



LYRICS 'N LEADERSHIP  
INSTITUTE

# 2026

## CALIFORNIA'S BRAIN CAPITAL ARTS STRATEGY PLAN

A New Way of **Learning**  
for a New Way of **Leading**



**PRESENTED BY**

**Lyrics 'N Leadership** Institute for Brain Health

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# Executive Summary

**Brain Capital Arts** is an idea that has met its time. With the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and as well as the rise of brain disorders such as Alzheimer's and stroke, investing in the brain power of your people and children is now of the utmost importance. It is an asset that cannot be ignored.

**The modern economy runs on brain capital:** the health and skills of human minds.

The economic impact is astounding, both in the cost of neglecting brain capital and in the **extraordinary financial return** that comes from intentionally investing in the brain capital of our communities throughout the lifespan. According to the McKinsey Health Institute, scaling cost effective interventions to prevent, treat, and support recovery from brain health conditions could unlock up to \$26 trillion in cumulative GDP gains. Meanwhile, brain disorders cost the global economy \$5 trillion each year. Investing in the brain capital of people, especially infants and children, has an ROI that community leaders should not ignore.

## **The choice is ours.**

In this white paper, brain health is defined as the promotion of healthy brain development and the prevention or treatment of mental, neurological, and substance use disorders in people of all ages. But health alone is not enough. **Brain skills**—the foundational cognitive, interpersonal, self-leadership, creative and technological literacy abilities that enable people to adapt, relate, and contribute meaningfully—are equally critical to societal progress.

Together, these form what is called **brain capital**.

This **Brain Capital Arts Strategy Plan** adds research findings that positions the arts as a strategic method to build brain capital throughout the life course because **the arts build both brain health and brain skills**.

**It is prevention, intervention and innovation all in one!**

# Executive Summary

It highlights artistic prevention as a realistic pathway, referencing research suggesting a substantial portion of dementia risk is modifiable through life course action. The plan promotes an intergenerational, integrative approach that embeds brain health education and arts engagement into existing systems such as prenatal care, early childhood services, schools, workplaces, community programs, faith based gatherings, food systems, and aging services.

The Brain Capital Arts Strategy Plan proposes statewide actions including cross sector leadership committees, an innovation fund blending public and private resources, educator credentialing and certification, community anchor partnerships, lifespan arts programming, continuing education alignment across professions, workplace integration, and public proclamations that normalize brain health culture. Let's jump in!

**Enjoy the journey!**



**“Your brain is the most complex structure known to humankind. After more than 100 years of study, we still don’t know all of its capacity.”**

— Dr. Wendy Suzuki,  
Neuroscientist, Professor of Neural  
Science and Psychology, NYU



Shawn 'The Creative Kid' Letford, Brain Capital Actionist, Keynote Speaker, Author, 8 years old

## This is the era of the brain.

Your brain is the central command center of your entire existence. Your identity, your mind, your emotions, your consciousness and your creativity all come from your brain. When you create an intentional awareness of how it operates, what affects it and how to improve it, your ability to flourish knows no bounds. We believe in innovative ways to strengthen the brain power and brain capital of our California community members from prenatal to our hospice homes. We believe in systems change. We believe in the intergenerational arts that build leadership skills, brain health and brain skills simultaneously.

### **We believe in the brain.**

As we continue to navigate the AI landscape, we can no longer ignore what current neuroscience is revealing about the neuro-protective nature of the arts. The arts are not a "nice to have," but a critical component in building well-connected, empathetic, healthy flexible brains capable of adapting, creating, and remaining resilient in an uncertain world.

**"This generation will have to invent their pathway and prove how they think deeper than a computer."**

– Trina Martin, Founder, Parents for Arts Education

# The Numbers Don't Lie

## Innovative Action is Needed Now

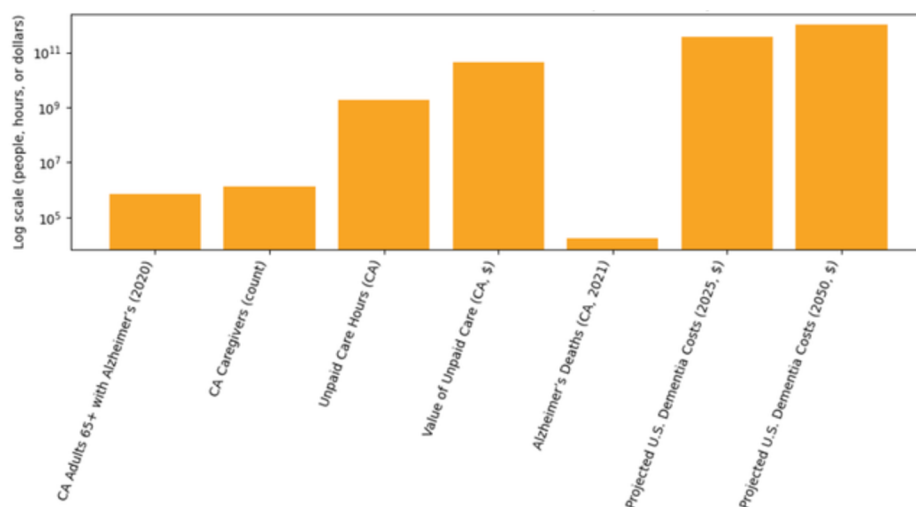
California is already carrying a heavy dementia load. An Alzheimer's Association California snapshot estimates 719,700 Californians age 65 and older living with Alzheimer's (2020), about 12 percent of older adults. Caregiving pressure is enormous, with 1,373,000 caregivers providing 1.864 billion hours of unpaid care valued at 44.272 billion dollars. Mortality is also significant, with 16,911 deaths from Alzheimer's disease reported in California in 2021. Nationally, the Alzheimer's Association reports health

and long term care costs for people living with dementia projected to reach 384 billion dollars in 2025 and rise toward nearly 1 trillion dollars by 2050, which signals how quickly this challenge can outgrow systems. These numbers make the case for a California strategy that strengthens brain health early, builds protective habits across life, and supports care ecosystems before crisis becomes the default.

It is time to not just spend time, awareness and investment on intervention but start to develop an intergenerational integrative program for **prevention of dementia causing diseases** and other chronic illnesses that increase the risks for dementia.

The time is now to build brain capital across the lifespan with intention and efficiency.

### Scale of Alzheimer's and Dementia Impact



Sources: Alzheimer's Association  
(California Snapshot; U.S. Projections)

# Holistic Brain Capital: The New Force of Our Time

## What is Brain Capital?



**Our brain is now the main star of the show.**

**Brain Capital** is a new form of capital that integrates brain health and brain skills to maximize societal growth, resilience and human flourishing.

The brain—it is both a public health asset and an economic engine. When Californians of all ages can learn, adapt, regulate emotion, eat well, collaborate, and stay cognitively strong over time, communities gain stronger school outcomes, a more resilient workforce, and lower long term care burden. Brain Capital thinking treats brain health like infrastructure: it is built through everyday environments such as homes, early learning settings, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, arts spaces, faith based gatherings and nature access. It also recognizes that risk accumulates across the life course, and that protective factors can be grown the same way. We need to move from just focusing on isolated organs and siloed systems and see the brain as the command center of a complex system for a holistic approach.

**“The brain is both a public health asset and an economic engine.”**

— Dr. Harris Eyre, Co-Founder of Global Brain Economy Initiative (GBEI)

According to the **McKinsey Health Institute**, prioritizing brain health and fostering brain capital has the potential to unlock \$26 trillion in global economic opportunities by enhancing workforce performance, igniting innovation, and reclaiming millions of years of quality life. Yet, this promise comes at a time of unprecedented challenges to brain health, as brain disorders cost the global economy \$5 trillion annually – a figure projected to soar to \$16 trillion by 2030.

The Lancet Commission emphasizes dementia prevention across the life course, noting that addressing modifiable risks throughout the lifespan could prevent or delay a substantial proportion of cases. The arts align naturally with this perspective because their effects begin as early as in utero, cultivating attention, memory, meaning making, social connection, and stress regulation capacities that form the foundation of Brain Capital.

Our brains were musical first. We were born artists. We were born to **flourish**.

