

ARTS IN THE PARKS



2017
EVALUATION
REPORT

About Arts in the Parks

Arts in the Parks encourages community building, enjoyment of local parks, and offers arts events for residents and tourists of all ages. Events include performances, dance, music, theatre, film, community-engaged work, and temporary installations by arts groups.

Selected parks are located throughout Toronto, from Etobicoke to Scarborough and North York to the downtown core. Arts in the Parks is a new initiative of the Toronto Arts Foundation and the Toronto Arts Council, being presented in partnership with the City of Toronto and Park People.



Arts in the Parks 2017: Partnerships

Toronto Arts Foundation's Arts in the Parks aims to make arts accessible in neighbourhoods throughout the city. The program is made possible with the following partnerships:

Toronto Arts Council offers the Animating Toronto Parks grants program to support free arts programming presented by professional artists.

City of Toronto, through its Arts & Culture Services and Parks, Forestry and Recreation departments, is working closely with Toronto Arts Foundation to support the arts programming and facilitate the permit process.

Park People is an organization that works in partnership with communities, park staff and private enterprises to facilitate neighbourhood engagement in local parks, provide resources and information for local park citizens on best practices and build a network of local community park groups.



Arts in the Parks 2017: At a Glance

Arts in the Parks Volunteers (recruited): 246

Total Volunteer Hours: 1132

Total Arts in the Parks Events (occurrences/unique): 341/54

Number of Parks Programmed: 54

Number of Parks Surveyed: 28

Audience: 151,774 (featured events)

Staff Hours On-Site 915.5

City Wards with Arts in the Parks Events: 34



Arts in the Parks 2017: Evaluation

1. **Feedback from Artists**
2. **Feedback from Audiences**
3. **Feedback from Volunteers***
4. **Feedback from Community Organizers**



*Surveys were sent to volunteers who completed shifts.

Artist Feedback

of surveys sent: 45
of responses: 24
Response Rate: 53%



Ballet Creole, Kambule Fest. Photo Credit: Tania Fitzpatrick

What Artists Have to Say

- *Receiving funding makes it possible to focus on production and execution*
- *Being able to practice art in the midst of nature has had a calming and restorative effect on all of us.*
- *Love this program and look forward to seeing it grow and support a diversity of art-making while sparking the imaginations of residents across the city.*
- *The experience helped us to reinforce our belief in accessible culture while also introducing us to new audiences.*

Arts in the Parks artists

Artists

Want to make arts accessible

Nearly **100%** of artists say the best part of Arts in the Parks is bringing arts to the public and bringing people together. **75%** want arts to be free and accessible in neighbourhoods and **76%** want their work to reach new audiences.

Like working in public space

63% of artists who filled out the survey make arts in public spaces the main focus of their arts practice.

67% of artists appreciated being able to use the natural features of the park

Are skilled and experienced

67% of artists who filled out the survey have worked in parks for more than 5 years.

58% work mainly in performing arts

Artists

Appreciate program benefits

84% of artists and art groups benefited from being part of Arts in Parks Program.

Artists noted that word-of-mouth from last year's event brought out a wider audience this year.

Face challenges

Dealing with the weather (**50%**) and City regulations and permits (**54%**) were the top two challenges for artists working in parks.

Received assistance

Most valued assistance provided by Arts in the Parks was: assistance with permits (**62%**); outreach into the local community (**63%**); volunteers on-site to direct audiences (**63%**); and marketing and promotion support. (**63%**)

Observations and Surprises

- Dealing with the weather (50%) and City regulations and permits (54%) were the top two challenges for artists working in parks.
- Some artists noted the importance of learning the different rhythms of each neighbourhood and the importance residents place on local events.
- People of all ages came to the parks and they stayed, even when it was raining.
- Artists were pleased that some City Councillors attended and others appreciated support given by City Parks staff.
- Art programs attracted diverse communities to the park. Some arts program encouraged interactions between the audience and artists and with art installations



“The kinds of cultures that were attracted to us was global, people from all cultural and language backgrounds stopped to thank us, talk with us and share their own stories. Even when language was a barrier, people found a way to connect using the drums and percussion. Even when they didn't stop and participate, they smiled, waved, slow down, nodded, thumbs up, and jiggled their approval at us from a distance. We felt like we were adding to the ambience/experience of the park.”

AITP Artist 2017

Nagata Shachu, Toronto Taiko Tales. Photo Credit: Tania Fitzpatrick

Suggestions

Promotion and Marketing

- More flexible marketing/ promotion plan; ability to make updates to Arts in the Parks [website](#); start door-to-door outreach earlier
- More mainstream media promotion; hipper and younger voice on social media
- Explore group marketing
- Encourage support from local businesses – hosting special days, sponsoring refreshments, storage

Providing artists with videos of their work is extremely helpful to establishing their work in public spaces.

Arts in Parks artist

Suggestions

Building Relationships with Community

- Ways for “outsider” artists to connect with community for more real engagement with neighbourhood (e.g. rehearsing on site)
- More local politicians out at events; AITP part of constituency event listings

Language and cultural barriers make it hard for people to attend – they need encouragement from people they trust. Building trust takes time.

Arts in the Parks artist

Suggestions

Scheduling and Programming

- Build awareness by having consistent presence in the park
e.g.: expect something in this park every Tuesday evening in July
- Include programming in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas to build on work being done there; introducing residents to new parts of their own community

It's hard to reach larger local audiences in parks that have not participated in the past.

Arts in the Parks artist



“Being quite a large park with challenging accessibility, we were always pleasantly surprised to see a small crowd of people suddenly round the bend and join us in time for the show. As well, the entire company was particularly delighted at one performance by visitors from the Northwood Seniors Centre. We were expecting them and had added an extra show to accommodate their travel time. Everyone from our cast made sure to escort all the seniors up and down the hill to our performance area and assist with any other mobility issues. There's a special conviviality that happens when we also act as hosts and not simply a company of actors.”

