

AAIDD Interest Network Annual Plan & Yearly Report

Planning and reporting on Interest Network activities designed to fulfil their purpose.
(See the [AAIDD Interest Networks Leadership Manual](#) for the purpose of the Interest Networks.

Interest Network:	Creative Arts
Lead Contact Person(s): (Chair) Tamara Shetron: Texas State University tamara.shetron@txstate.edu (Vice-Chair) Michelle Thompson, michelle.peace.2you@gmail	
Next Scheduled Election & Leadership Position(s) that will be Open for Nomination: May 2027: a) Chair: Tamara Shetron b) Vice Chair/Research: Michelle Thompson c) Secretary/Treasurer: Yumi Shirai; OPEN in May d) Social Media: OPEN Now! e) Innovation/Information: OPEN Now! f) Membership/Communication: OPEN Now! g) Advisory Mentors: Peter Temple and Samantha Brophy optional roles: Social Media, Innovation/Information, Membership/communications	
2025-2026 Report For the year that just ended (July 1-June 30), indicate objectives met, activities completed, and funds used. <i>Objectives and Activities for 2025-2026:</i> A. Expand membership and network member involvement Several new people joined some of our monthly meetings, including Em Peacock, a graduate student in Chicago who we provided a scholarship to attend the annual AAIDD meeting in conjunction with the Religion and Spirituality IN. B. Increase network visibility and collaboration We continue to increase network visibility with our FB page, website, and outreach to other AAIDD members. These have proven valuable assets for when we introduce what we do to people interested in our IN. We collaborated with the Education IN in February, 2026, for their BRAAIN Series Webinar on creative arts. Together, Yumi, Tami, and Samantha responded to the following questions for a rich discussion on arts: Panel Questions: 1. How has working with learners with IDD changed your approach to creative arts education? 2. How do you approach co-creation with artists with IDD rather than “instruction”? 3. What systemic barriers continue to limit access to the arts for people with IDD? 4. How can arts institutions move beyond “special programs” toward structural inclusion? 5. What advice would you give new creative arts educators of people with IDD? 6. What practices in arts education need to be reimaged to better include learners with IDD? 7. What research questions remain underexplored in creative arts education and IDD? C. Increase awareness of the critical role of creativity to promote inclusion and belonging for all people	

Due July 31, 2026

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D. Collaborate with other AAIDD Interest Networks

Our research on community-arts groups transition to virtual spaces during Covid-19 was published in July, 2026.

Citation: Shirai, Y., Boulanger Thompson, M., & Shetron, T. We-Making Through Technology: How Community Arts Organizations for Artists with Disabilities Adapted during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 14, 1848823.

Link: <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2026.1848823/full>

2026-2027 Plan: Goals, Objectives, Activities, and Strategies

For the **coming year** (July 1-June 30), describe the planned objectives, activities, and proposed expenditure of funds.

Objectives for 2026-2027:

1. Continue to expand membership and network member involvement
2. Continue to increase Creative Arts network visibility and collaboration (within AAIDD and in the wider IDD and Arts communities)
3. Increase Creative Arts network collaboration with other AAIDD interest networks (i.e. Spirituality, Gerontology, Health & Wellness, Technology)
4. Increase awareness of the critical role of creativity to promote inclusion and belonging for all people
5. Include and amplify voices of artists with IDD in the Creative Arts network

Proposed Activities for 2026-2027:

1. Host monthly steering committee meetings to plan and prepare all member quarterly meetings and conference proposals/presentations.
2. Encourage members to submit proposals for AAIDD or other relevant conferences on current artistic related research activities particularly topics that address the importance of creativity and creative arts in the lives of people with IDD.
3. Host a webinar series of 3-4 creativity-focused activities open to all members of AAIDD for the purpose of bringing more creativity activities and understanding to their lives so they can experience first-hand the benefits of creativity. Already in the planning stages: (1) Mosaicology with Nina Harper (an artistic method for combining art and thought to integrate conflicting thoughts), (2) Express Yourself Arts activity hosted by Ellen Geis, and (3) The Use of Social Media to Support Art Therapy, Sam Brophy. (We may add one more...just beginning to schedule and sort things out now).

We continue to:

1. Continue to develop a database of creative arts studios (inclusive, progressive, etc..) in the US and internationally.
2. Reach out to self-advocates to include their representation, voice, and self-advocacy in our Creative Arts network (meetings, websites, presentations)
3. Ensure our Creative Arts network is inclusive and accessible by working towards implementing the following in our meetings, websites, presentations, (Plain/Simple Language, Accessible technology, include the voices of people with IDD, implement UDL to all meetings and presentations.
4. Work across disciplines to promote the use of creativity in multiple spaces and in tandem with the goals of other disciplines.