# Brain Capital Justice: Positioning Brain Capital as a Human Right

Brain Capital must be recognized as a **justice issue**, not simply an individual responsibility or a matter of public health. Brain Capital is the combination of **brain health and brain skills**, and it is foundational to human flourishing. Because the brain is the central organ that shapes how we think, learn, feel, and contribute to society, protecting and developing it should be understood as a **basic human right**.

Brain health is often conflated with mental health, but the brain is also a **physical organ**. It sits at the intersection of our physical systems and our mental and emotional experiences. The brain influences the body, and the body influences the brain. If societies already recognize physical health and mental health as human rights (per the Article 12 of the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), then brain health logically belongs in that same category. Every child deserves access to the strategies and environments that allow their brain to develop fully and build cognitive reserve as early as possible.

However, brain health is not simply about avoiding or living with illness. A healthy brain is meant to be **engaged, curious, creative, connected, and capable of contributing to community life**. Brain skills include the ability to think creatively, ask questions, shift perspectives, adapt to new situations, and build resilient solutions for complex challenges in new situations.

To support this vision, we propose the **Seven Pillars of Brain Capital**. Many frameworks describe six pillars of brain health, but we believe the **arts deserve their own pillar** because they uniquely strengthen both brain health and brain skills.

These pillars work together to support individual flourishing and long term societal innovation.

The framework is represented by a **rainbow metaphor**. Light illuminates the path to flourishing, yet within light are hidden colors. Similarly, Brain Capital contains interconnected elements that influence us throughout life, whether we notice them or not. Hopefully with this paper, we can be more intentional about strengthening these pillars in our own lives and in our communities.



## The seven pillars are:

1

### Sleep

Sleep restores the brain, clears toxins, and consolidates memories, preparing us for learning and creativity.

2

### Nutrition

Healthy foods support brain metabolism, gut health, and the systems that fuel cognition and emotional balance. Lowering ultra processed foods and toxins are critical for brain health.

3

### Peace

Stress management through breathing, reflection, artistic expression, and reframing protects brain health.

4

### Social Connection

Strong relationships and diverse interactions strengthen brain networks, increase wellness and expand learning.

5

### Movement

Physical movement activates the brain. Activities such as dance, exercise, and mindful movement enhance cognitive flexibility.

6

### Arts

Artistic expression deepens neural connections, sensory abilities, strengthens mind body awareness, builds human-centric leadership skills, and expands creative thinking.

7

### Creativity, Mental Stimulation and Purpose

Challenging the brain through learning, curiosity, and imaginative exploration keeps it adaptable and resilient. Having purpose and making meaningful connections allows us to be resilient and keep moving forward.

These pillars do not exist in a vacuum. Physical conditions, including quality educational systems, access to healthcare, clean environments (mold and air pollution have been directly linked to cognitive decline and dementia), digital access, governance quality, and social equity allow brains to develop and perform at their best.

Brain Capital is not a luxury. **It is a human right, and when we nurture these seven pillars for building brain capital, we allow every person to shine with the full spectrum of human potential.**

# A Global Need for Local Solutions: Promotion of Brain Health Across Communities

We are beginning to address this at a national level but let's increase innovative solutions by bringing congressional educational committees, dementia prevention committees, and arts advocacy committees together. Uniting these forces to build powerful minds is an innovative approach that can bring America back to a position of global leadership with healthy brains.

Yet, this is not just a national concern but a global one. Many nations are creating or updating their brain health plans and all of them communicate ***the importance of accessible community neuro-education and an intergenerational approach.*** Switzerland was one of the first nations to globally present a brain health plan. At a nationwide level, the Swiss Brain Health Plan (SBHP) shows how large-scale strategies can bring brain health initiatives at the population level.

## The SBHP shared **five** strategic objectives:

1

**to raise awareness of brain health and its determinants**

2

**to strengthen cross-disciplinary and interprofessional training for healthcare professionals**

3

**to foster research on biological, psychological, and non-medical determinants of brain health, with an emphasis on individualized prevention and treatment of brain disorders**

4

**to prioritize a holistic, integrated, person-centered public health that bridges clinical neuroscience and population health through collaborations with scientific, healthcare, commercial, societal, and governmental stakeholders**

5

**to support, empower, and engage patients, caregivers, and advocacy groups, while reducing stigma and discrimination associated with brain disorders**

The **Swiss Brain Council** is leading the way globally, while Texas is leading way nationally. Is our state in this conversation? In June of 2025, the Swiss hosted the 'National, Regional and International Plans for Brain and Mental Health: Bridging the Gaps' symposium. The gathering featured and analyzed **22 brain health initiatives** from organizations worldwide.

Despite local differences, a clear consensus emerged identifying the top three priorities among 20 brain health topics:

### Three Top Global Priorities in Brain Health and Brain Capital:

- 1** **definition** of brain health
- 2** **identification** of measures of brain health
- 3** **development** of population-wide strategies to promote brain health

**“AI may transform how we work, but only human leaders can determine why we work and what we’re trying to achieve.”**

— Bob Sternfels, Global Managing Partner, McKinsey & Company

The arts can be a carrier of academic and leadership content while improving brain health and brain skills simultaneously.



Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute keynote speaking on Brain Capital Arts in the workplace.

# Turn Back Time: Brain Clocks and the Arts

How arts education, arts expression and arts integration can turn back time

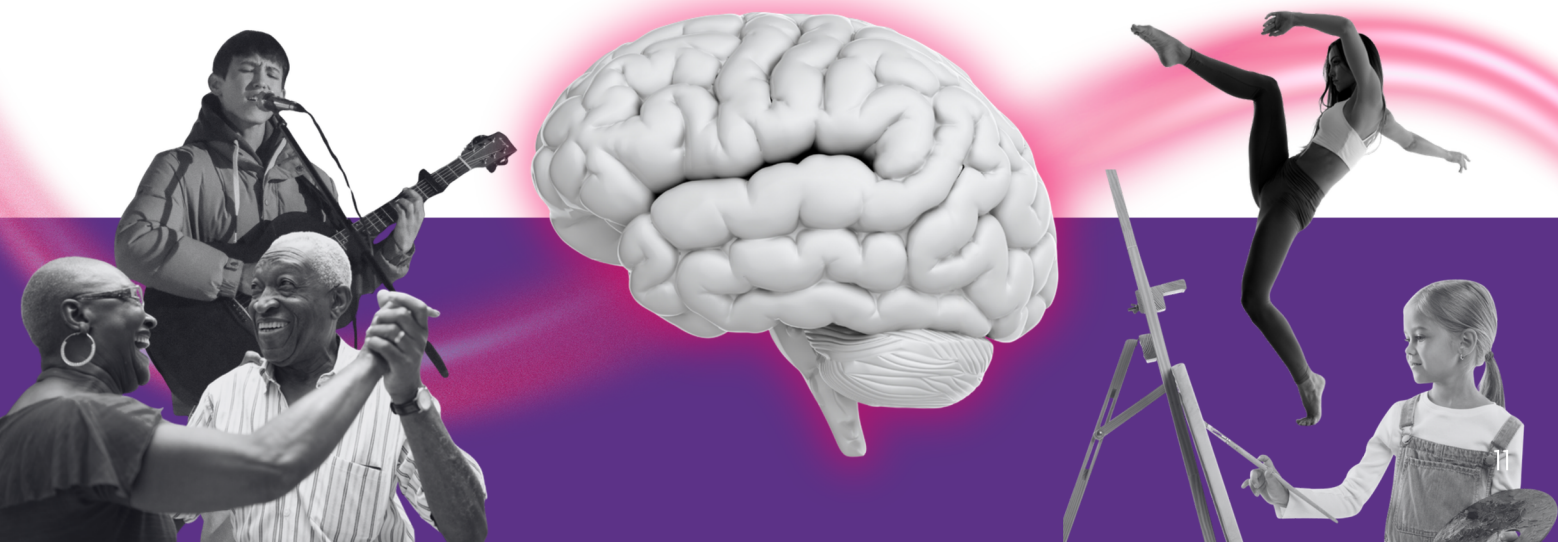
Can learning an art turn back your brain time? Maybe, but studies are starting to show artistic experiences enhance brain health, which could slow down the brain's aging. That's according to a study by a group of international scientists across 13 countries led by Dr. Agustin Ibanez and his team called, 'Creative Experiences and Brain Clocks.' They collected data from almost 1,400 people across different countries. They found that creative activities, like dance classes - the tango proved particularly effective - or art classes, music lessons, or a hobby like gaming, had a positive impact on an artificial intelligence (AI) "brain clock". And the more the participant practised their art form, the "younger" their brain clocks were.