Arts in the Parks artist 2017

Suggestions

Artist Support

- Organize a meet-and-greet for AITP artists to discuss and exchange ideas
- Consider a multi-year AITP residency to help sustain a relationship with a park

It's hard to reach larger local audiences in parks that have not participated in the past.

Arts in the Parks artist

Suggestions

Permits and Park Amenities

- Address glitches in permit process (noise exemptions)
- Rent portable toilets
- Better lines of communication with Park Supervisors; get more clarity about what types of activities are allowed in specific parks



“The park proved to be a remarkable place where the space suited everyone, and gave them the space they needed to get along. When we aren’t engaging a person for a bit, the park is taking care of them through play spaces, greenery, fresh air. We found that once you are outside, in a place of repose and natural life, people are not only patient, but engaged by the natural surroundings in ways that you can’t replicate indoors. In a sense, the natural world was our collaborator, and was able to hold many different people together and facilitate simple and nourishing points of interaction.”

Arts in the Parks artist 2017

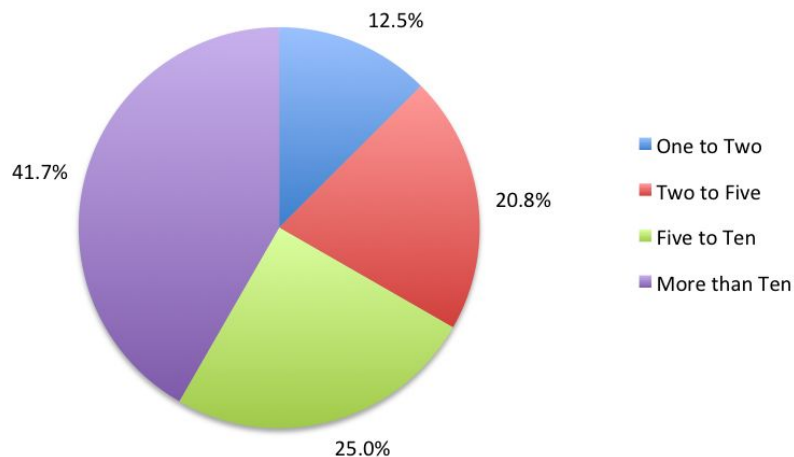
Clay & Paper Theatre, *Fables for the Future II*. Photo Credit: Arienne Domiclong

DATA

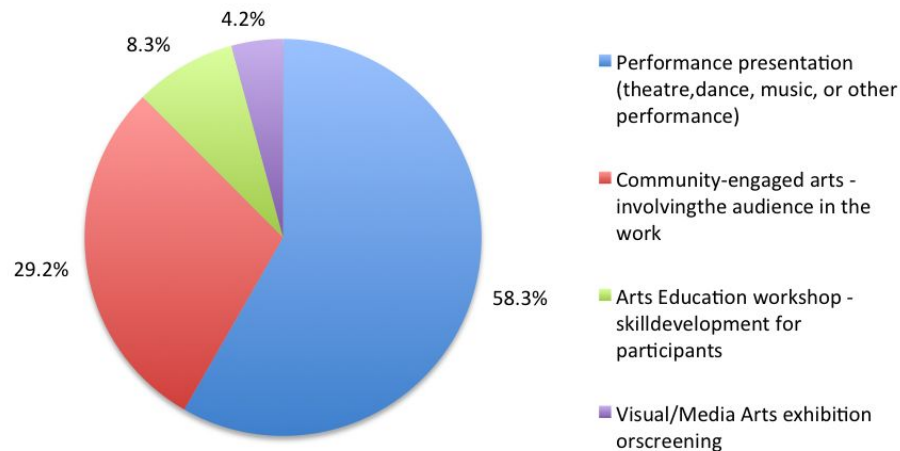


Experience & Focus

How many years have you been working in public/outdoor spaces?

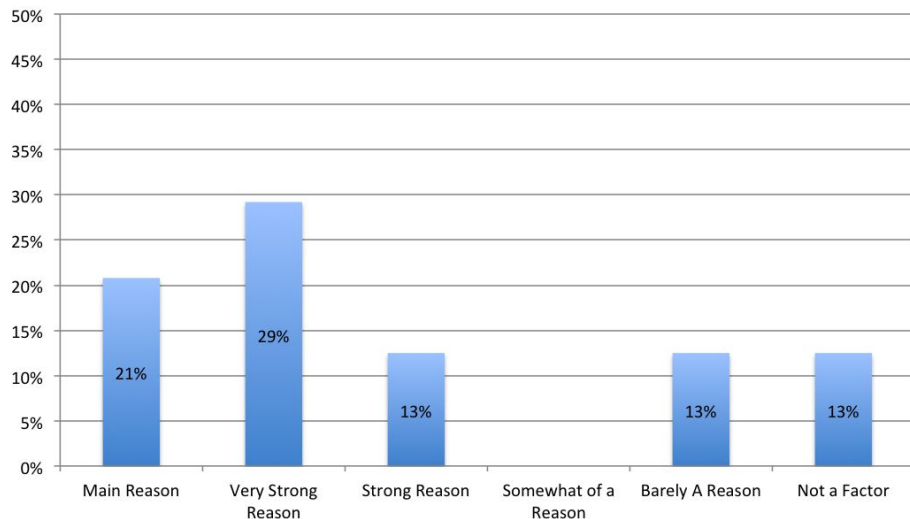


Which of these best describes the arts experience you offered?

