

# Health & Healing in the Arts

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In this day and age we seem to concentrate more on math, science and engineering, especially during our formative years of learning. We should not neglect the creative artistic side of our brains. I submit that the arts help keep us balanced. Emotionally the arts help us release our stress, and they contribute to our physical health. For example dancing is good for our heart, weight control, and balance just to name a few positives. The arts are very beneficial for healing. For example when we laugh, smile or even exercise our body releases endorphins, a natural hormone that makes us feel better and reduces pain. Endorphins are released whether we play an active or passive role in the arts and this is good for our mental health and physical being. The arts help assist us to recognize all that we have in life and how much more there is to discover in our lives.



We are very fortunate to live in an area of the country that has such diversity in the arts. I grew up in Los Gatos, in a very nurturing home. My parents felt it was important for my brother and I to get a well balanced education, which included exposure to the arts. My grandfather, K.P. Armann was an artist and sculptor in the early 1900's. He impressed upon my father the importance of beauty in nature and he captured it very well in his work.

My father went on to be an architect and civil engineer here in Los Gatos. Like his father before him, my dad taught us how to enjoy the arts. My dad, Karty, designed the round house, train station and the carousal house in Oak Meadow Park. My mom, Harriet, is a very nurturing caregiver. She taught us the importance of giving back to our community by being a volunteer and a companion to the elderly. It was through her that I learned we have several museums in Los Gatos, where we can enjoy the art, culture and history of our town. My brother, Ken, enjoys the art of restoring old British motorcycles. We model ourselves after our parents. I find it interesting that I modeled my mother's nurturing, caregiver qualities, while my brother modeled my father's artistic qualities.

Just off highway 9, between Los Gatos and Saratoga we have Villa Montalvo which is an art and cultural center. They feature many things to do and see from musical events, art



galleries to the beautiful gardens to walk through, and more. They have classes and workshops, and volunteers are always welcome.

At the town center the library has been remodeled, and in the summer we have Music in the Park which is a free venue for everyone, and Los Gatos Music & Arts also produces "Jazz on the Plazz" during the summer months.

We have several stage and theater groups in the area, with productions being put on year round. Being a part of a production helps build self esteem and confidence, whether you are on the stage or behind the scenes. Dancing is a great way to get your heart beating faster. It is both physical and emotionally enhancing. Sign up to learn dancing at Arthur Murray Dance Studio, where my brother and I learned ballroom dancing during our teen years. Try Dance Attack Studio and Dance Academy USA, they specialize in teaching all types of dancing for both young and old.

There is so much to the arts and culture that benefit our body and minds. Cultural events give us relief from daily stress. The artist, whether it be painting, acting, playing music or just being the observer of art allows us a diversion from the day to day routines and activities of life. The arts are a healthy way for us to recharge our psyche, so that we may be more productive and happy in our daily lives.



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