Across every creative field, the pattern was strikingly consistent: artistry was linked to a younger-looking brain. **The more people practiced their art, the stronger the effect.** And it didn't matter what kind of art it was. It could be dancing, painting, music, or gaming. All helped key brain areas work better together.

**These areas, important for focus and learning, usually age first but the creative arts seem to keep their connections stronger and more flexible.**

Artistry, they found, protects brain areas that are vulnerable to aging and makes brain communication more efficient (similar to building more, larger, and higher-quality roads to communicate between cities within a country).

By showing that artistic engagement can delay brain ageing, this research helps us reimagine the role of artistry in education, public health, and ageing societies. In the big picture, it expands our understanding of healthy aging beyond disease prevention. It highlights artistry and creativity as a scalable, accessible and deeply human mechanism to sustain cognitive and emotional wellbeing across diverse populations and lifespans. It's time to use art intentionally to increase the connectivity of our brains while keeping us vibrant and thriving!



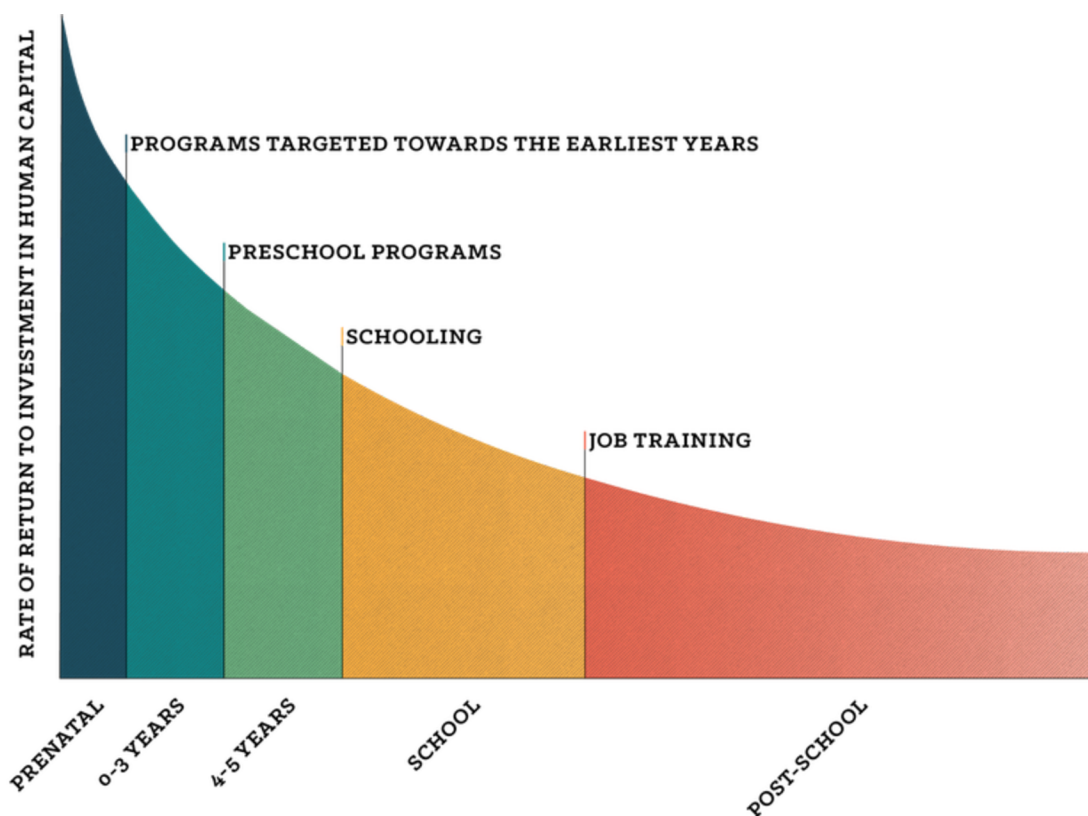
# Let's Start at the Beginning!

The Importance of Prevention and Integration Throughout the Lifespan

**“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”**

**Heckman's Law** suggests that investing in brain capital early in the lifespan, even in utero, yields far greater returns than waiting until later in life. Research by Dr. Nina Kraus, Dr. Anita Collins and Dr. Ani Patel demonstrate that early musical exposure strengthens many neural systems, including the auditory system, and builds neural networks that support attention, language, and learning across the lifespan. They also claim early music training can assist in increasing phonic and pitch discrimination while lowering negative neural noise, which will not only improve the brain capital of children but can likely improve their reading ability as well.

## The Hickman Curve of ROI for Early Brain Capital Development



**“Early childhood development is a smart investment. The earlier the investment, the greater the return.”**

— Dr. James Heckman



When **music** is integrated into prenatal care, Head Start programs, and infant and toddler ‘Mommy/Caretaker and Me’ programs with literacy, it becomes a foundational element of California’s dementia prevention strategy by strengthening early brain growth, reading skills and auditory neural systems. **Hearing loss and difficulty understanding speech in noisy environments are among the most significant risk factors for dementia**, yet these neural networks can be strengthened early in life having a remaining effect throughout the lifespan, per Dr. Kraus’ research. Music training directly strengthens auditory processing, attention, and speech in noise abilities, creating resilient neural pathways that support cognitive health well into older adulthood.

Strategic ‘artistic’ prevention matters because dementia is not a late life event. Dementia causing diseases, like Alzheimer's, can arise in the brain during midlife which means it is a childhood conversation of prevention. Women and communities of color are affected at higher rates, which means serving these groups earlier, with interactive bonding type programs, is key.



Risk and resilience are shaped by education, cardiovascular health, food choices, sensory health, mental health, social connection, and lifelong cognitive engagement. The 2024 Lancet Commission identifies 14 modifiable risk factors across the life course and estimates that nearly 45 percent of dementia cases could be prevented or delayed through action on these risks. **Most of these risk factors become solidified in early adulthood, therefore should be addressed in adolescence and taught, through the arts, in childhood through engaging cultural and salient experiences.**

Chart Reference: 2025 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures, Alzheimer's Association

In early 2026, the World Economic Forum and The World Health Organization similarly framed dementia risk reduction as a public health priority, emphasizing interventions that support healthy behaviors and reduce risk factors over time.

## **We are here to alert Californians: *Integration is the multiplier.***

When neuro-education and brain health are embedded into normal routines such as prenatal/postnatal care, pediatric visits, early learning, school culture, workforce training, community arts, faith based experiences, food systems, and senior services, it becomes ubiquitous, cultural and easier to sustain. The arts are a practical integration tool because they can deliver brain healthy inputs in engaging cultural and memorable forms. It's a double win. Prevention is more cost effective and beneficial than late life care payouts for all involved.

Don't wait for the end, let's start at the **beginning**.

## **Don't Separate! Integrate!**

### Taking an Intergenerational Approach to Integrate Brain Capital

The brain is an integrative organ. It is a living symphony of electricity, neurons, and neurochemicals flowing and dancing in our heads as it carries us through life. Building Brain Capital in our citizens should follow the same rhythm, woven seamlessly into daily experiences rather than taught in isolation.

The co-author of this report, Genein Letford, has spent more than twenty years designing integrative programs that unite academic content, life skills, historical leadership, brain health, and the arts. Her LA Grammy Museum award winning work demonstrates the power of integration to move learning beyond information and into developing wisdom, health and purpose, allowing brain healthy behaviors to become a natural and lasting part of how people live, lead, and learn.

California can make Brain Capital measurable by anchoring arts based brain education to predictable milestones: prenatal brain health programs, birth to age three services, preschool entry, elementary school literacy, middle school wellness checks, high school pathways, first jobs, parenthood transitions, milestone health and mental wellness checks, retirement planning, and entry into senior services.

**"In rehearsal is where leaders are built.  
It's in the process where the magic  
happens."**

— Herbert Washington, Artistic Director, Phoenix Boys Choir



***The goal is not adding extra programs.*** The goal is an integrative brain health layer inside what already exists. During prenatal support, create lullaby programs, such as the Carnegie Hall's Lullaby Project. In early years, pair developmental experiences with music, movement, rhythm play, and caregiver bonding practices that reduce stress and build language and self regulation. In K to 12 classrooms, embed arts and brain health integrated instruction with academics that strengthens executive function, belonging, memory and purpose through story, symbolic reasoning, performance, and design.