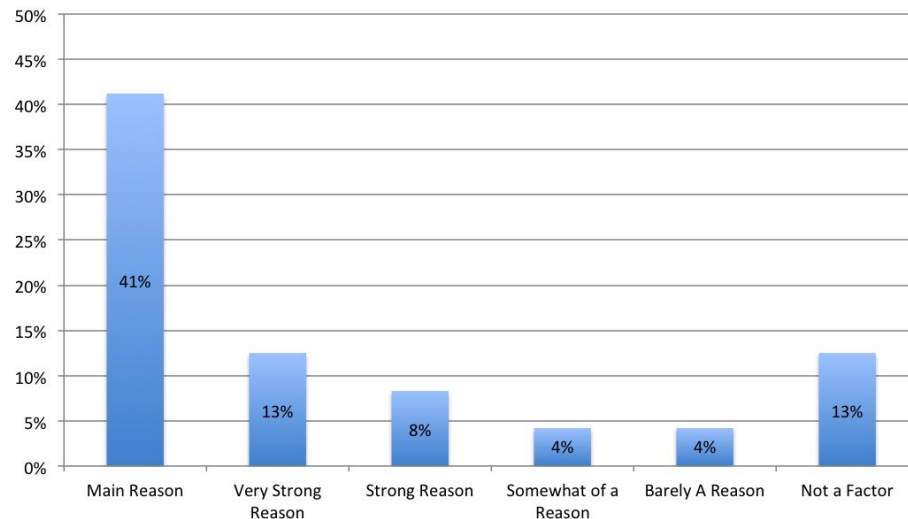


Experience with AITP

What assistance from Arts in the Parks was most important to you: Marketing and promotion

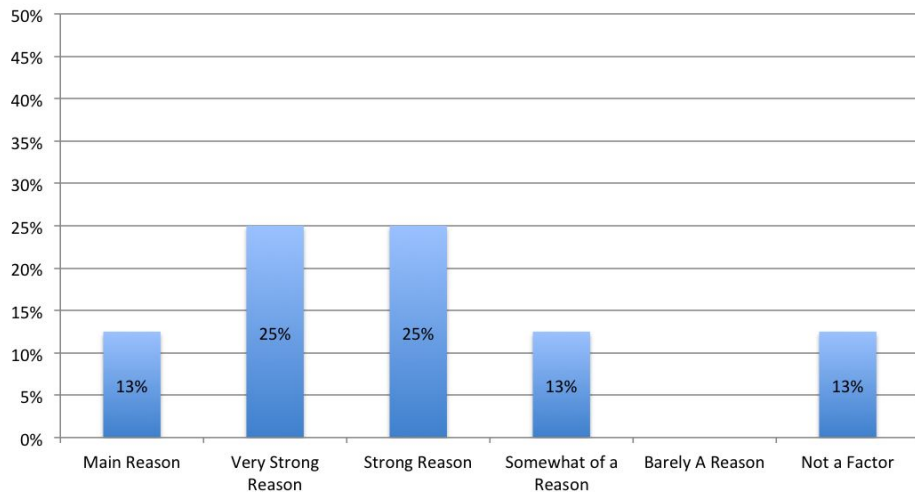


What assistance from Arts in the Parks was most important to you: Assistance with City of Toronto permitting

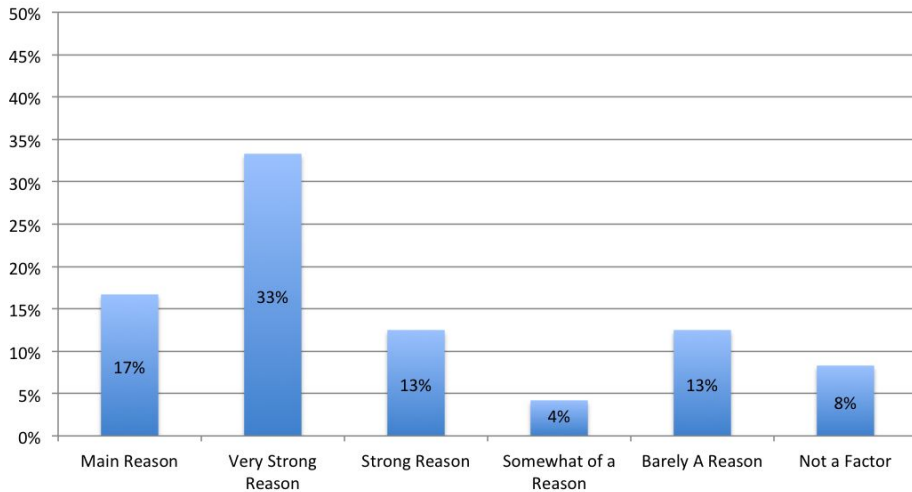


Experience with AITP

What assistance from Arts in the Parks was most important to you: Being part of a large initiative encouraged people to attend our activity

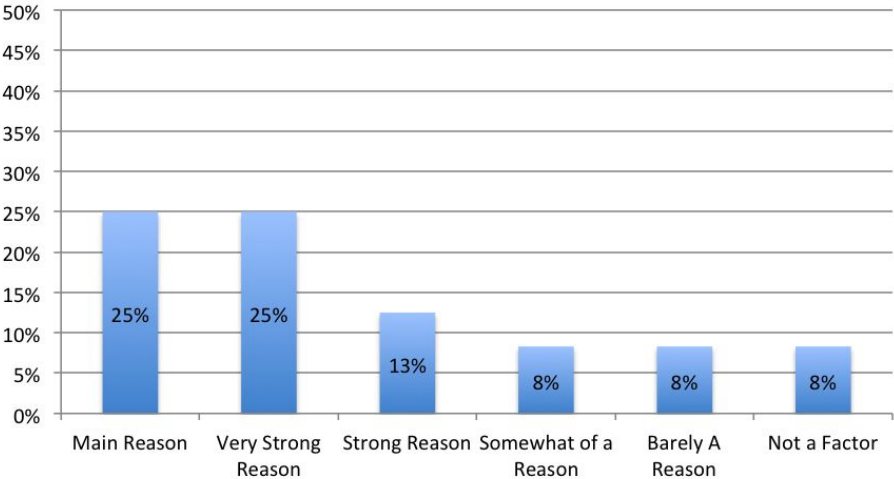


What assistance from Arts in the Parks was most important to you: Volunteers on site to direct audiences or participants

