> No → If no, what was missing? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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14. How did you hear about Music for Life?

- <sup>1</sup> Friends, family, or acquaintances who had previously participated in Music for Life
- <sup>2</sup> Friends, family, or acquaintances who had *not* previously participated in Music for Life
- <sup>3</sup> Social media (Facebook, etc.)
- <sup>4</sup> Online search (Google, etc.)
- <sup>5</sup> Another way, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- <sup>1</sup> Very satisfied
- <sup>2</sup> Somewhat satisfied
- <sup>3</sup> Somewhat dissatisfied
- <sup>4</sup> Very dissatisfied

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

- <sup>1</sup> Yes
- <sup>2</sup> Maybe
- <sup>3</sup> No
- <sup>8</sup> I don't know

Why?

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

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

18. With what gender do you identify?

- 1 Female
- 2 Male
- 3 Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Prefer not to answer

19. What is your age (in years)? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What is your zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

21. 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

## Acknowledgements

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Anne Li

Wilder Research, a division of Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, is a nationally respected nonprofit research and evaluation group. For more than 100 years, Wilder Research has gathered and interpreted facts and trends to help families and communities thrive, get at the core of community concerns, and uncover issues that are overlooked or poorly understood.

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