Some examples of artistic neuro-integration can be creative and wisdom producing. For example, when teaching on the life cycle of a butterfly, students can also learn the adaptable strategies for facing 'chrysalis struggles' in life, dealing with change, learning how to modify skills in new situations and evolving through life. Lifewise, in history, when students learn about historical figures, like Abraham Lincoln, they can also learn the brain regions involved for problem solving under pressure, stress reduction techniques, dealing with conflict, negotiating in relationships, and how to have the 'right to rise' that results in post traumatic growth instead of post traumatic unresolved stress.

The workforce can benefit from neuroarts-integration of leadership development programs as well. Evidence shows arts integration can support a range of health and well being outcomes as well as increase brain capital, EQ, leadership skills and purpose. Flexible thinking and the ability to ponder multiple meanings within artistic explorations helps leaders to navigate unpredictable events and make choices in their everyday lives.

Integrating this into our daily lives is doable. For older adults, create referral pathways from primary care and community centers into arts participation that supports cognition, connection and creativity, including programs that are new and diverse to the learner.

## ***Each life transition becomes a doorway into brain optimization and dementia prevention.***

All of these arts integrative methods increase neural pathways and allow the person to engage in new experiences of discovery, expression, meaning making and creative thinking.



# The Arts Equip the Brain for the Complexity of AI

## Artistic Training Builds the Brain for the Human Skills Needed Today

Great leaders navigating constant change, leading diverse teams, and innovating toward unseen futures are those who most need adaptable, flexible and resilient brains.

Flexibility, creativity and focus requires us to enter and exit flow states. The arts can help you enter a "flow state," a mental state of complete immersion and focus. This includes improvisational arts as well. The work of neuroscientist and musician, Dr. Charles Lim, highlights the importance of flow and improvisation for artists and now we are extending his findings into leadership development. This heightened concentration allows for deeper creativity, as you are fully present at the moment and able to explore ideas without distractions. Engaging in the arts often trigger this immersive experience, which enhances creative output in non-arts areas and brain capital. Let's get in the flow!

Per the work of Dr. Martin Picard, a thought leader and researcher on the energy and functions of mitochondria, **we are energy!** This is not mysticism, it's science! We, or rather our mitochondria, are energy transformers! The flow of energy throughout our body is what keeps us alive. Inspired by this biochemistry insight, Brain Capital Arts extends the concept beyond the cellular level, proposing that **the arts help regulate and elevate the energy of the human experience.** By intentionally integrating artistic expression into everyday life, the arts support integrative thinking, emotional resilience, and the **dynamic energetic flow** that fuels learning, connection, creativity and well being.

Let's get in the flow!

## Let's Take the Brain Apart, Art By Art

The Brain Capital Impact from the Arts



**Music**, especially when played with others, demands multi cognition as the brain simultaneously processes rhythm, melody, harmony, and timing. This coordinated activity activates multiple brain regions at once. In musicians, the corpus callosum, the structure connecting the two hemispheres, tends to be more robust than in non musicians. In fact, while a neuroscientist cannot determine whether a brain belonged to a teacher, construction worker, or lawyer by sight alone, they can often identify whether the person was a musician. Music also strengthens the auditory system, offering protective benefits later in life when hearing decline becomes more common. Music also increases emotional sensitivity and emotional intelligence. Choir singing in particular has been shown to be neuroprotective, supporting both healthy childhood development and cognitive and neurological aging in older adults.



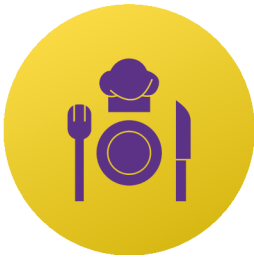
When creating **visual art**, there are endless choices to make—color, composition, texture, medium, and more. Painting, sculpting, drawing and tactile art heightens the ability to differentiate colors, textures and other mediums. It increases your ability for perspective, relationship, and associations. Visual arts, like all the arts, increases the sensitivity to pattern forming and pattern breaking. When you engage in visual arts, you truly learn how to observe beyond your senses.



**Dance** is a full body neuro-protective activity that requires continuous coordination between the brain, mind and body. The brain must integrate spatial awareness, rhythm, timing, and muscle control while the body expresses these processes through movement. **Dance is neuroprotective** and has emerged as a frontrunner within the movement and exercise pillar for dementia risk reduction because it demands cognition in motion. We refer to this as **kinesthetic cognition**. Unlike simply running on a track, dance requires ongoing awareness of the body within time and space. Movement practices such as dance, karate, tai chi, and capoeira produce profound benefits for the developing brain in early childhood and for the aging brain later in life. Dance has been shown to be one of the most powerful and most effective forms of activity in the act of preventing or slowing the progression of dementia due to its social, emotional and physical benefits.



*To be or not to be?* **Theatre** training should be a must for any person who wishes to lead people well. This multifaceted art emphasizes emotional regulation, perspective shifting and clear communication, both verbal and non-verbal. Whether acting, directing, or designing, every aspect of theatre requires effective communication to convey the intended message. On our Create and Grow Your Brain Capital Podcast (Ep # 128), Dr. Thalia Goldstein, author of [Why Theatre Education Matters: Understanding Its Cognitive, Social and Emotional Benefits](#), shares how practicing these skills, across all the arts, strengthens the ability to articulate ideas clearly and creatively is a valuable brain capital asset in any field. She lists the eight 'Habits of Mind' that leaders need to implement in their work, which are strengthened by theater arts.



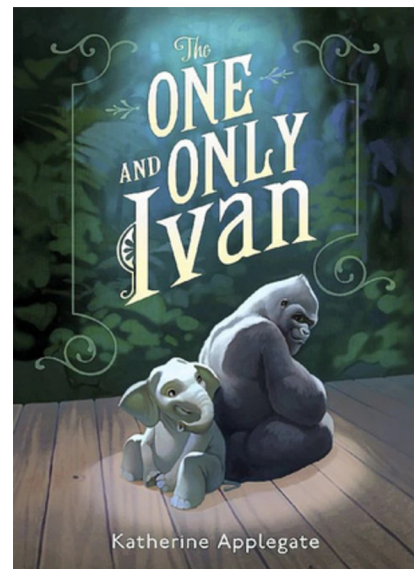
**Culinary arts** are included in the core list of arts because the ways we choose, combine, and create food shape how we think, express, and communicate. We further explore how what we eat influences the thoughts we generate and the world we perceive. From spices to oils to complex carbohydrates, our food is composed of neurochemicals and neuro information that guide both brain, mind and our gut microbiome. Our diet is now recognized as an art of expression, creation, and system integration supporting wellbeing, health, leadership, and creative thinking.

As we continue to navigate the AI landscape, **we can no longer ignore what current neuroscience is revealing about the neuro protective nature of the arts.** The arts are not a “nice to have,” but a critical component in building well-connected, empathetic, healthy flexible brains capable of adapting, creating, and remaining resilient in an uncertain world.

## **A Case Study: One Book One School - Finding Ivan Through Brain Capital Arts**

“When you add music to the books, it makes the characters come alive!”

At NEW Academy Canoga Park (NACP), Brain Capital Arts transformed a traditional literacy unit into a deeply meaningful learning experience for hundreds of students and an award winning author. The school hosted a One Book One School event where the entire elementary school, from kindergarten to fifth grade, read the award winning novel **The One and Only Ivan** by **Newbery Medal winning author Katherine Applegate**. When she visited the school for an author visit, students had already read her novel at their instructional levels and completed core English language arts assignments. But wait, there’s more!



Through the Brain Capital Arts curriculum, they moved beyond memorization and comprehension into identity exploration, narrative discovery, metacognitive thinking, brain health strategies and creative expression. Students constructed visual representations of characters using materials such as foil, rice, stones, and natural elements, intentionally aligning the properties of each material with character traits and justified their symbolic choices. This required abstract reasoning, metaphorical thinking, and evidence based explanation.

Fifth grade classes translated key scenes into an interpretive dance, embodying emotion, conflict, and transformation through movement. Students understood Ivan's built environment of living in concrete walls had a negative effect on his mental health. They created a brain healthy 'nature capital' environment which taught them about their own connection to nature and their own built environmental effects on brain health. They justified each creative design choice with evidence from the story. Students discussed the brain strategies that Ivan and the characters employed to move through difficult times, increase resilience, and be adaptable in new situations and connected it to their own lived experience.