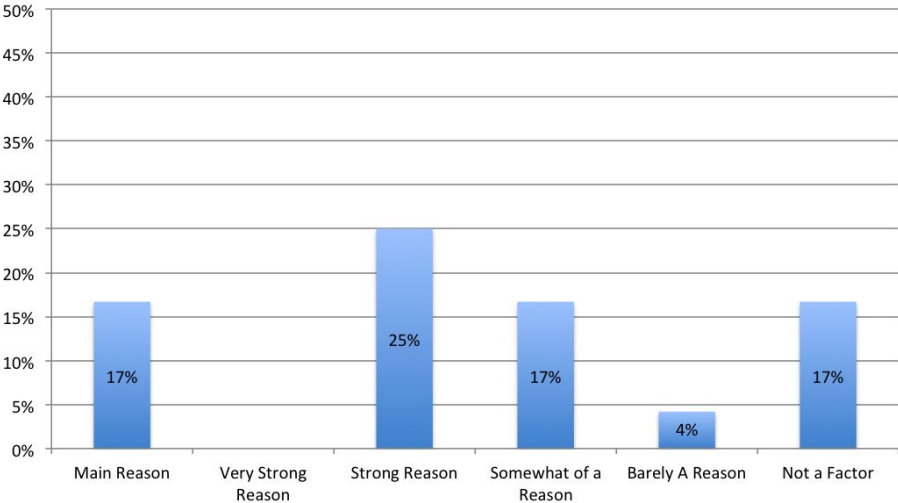


Experience with AITP

What assistance from Arts in the Parks was most important to you: Local community outreach

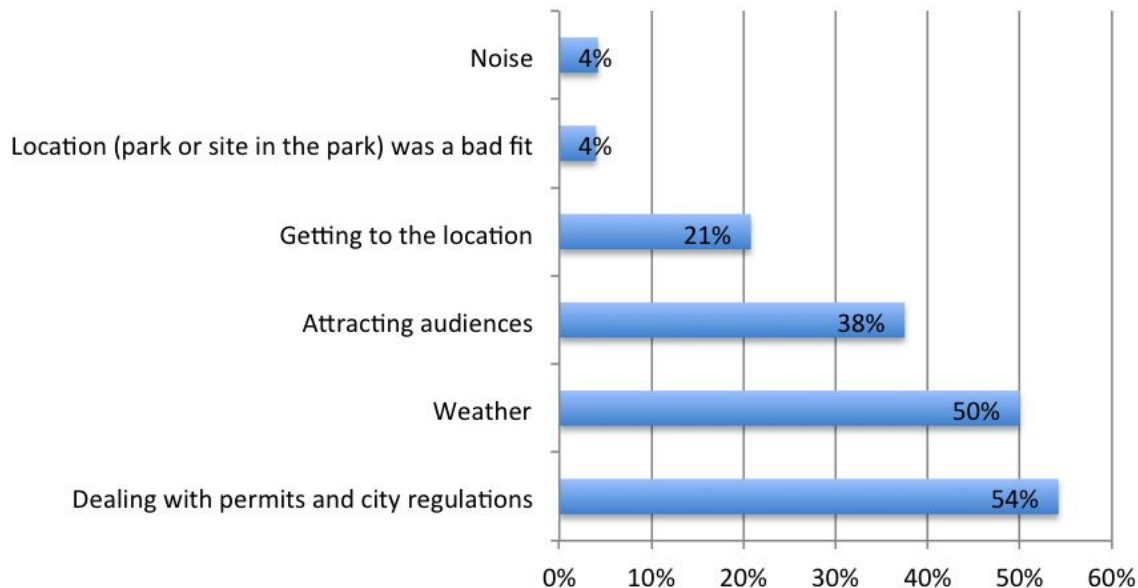


What assistance from Arts in the Parks was most important to you: Wayfinding signage in the park



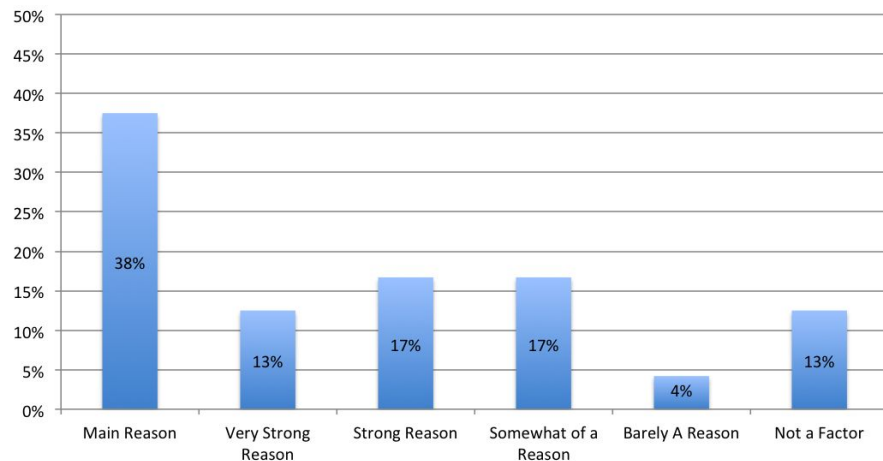
Challenges Faced

What was challenging about working in parks?