When Ms. Applegate witnessed the performances and reviewed the art pieces, she was moved to tears by the depth of empathy and insight reflected back to her of her own literary work. **"I have been to many events surrounding my book, but this was one of the most memorable school visits of my career,"** she shared with the staff later in the day.

After signing books, she visited all twenty two classrooms, engaging personally with students and affirming their creative efforts. Years later, many NACP students, who are now young adults, still remember the experience and brain health strategies connected to Ivan and the other characters, demonstrating the lasting impact of embodied, emotionally rich learning, driven by narrative, that is the basis of Brain Capital Arts. The initiative gained attention and we hope with this Brain Capital movement, will serve as a model of how integrating the arts and brain health strategies into academic curriculum elevates academic rigor while cultivating empathy, identity development, brain capital, and the higher order skills essential for today's leaders.



Author Katherine Applegate at NEW Academy Canoga Park

# A Case Study: The Blessing Of Brain Capital

## Innovative Integration of Brain Capital Arts into Faith Based Communities

Even though Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute is a secular organization, we actively support faith based communities in integrating brain capital principles and neurosomatic practices into their programming.

Research on the effects of practices such as meditation, prayer, gratitude, solitude, journaling, compassion, forgiveness, cultivating purpose, and believing in something greater than oneself has expanded significantly over the past decade. Studies examining the impact of spiritual engagement on brain health, mental wellbeing, and overall physical health have grown substantially as well. After extensive review of the evidence, findings suggest that many of these practices, usually correlated with faith based experiences, strengthen brain health, enhance coping capacity, and meaningfully reduce stress.

**With a significant number of diverse individuals across the lifespan attending faith based services and gatherings, this represents a powerful opportunity to strengthen brain capital within your state.** By integrating neuroeducation, neuroarts, and neurosomatic creativity, faith-based organizations expand not only the spiritual growth of individuals but also the brain capital of a substantial portion of the population. During our research for 'Right to Rise' Building Brain Capital Through the Music, Art and Leadership of Prince, we identified a faith-based church that had started the journey of incorporating brain capital segments into its service format.

Here is a case study.

Pastors Joshua and Hannah Welton lead Your Will Be Done Ministries, a non denominational Christian online church serving an international audience. Pastor Hannah Welton was the former drummer for singer and guitarist Prince, and Pastor Joshua Welton collaborated with Prince in music production. In 2017, one year after Prince's passing, the Weltons launched their online church to serve international communities in spiritual and wellbeing development.

After a year of following a traditional church format of presenting a new message to the community each week, the pastors recognized that for greater impact and meaningful behavior change they needed to innovate the entire structure, shifting from a weekly 'sit and receive' model into a more interactive design that created expanded space for member reflection, curiosity, artistry, interaction, creative thinking, and authentic internal to external transformation.

Their new **four part monthly structure** consisted of a 'Seed, Selah, Feast and Sabbath services'.



#### **1st Service of the Month:**

**Seed Service:** This is a traditional gathering where the pastor delivers a focused message using scripture, parables, and lived examples to communicate the teaching points. The congregation receives access to sermon notes and may revisit the video recorded message at any time after the live service. Following the service and throughout the week, members are invited to reflect on the teaching and submit insights, connections, questions, and personal testimonies through an online form or by email.



#### **2nd Service of the Month:**

**Selah Service:** The pastors review the focused message and share the questions and insights submitted throughout the week. They celebrate the curiosity of the submissions and highlight the perspectives their members share. They use the questions to explain, expand and explore the lesson points deeper and from multiple perspectives. Every Wednesday night, congregants can share their insights in online small groups for additional social interaction and exchange of ideas.



#### **3rd Service of the Month:**

**Feast Service:** After hearing the message the first week, and engaging in thoughtful reflection and offering insights the second week, congregants may choose to create a representation that expresses their understanding and application of the teaching in any artistic or written form they prefer. Many members compose songs, drawings, cartoons, written reflections, poems, paintings, or videos that communicate their personal experience with the Seed message. This creative invitation deepens their engagement with the original message while strengthening their brain capital in the process through mental stimulation and reflection. This segment remains completely optional yet is encouraged to help each member cultivate creative capacity and spiritual insight through the learning journey. The submissions are then shared with the entire congregation to increase the creative skill of perspective shifting and creative celebration.



#### **4th Service of the Month:**

**Sabbath Service:** This is a non-gathering that intentionally becomes a pause, with the pastors not hosting an online meeting. Congregation members are encouraged to use this Sunday to reflect, journal, revisit the message, pray, meditate, create art, walk in nature, rest, or participate in other practices that invite deep thinking and reflection on the past month's message. This rhythm strengthens brain capital in multiple ways and activates the default mode network, a group of neural systems engaged when a person is not focused on an external task yet is inwardly focused. It can enhance creativity, wellbeing, parasympathetic nervous system regulation, and inner peace.

This innovative case study stands as an example of reimagining a traditional system of experience to expand the spiritual, creative, and neurological growth of each participant. By elevating the depth of engagement, individuals activate more of their brain capacity for meaningful mental stimulation and increases the likelihood of behavior change.

## **A Case Study: Singing Our Way To Brain Health**

Bringing Brain Capital Arts to Community Programs and Beyond

An international force of song, the two time Grammy Award winning Phoenix Boys Choir (PBC) is a signature case study showing the impact of brain capital integration into an arts curriculum; the mirror image of integrating the arts into an academic curriculum.

Heading into their 79th year of performance, **PBC will be among the first national and international choirs to explicitly incorporate brain health and brain capital neuro-education into their programming** and extend the brain capital knowledge to those they serve. Former PBC choir member, Herbert Washington, shares why this work is so important yet so personal to him.

“I was eight years old when my mother was taken away in handcuffs. She was struggling with schizophrenia, and in a single afternoon my world split apart,” he recalls.

“I went from school to foster care, carrying confusion, fear, and a love of singing that felt like my only constant. Music was the one place where I felt steady. When I auditioned for the Phoenix Boys Choir, **I had no idea that moment would change my trajectory.** Travel, structure, brotherhood, and the discipline of rehearsal gave me something I desperately needed: belonging, purpose, and a vision beyond my current circumstances.”

Today, as the artistic director of the Phoenix Boys Choir, Mr. Washington channels that lived experience into a PBC model that intertwines music with leadership and character development. They are now integrating neuro-education and brain capital training to equip their singers, ranging from 4 years old to adults, with tools for life in this era of AI. Building flexible, adaptable and resilient brains that can sing to and through life (on key!) is the goal of PBC.

Choir is not treated as an extracurricular activity, but as an essential developmental practice grounded in research that demonstrates its role in strengthening neural pathways, supporting long term brain health, and lowering the risk for dementia.

Boys learn to stand with poise, look others in the eye, regulate their breathing, regulate and utilize various emotions, and align their energy with the energy of the group. Singing activates memory, attention, emotional cues, and executive function, strengthening the very skills required for stable adulthood, leadership and creative compassion.

PBC will be heading to Carnegie Hall in New York City in 2027 and then onto Europe to bring their creative gifts to the world. The PBC leaders incorporate brain capital and neuro-education concepts into each component of the experience. Traveling internationally expands creative thinking. Young singers navigate new cultures, adapt to unfamiliar environments, and perform under pressure. They learn the brain mechanisms that foster this independence and flexibility, essential components of innovation and leadership.

Rehearsal itself builds resilience. Sight reading complex music at age ten demands persistence. Mistakes are addressed in real time and they grasp how the brain learns from mistakes and adapts for future experiences. The emphasis remains on process rather than just on the performance. The stage is the visible product, but the neuro-growth happens in practice rooms where boys challenge one another, refine technique, grow empathy and build cognitive reserve.

Through disciplined preparation and shared purpose, the choir shapes emotionally intelligent young men equipped to lead with confidence, creativity, and compassion. This is a case study to highlight the integration of brain capital curriculum into community programs in any area such as athletic teams, arts groups, afterschool programs or community service programs.

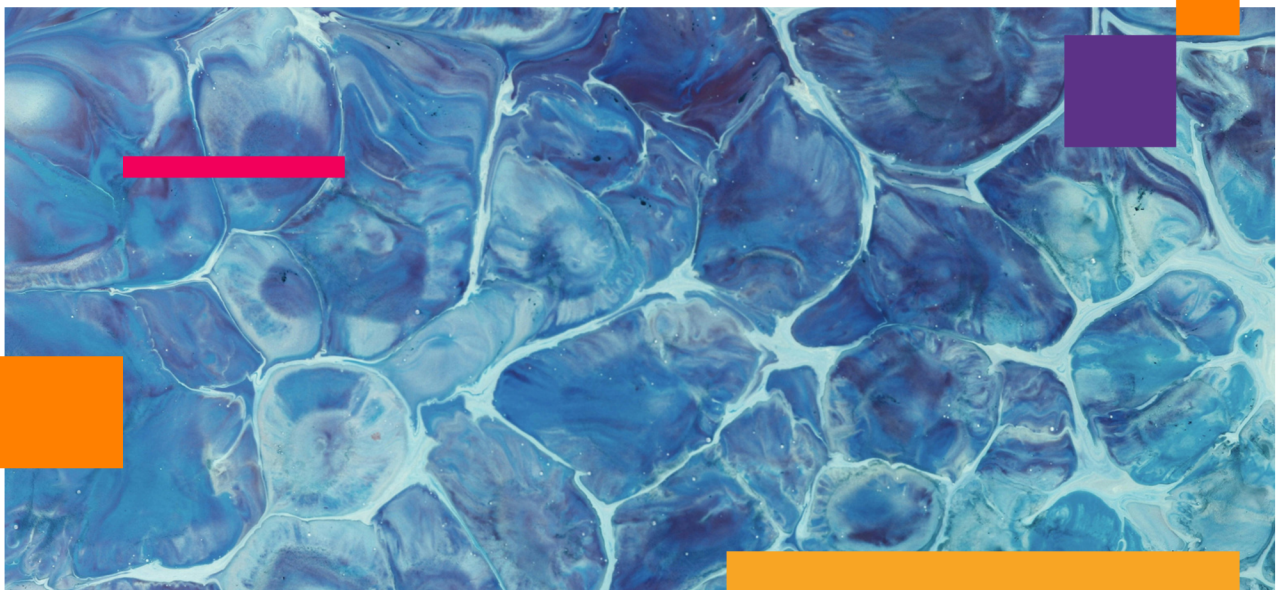


# A Case Study: Looking Beyond the Symptoms

## Brain Capital Arts Within an AWSOM Medical School Curriculum

"I would paint where I wanted to be, not where I was," Alice Walton, heir of the Wal-Mart empire, recalls of the years following her car accident and repeated surgeries. "It was my armor." In the isolation of chronic illness, art became more than distraction. It became regulation, resilience, and hope. That deeply personal experience now lives at the center of a bold experiment: a medical school designed to collide art and science in order to train a different kind of doctor in an AI era workforce.

At the Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM) in Arkansas, students master anatomy, pathology, and clinical simulations. Yet they also sit for fifteen minutes in front of a painting, learning to observe what is present and what is absent. "Curiosity is the first step," says faculty member Dr. Stephen Nix. "For care and connection to happen, you have to truly want to know more about another person."



This medical 'brain capital arts' school teaches them how to see what is not there. In this new age of leadership, the skill of self and other awareness is now indispensable. Seeing beyond the surface and making sense of what isn't obvious is the ace up a leader's sleeve.

This integration is profound for the emerging AI driven future of work and healthcare industry. As algorithms grow more capable of diagnosis, the irreplaceable human skills become empathy, pattern recognition, emotional intelligence, and contextual thinking. By studying art, students practice slowing down, tolerating ambiguity, dealing with complexity and engaging multiple interpretations, capacities that machines cannot replicate.

The arts infused structure builds brain capital by strengthening executive function, observational acuity, and self regulation. AWSOM students learn to look at a canvas the way they will look at a medical scan and listen to a piece of music the way they would a heartbeat.

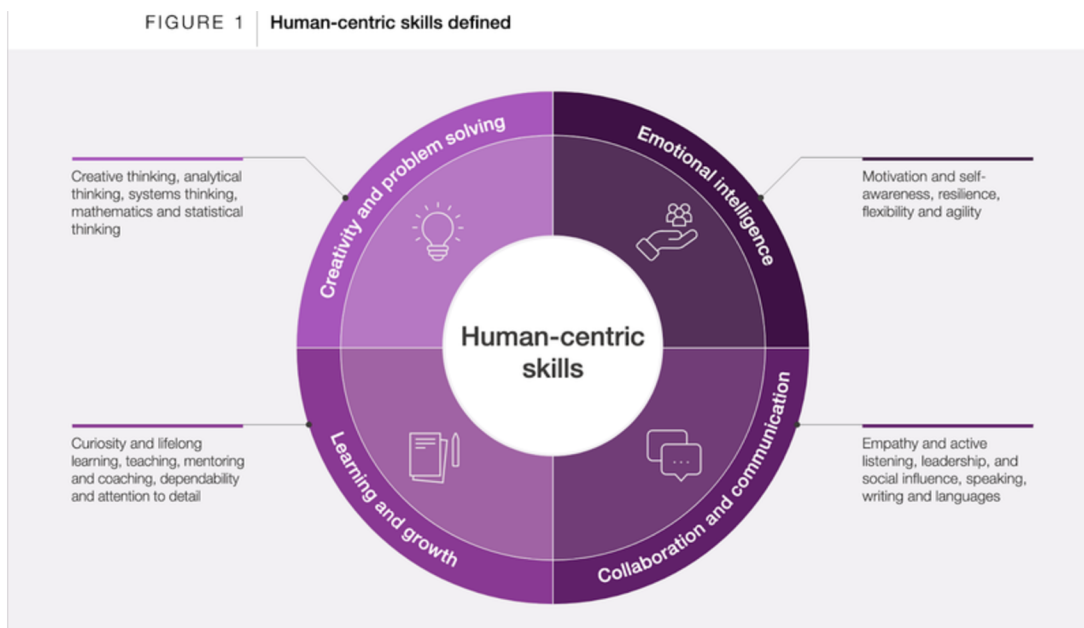
Moving pain into purpose, Ms. Walton and her team understand the true essence and urgency of incorporating brain capital arts in a medical training program. With blending art, whole person training and holistic medicine, the school is cultivating doctors who are not only clinically competent, but creatively adaptive, emotionally grounded, and neurologically prepared for a complex future.

## Brain Capital Leadership

### Leadership Arts Development for a New Era of AI

Reskilling and upskilling is now a must for our workforce. Per the World Economic Forum demand for creativity, resilience and collaboration is rising, but inconsistent training and assessment leave global skill gaps unresolved. **The arts can address this gap in skill development.** The skills our employees and leaders need are embedded in the arts automatically; attention, collaboration, learning agility, adaptability, wisdom, situational awareness, temporal awareness, resilience, emotional regulation, and communication.

**A Brain Capital Arts Strategy** should treat workforce development as a human flourishing policy, economic policy and brain health policy. Arts based neuro-training is a practical method because it creates real time practice with feedback, reflection, cognitive flexibility, group dynamic and coordination. These are cognitive leadership skills that protect employability in an AI shaped economy and can buffer stress that harms brain health.



The World Health Organization supports arts engagement as a contributor to well being as well, which directly impacts retention and performance. The rising dementia case also supports workforce action because long term care costs are rising nationally, and reducing future burden protects economic stability.

California can incentivize employers to adopt creative health programs that include the arts, especially in high stress industries. Companies can partner with arts training programs, community college art departments, and arts organizations to deliver portable arts based brain skills development training. Include pathways for caregivers reentering work, offering flexible creative cohorts that rebuild confidence and connection.

## **The Art of Creative Cuisine on Brain Capital**

### **Modifying Our Food Industry to Turn Inflamed Brains into Brains of Brilliance**

Food is brain fuel. Food is also an art. Our body is a canvas and the collection, combination and the cooking of the food we eat can paint the picture of health and flourishing or disarray and inflamed chaos. We become what we repeatedly put into our bodies, and the quality of that input shapes learning, mood, our immunity and long term brain health.

#### **The choice is ours. Or is it?**

True system change in this area is essential, especially for our children, and it goes far beyond nutrition education or individual food choices. Building Brain Capital requires a reimagining of the food industry itself, addressing the ubiquitous presence of neurotoxic additives, excessive added sugars, food color toxins and harmful substances in foods that are widely marketed and made accessible to vulnerable young people and their families.