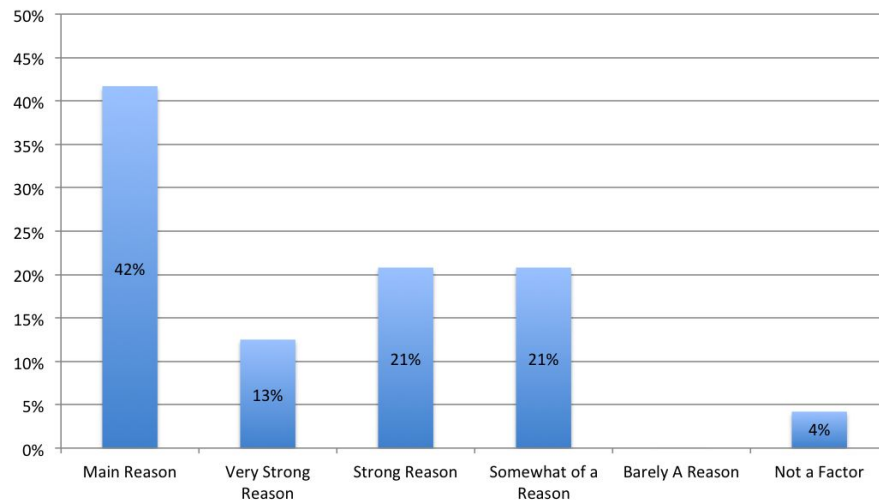


Motivation

Why were you interested in being part of Arts in the Parks: I want to engage with specific sites/ environments

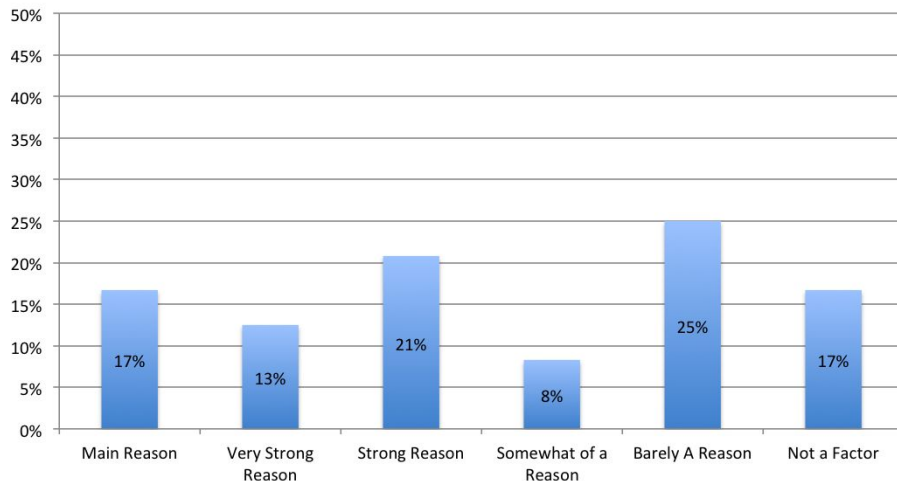


Why were you interested in being part of Arts in the Parks: I want to reach new audiences

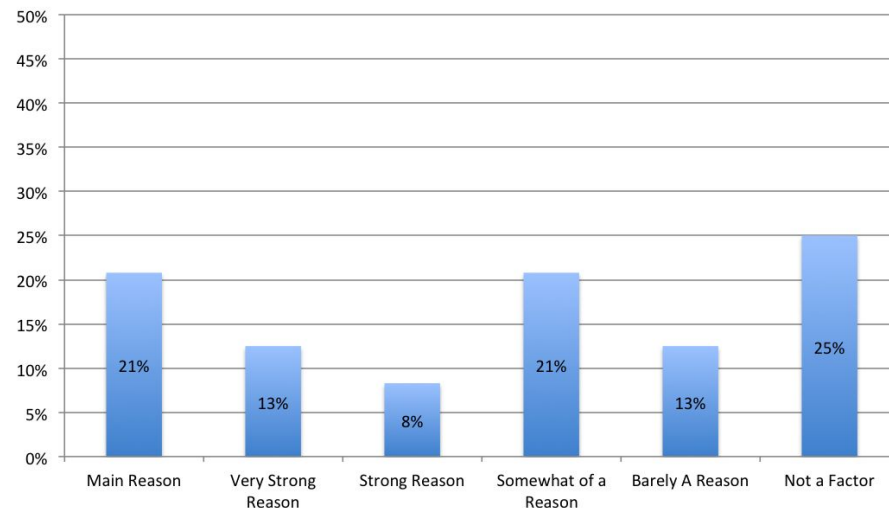


Motivation

Why were you interested in being part of Arts in the Parks: I want to work with specific communities in creation or skill building work

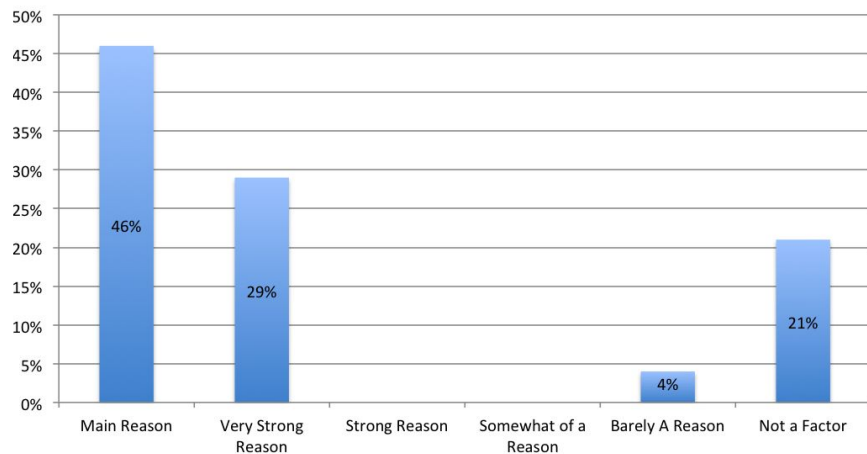


Why were you interested in being part of Arts in the Parks: This work influences the rest of my arts practice