Food is a daily brain intervention, and our industrialized food industry is a massive contributor to whether our citizens thrive or falter in California. In addition to a complete systemic food overhaul, a Brain Capital Arts Strategy can shift nutrition education from information to behavior change through creative educational experiences and a memorable curriculum that integrates culinary arts throughout the life span. Insert cuisine concepts into academic curriculum, prenatal and parental nutritional classes through literacy and lullabies, higher educational onboard experiences and even creating community art that makes healthy choices visible and desirable.

# Brains Built with Intention

Nature Capital and the Built Environment

**“We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.”**

- Winston Churchill

How do you design for performance and human flourishing? With intention.

Brains are shaped by the experiences they have and the environments they are in. Building brain healthy spaces is an art for all types of spaces; our homes, schools, hospitals, faith based places, community spaces and our workplaces. We can now design inclusive places that inspire community, belonging and social cohesion that also build brain capital. Per Perkins and Will Design firm, every building and its surrounding either support or drain

- How people think
- How they feel physically
- How they connect with others
- How they interact with technology

Keeley Kaukimoce, co-director of Lyrics N Leadership Institute, carries a deeply personal story of mold exposure and its profound impact on her life and brain health. She holds a clear belief that ‘sick buildings create sick people’, and calls for greater awareness and healthcare education to address an often overlooked epidemic that may contribute to cognitive decline and dementia. Poor building materials, leaking pipes, inadequate



renovations, and toxic HVAC systems continue to compromise indoor air quality, yet mold remains largely absent from public conversation. While air quality is discussed, the root cause is often left unnamed. In Cleveland, Ohio, one school faced severe mold exposure due to persistent leaks and neglect, leaving students and teachers with headaches, respiratory issues, and cognitive challenges. Prolonged exposure can disrupt memory, attention, and overall brain development. When we invest in the health of our built environment and not just the beauty of design, we protect the developing brains and future potential of our children and their families.

**“Design shapes the nervous system. The nervous system shapes performance. Performance shapes outcomes.”**

– Deborah Beck, Perkins and Will

## The Vote for Brain Resilience

Policy and Advocacy to Increase Brain Capital in Our Communities

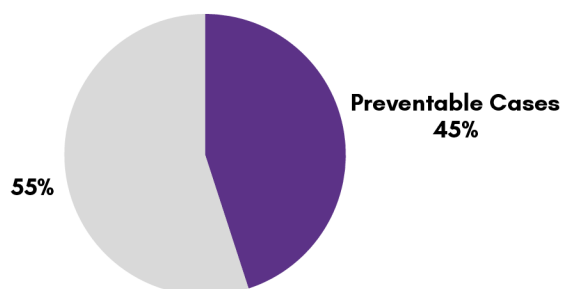
### We voted for you to vote for our brain capital!

Community members can learn how to confidently champion stronger brain capital initiatives with their elected officials at the city, state and national levels. Brain capital is dynamic and interconnected, touching healthcare, education, city infrastructure, food systems, and workforce development. When we strengthen these areas, we strengthen the cognitive and creative capacity of our communities.

It is difficult to strengthen what we do not yet recognize. In February of 2026, our Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute and WE United executive teams flew to Washington D.C to present the concept of brain capital to several United States Senate offices and a number of state representatives. Many had not yet encountered the term brain capital, even though the policies they shape deeply influence it every day.

Government committees can host ongoing professional learning sessions to stay current on research, innovation, and best practices that support a thriving brain capital economy. By staying connected to **leading brain capital organizations** such as the McKinsey Health Institute, UsAgainstAlzheimer's, the Global Brain Economy Initiative, WE United, and Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute for Brain Health, you will maintain a broad and informed perspective on how to cultivate a thriving brain economy. When government leaders are well versed in brain capital principles, they are better equipped to craft bipartisan legislation that is thoughtful, effective, and future focused.

**Keep the message clear and actionable: Build brains early, support brains artistically and holistically, and honor brains across the lifespan, including in aging.**



**2025 - 2030**

## **Brain Capital Arts Strategy Plan**

Great ideas remain only ideas until there is a clear plan to move insight and theory into meaningful action. We need *imagineers* to spark bold vision, *engineers* to design the framework, and *actioneers* to carry the work forward. Below are several calls to action for your leadership team to consider as your state begins integrating brain capital and brain capital arts into its broader ecosystem.

### **Create Inclusive Brain Capital Arts Leadership Committees and State Commission**

Create diverse committees at the community, city and state commission levels. These committees should include diverse voices from healthcare, corporate, education, neuroscience, non-profit, faith based, and other sectors including practitioners from early childhood, kindergarten through sixth grade, seventh through twelfth grade, and higher education. Invite communicators, artists, community members, and authentic cultural advisors to hold designated seats on the Brain Capital Arts Committee and state commission. These committees will work collaboratively to define how they will explore/engage in brain health and brain capital for their communities. They will ideate how to disseminate this information and resources to their community in ways that are inclusive, practical, accessible and culturally responsive. The committee will also advocate for funding with private, state and federal representatives since brain capital issues need resources to create outreach opportunities that affect multiple sectors, including health, education, food, workforce development and aging.

### **Mobilize Investments for Brain Capital Innovation Fund**

Though brain disorders are among our health systems' and this century's most urgent challenges, funding for brain health innovation in community awareness, early detection, early prevention, and intervention breakthroughs remains astonishingly low. In many states, less than 10% of total bioresearch and health funding is allocated to brain health awareness and prevention, even though neurological and mental health conditions account for more than 40% of the burden.

### **Establish the Brain Capital Innovation Fund within the State Treasury.**

The Fund will be supported through legislative appropriations, federal funding, grants, gifts, and private contributions. Monies in the Fund are continuously appropriated and will support evidence based programs and pilot initiatives that strengthen early childhood cognitive development, expand school based mental health services, advance workforce reskilling and adult education, promote creative and arts integrated learning, and implement community based prevention strategies that protect cognitive and neurological health. The Commission will develop grant award criteria and ensure that funded initiatives prioritize measurable outcomes and demonstrated return on investment.

# 2025 - 2030 Brain Capital Arts Strategy Plan

## **Establish Lifespan Partnerships and Shared Responsibility**

Build partnerships across the lifespan to foster collective responsibility among sectors that do not traditionally collaborate. This approach encourages shared investment in brain health outcomes and acknowledges the connection throughout the lifespan. Examples include prenatal programs sponsored by corporate partners, Head Start and Early Education programs partnering with elder memory care groups, and food supply organizations collaborating with family service agencies to support brain healthy environments. Diverse connection is key.

## **Offer Arts Programming at Every Stage of Life**

Offer arts programming at every stage of life to improve cognitive reserve and expand Brain Capital across generations. Beginning in utero with expecting parents, offer programs that teach song creation of lullabies, as well as prenatal music and movement classes. In early childhood, offer caregiver/child music, movement, storytelling, and creative play options. As children grow, integrate individualized and specialized art experiences in formal and informal settings that deepen critical thinking, collaboration, focus, cognitive flexibility, emotional regulation and resilience. Partner with arts organizations and trained, credentialed or certified independent artists to offer programming for community and educational organizations.

## **Establish Educator Credentialing Programs and Brain Capital Arts Certifications**

Administer brain capital educator certification training for all licensed educators and preservice educators. Training should focus on integrating brain health and Brain Capital concepts into existing curricula. Make opportunities available that offer continuing education credits and Brain Capital certifications for educators, educational specialists and paraprofessionals. Embed this training into university teacher credential and preparation programs to ensure long term sustainability.

## **Develop Integrative Brain Capital Learning Pathways**

Introduce supplementary and complementary integrative Brain Capital training and learning experiences across educational settings. This includes childcare settings, preschools, K-12, trade schools, and higher education curricula. These integration lessons should be adaptable, developmentally appropriate, and supportive of existing learning goals while building cognitive reserve for both teachers, students and their families through the Child Mediated Health Communication model presented in research from Hip Hop Public Health ([www.hhph.org](http://www.hhph.org)).

# 2025 - 2030

## Brain Capital Arts Strategy Plan

### **Cross Sector Continuing Education Alignment for other Professionals**

Partner with organizations that already provide required continuing education credits (CE's or CEU's) for professionals across sectors, including healthcare, culinary schools, construction, tech, HR, finance, and other professional fields that require continuing education. Incorporate Brain Capital courses into ongoing professional development and industry conferences, supporting individuals in applying brain health skills in their personal lives and in their work with clients, students, patients and communities.

### **Establish Community Anchors for Brain Capital Access**

Connect with and support nonprofit organizations with brain capital resources that have a direct community reach, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA programs, Northside Achievement Zone, CDF Freedom Schools, parent support groups, nutritional outreach programs, and other mentoring/leadership organizations for youth and adults. Equip and fund these organizations to teach brain health and Brain Capital content, providing tools, books and accessible culturally sensitive resources to help participants interpret and track their own brain health, creative flexibility and other biometrics, such as blood pressure.

### **Workplace Integration of Brain Capital**

Partner with corporations to integrate Brain Capital into employee onboarding programs, ongoing feedback and performance reviews, employee resource group (ERG's) and C-Suite leadership development initiatives. Incorporate employee and family brain health programs so employees can learn how to bring brain capital behaviors into their home as well. This embeds brain health as a shared value within organizational culture and workforce development for whole human flourishing.

### **Community Celebration of Brain Capital Arts and Brain Health**

Establish city and state government authorized proclamations to elevate awareness and build collective commitment to shared brain health goals. These proclamations can serve as public declarations that position brain health and Brain Capital as civic priorities tied to education, workforce development, healthcare, and community wellbeing.

Partner with Parks and Recreation departments to create citywide brain health fairs and to integrate brain health components into existing festivals, family centered intergenerational gatherings, and community celebrations. Embedding brain health experiences into established events increases visibility and normalizes healthy cognitive practices across generations.

Strengthen brain health standards at city sponsored events by aligning food and environment guidelines with evidence informed practices. This may include reducing or eliminating products that contain ingredients associated with negative cognitive impact, (such as food color toxins or foods with massive amounts of sugar) and encouraging neuro-protective options instead. Clear vendor guidelines can help ensure that public events model the brain healthy culture communities are working to build.



## When It's All Said and Done: Brains + Arts Win

### CONCLUSION

California can lead the nation by treating Brain Capital as a human imperative, a health focus, and an economic project all at once. The dementia burden is already large in prevalence, deaths, and caregiver strain, and national cost projections show why waiting is expensive.

Prevention is realistic because a meaningful portion of dementia risk is modifiable across life, and the life course framing makes early intervention a logical starting point rather than an optional add on. **Not only unlock billions but unlock brilliance!**

The arts, including creative cuisine, are integral because they train the very capacities Brain Capital depends on: attention, neural integration, memory, emotional regulation, social connection, meaning and innovation. This plan invites California to build a statewide ecosystem where every milestone includes creative brain support, every community has access to arts, healthy food and nature, and every age can keep strengthening the brain through culture, connection, and care.

**California dreamin' can become real if we start today and start together!**

Thank you for your time!

# Authors



## **Genein Letford, M.Ed.**

### **Founder & Co-Director, Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute**

Genein Letford is the founder and co-director of Lyrics 'N Leadership for Brain Health and Brainolicious Adventures. She is a national thought leader and award-winning educator dedicated to advancing brain health, brain skills, and creative leadership. Recognized as the 2019 LA Lakers Philanthropic Woman of the Year, the 2015 California Charter Teacher of the Year, and 2012 LA Grammy Museum 'Educating Through Music' inaugural winner, she is the creator of Prismatic Leadership®, Intercultural Creativity®, and NeuroSomatic Creativity®. As Founder and Chief Creative Officer of CAFFE Strategies, Genein partners with C-Suite executives and organizations to design sustainable strategies that merge neuroscience with creativity and brain health. Her work empowers leaders and teams to unleash innovation for personal growth and organizational success. Her acclaimed framework, the 7 Gems of NeuroSomatic Creativity®, equips corporations and institutions to enhance brain health while strengthening the essential cognitive tools that fuel creativity, problem-solving, and resilience. Genein holds degrees in Psychology and Educational Development from UCLA and CSUN, and she is certified in Brain-Centric Design. A passionate Brain Health Activist, she has collaborated with the Center for BrainHealth at the University of Texas at Dallas. With her son, she writes brain health poetry books on brain capital and also co-established the nation's first Brain Capital Awareness Month in Phoenix, Arizona.



## **Keeley Kaukimoce**

### **Co-Director, Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute**

Keeley Kaukimoce is a powerhouse in dance, wellness, and creative leadership. She has performed on So You Think You Can Dance, America's Best Dance Crew, and Dancing with the Stars, and choreographed for artists like Miley Cyrus, films such as You Got Served, and Off-Broadway's Groovaloo. She has appeared in music videos for Snoop Dogg, Justin Bieber, and Missy Elliott, including the iconic "bend and snap" in Legally Blonde. An international teacher of Hip Hop and Locking, Keeley combines movement with brain science and holistic healing to inspire dancers and support brain health. She is co-director of Lyrics 'N Leadership, a producer, entrepreneur, and mother of two, dedicated to transforming generations through creativity, movement, and wellness.

# Authors



## Nicole Andrews

### Co-Director, Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute

Nicole Andrews is a visionary educator, consultant, and equity-centered leader with over eighteen years of experience serving children, families, and historically marginalized communities. As Director of Early Education and Equity at Lyrics N' Leadership Institute, she designs culturally responsive programs and trauma-informed practices that foster belonging and help young learners thrive. Her leadership has been recognized with the Rochester Mayor's Excellence in Education Award, and she holds certifications in equity facilitation, cultural assessment, and neurodevelopmental education. Beyond organizational leadership, Nicole has contributed to books on creativity and child development, and is a sought-after guide who helps individuals reconnect with their inner selves. She embodies a philosophy of service, equity, and transformation—walking alongside communities to nurture resilience and systemic change.



## Monica Montoya

### Director of Operations, Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute

Monica Montoya is a community-oriented administrator, communications strategist, and systems-minded professional with a deep commitment to care, clarity, and human connection. She brings years of experience creating robust infrastructure and responsive environments across arts, nonprofit, and community-based spaces to her role as Director of Operations at Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute. Alongside her work supporting national arts and culture organizations behind the scenes, Monica is especially drawn to spaces and missions that prioritize presence, creativity, and mindfulness.



## Jackie Mattox

### Founder CEO, WE United

Jackie Mattox is the Founder and CEO of a global professional network advancing leadership excellence across technology driven industries. Since launching the organization in 2017, Jackie has transformed WE United from a grassroots initiative into an international leadership platform that partners with Fortune 500 companies, global distributors, manufacturers, digital integrators, and innovators across the tech industry. Jackie engages with executive teams spanning all departments with some of the world's top leadership trainers, bringing a rare ecosystem of industry influence with manufacturers, electronics distributors, contract manufacturers, and software/digital platforms. As WE United aligns with Lyrics 'N Leadership for Brain Health, she is pioneering Brain Capital executive leadership development to her clients and the sector of technology and AI.



## Who is Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute for Brain Health and Brainolicious Adventures®?

The mission of Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute, with Brainolicious Adventures, is to equip adults and children from various backgrounds with high quality learning in leadership, life skills and brain health (dementia preventing) education through the arts and the work of iconic musical artists and cultural icons. Our vision is to see people and children flourish by strengthening their brains, expanding their creativity, and deepening their social connections. We envision a community where every member reaches their full potential with an empowered understanding of how the mind, brain, and body work together. The 7 Pillars of Brain Capital are sleep, food, movement, social interaction, stress management, mental stimulation, and the arts. Through the music and art they create, and through the masterpieces of iconic artists and leaders **who have inspired generations to look inward and lead forward, our students discover new pathways to grow, reflect, and thrive.**

## Who is WE United?



Fueled by honor, authenticity, courage, and commitment, WE United (WE) is a professional network dedicated to championing women leaders and ensuring the inclusion of all qualified talent in shaping the future workforce within the electronics supply chain and adjacent technology-driven industries. While WE began as a community advocating for women in leadership, our natural evolution reflects a greater truth: equity and excellence require unity. Today, WE United embraces and actively engages male stakeholders as allies, mentors, and partners in leadership. By working together, we empower workplaces to rise above biases and fill leadership pipelines with the most qualified candidates, regardless of gender or background.

## Other Partners and Supporters



## Contact:

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