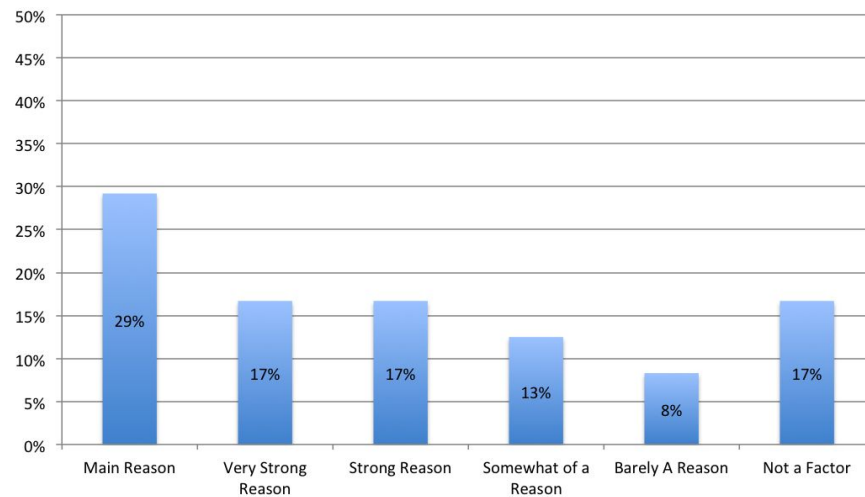


Motivation

Why were you interested in being part of Arts in the Parks: I want arts to be free and accessible in neighbourhoods

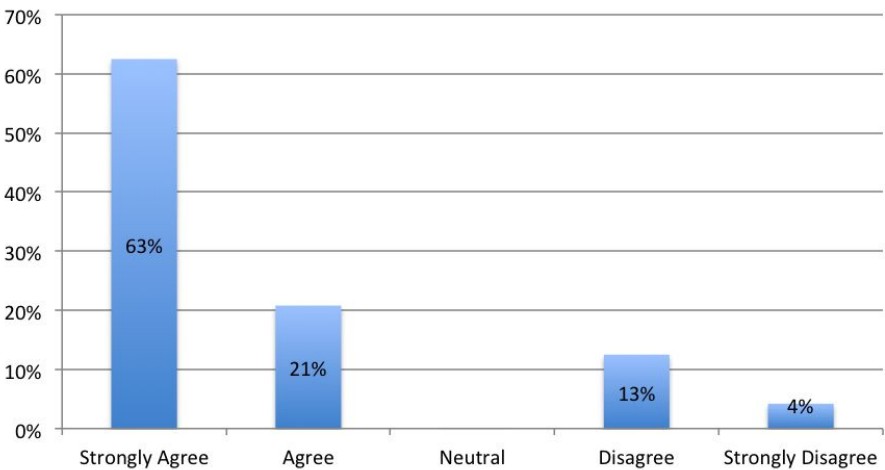


Why were you interested in being part of Arts in the Parks: Arts in public spaces in the main focus of my (our) work

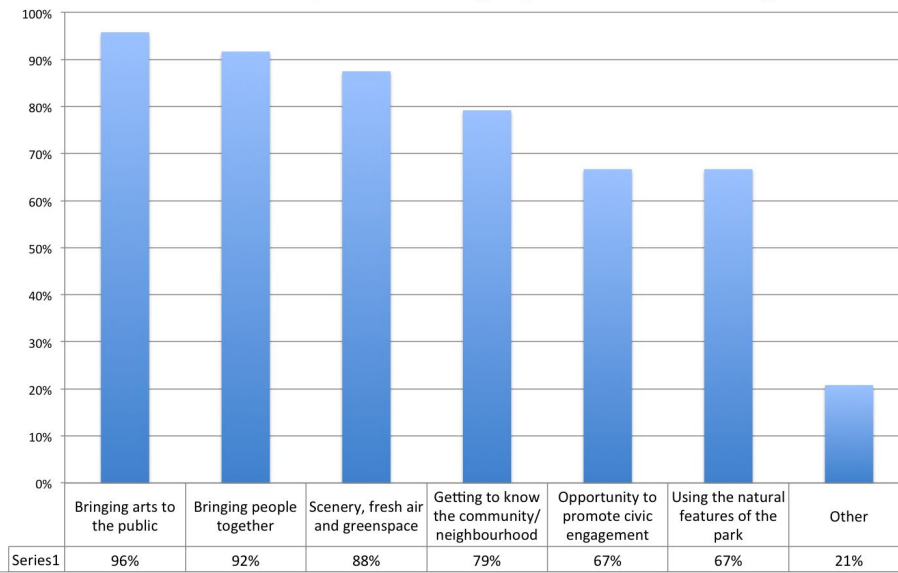


Benefits

We/I benefited from being part of Arts in the Parks?



What was the best part of working in parks/outdoor settings?



Audience Feedback

of responses: 932
of events: 182
of parks surveyed: 28
Response Rate: 0.61%



Nagata Shachu, Toronto Taiko Tales. Photo Credit: Tania Fitzpatrick

Audiences

Are finding out about Arts in the Parks

Top **3 ways** that audience members heard about Arts in the Parks was:

- Family and friends
- Just passing by the park
- Social media

Why people attended

Main reasons people attend are: it's free (**51%**), it's outside (**50%**) and it's close to home (**45%**)

Approximately **one third** of audience members often attend the arts. While **44%** said they sometimes attend.

Who attended

25% of attendees attended with another adult and **36%** came with one or more children.

38% of audience members are under 34.

Audiences

Felt welcome

85% of attendees strongly agreed that it was a welcoming event and they want to see more arts events in parks.

70% of respondents strongly agreed that attending Arts in the Parks made them feel like attending more arts activities.

Appreciate local activities

25% of attendees would like to find out more about local organizations and services.

81% of attendees live in the neighbourhood or region of the city where they attended an Arts in the Parks activity.

Want to learn more

32% said they would like to learn new arts skills or techniques.

73% appreciate an opportunity to see professional artists at work.



Top Attending Neighbourhoods

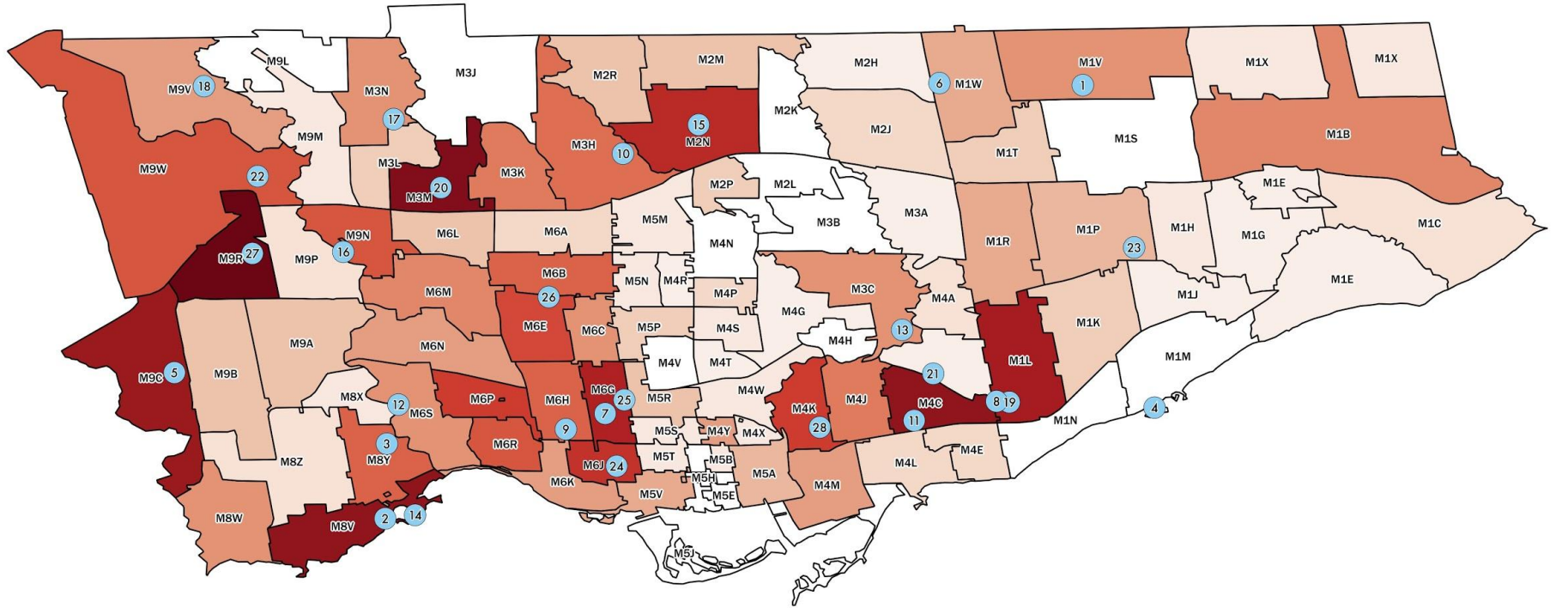
Based on the parks we surveyed these were the top five attending neighbourhoods.

Some people travelled across the city to attend AITP events while others attended in their own region or neighbourhood.

Top Attendee Neighbourhoods:

1. M9R
Kingsview Village/St. Phillips/Martin Grove Gardens/Richview Gardens
2. M3M
Downsview
3. M4C & M8V
Woodbine Heights & New Toronto/Mimico South/Humber Bay Shores
4. M9C
Woodbine Heights & Eringate/Bloordale Gardens/Old Burnhamthorpe/Markland Woods
5. M1L
Golden Mile/Clairlea/Oakridge

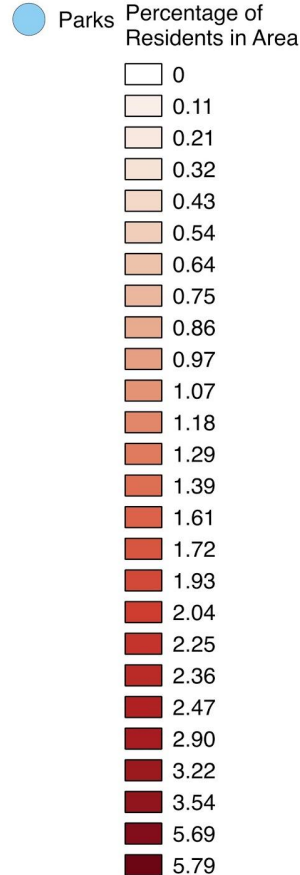
Arts in the Parks 2017: Where are Attendees Coming From?



Arts in the Parks 2017:

Where are Attendees Coming From?

Legend



Surveyed Parks

1. Alexmuir Park
2. Amos Waites Park
3. Bell Manor Park
4. Bluffers Park
5. Broadacres Park
6. Chester Le Park
7. Christie Pitts Park
8. Dentonia Park
9. Dufferin Grove Park
10. Earl Bales Park
11. East Lynne Park
12. Etienne Brule Park
13. Flemington Park
14. Humber Bay Park West
15. Lee Lifeson Art Park
16. Memorial Park – York
17. Oakdale Park
18. Panorama Park
19. Prairie Drive Park
20. Roding Park
21. Taylor Creek Park
22. The Elms Park
23. Thomson Memorial Park
24. Trinity Bellwoods Park
25. Vermont Square Park
26. Walter Saunders Park
27. Wincott Park
28. Withrow Park

About

This map illustrates where Arts in the Park attendees are residing within Toronto, as well as which areas of the city have direct access to Arts in the Parks events. The map consists of Toronto's FSAs*, overlaid with surveyed event locations. The darker the area the higher percentage of Arts in the Park attendees reside there. The information was gathered from short and long form surveys attendees filled out at Arts in the Park events, which asked for their postal code. This map enables us to see which areas had the most attendees, and which areas may need more outreach to get residents out into parks and interacting with public art.

*FSA (forward sortation area) is the first three characters of a postal code.
(e.g. **A1A**1A1)

Case Studies

The case study maps provide a more specific example and clearer image as to who is attending and participating in Arts in the Parks events. It is most common that attendees come from areas local to the park, however people often travel outside of their neighbourhoods or communities to attend events.

The following three events/parks are examined:

1. Clay & Paper at Wincott Park
2. K Funk & Lady Ree at Lee Lifeson Park
3. Parks 'N Wreck at Prairie Drive Park

Arts in the Parks Case Study 2017: Clay & Paper in Wincott Park

Type of Performance:
Theatre Performance

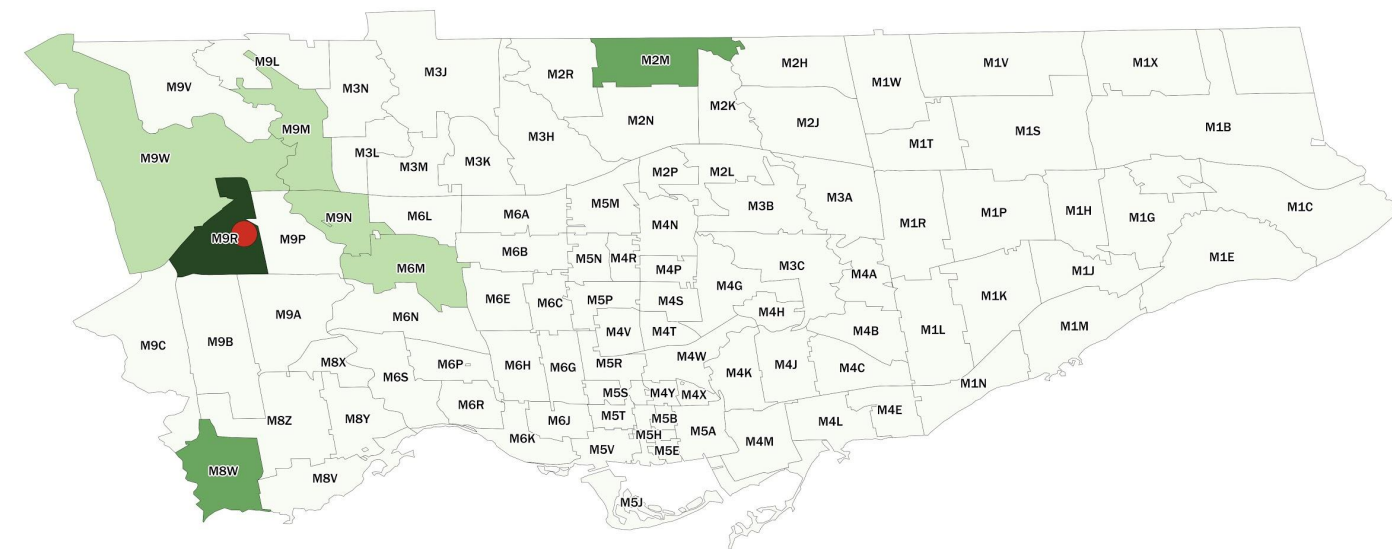
Dates: August 16-20, 2017

Estimated Attendance: 201

Previous AITP Presenter:
Yes

Did the Event/Performance
have multiple Dates: Yes; a
total eleven dates – five of
them at Wincott Park.

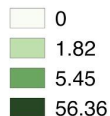
Did the Event/Performance
have multiple Locations: Yes;
they had performances at
two other parks prior to their
shows at Wincott park.



Legend

● Wincott Park

Percentage of Respondents in Area



Arts in the Parks Case Study 2017: K Funk & Lady Ree in Lee Lifeson Park

Type of Performance:
Musical Workshop

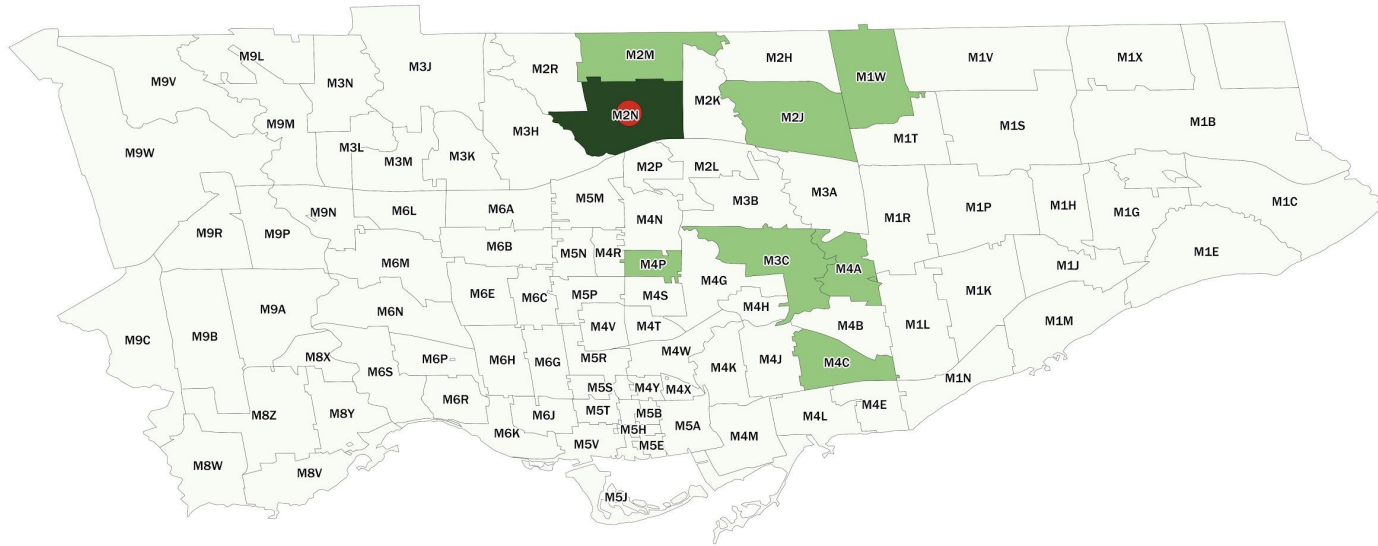
Date: July 23, 2017

Estimated Attendance: 70

Previous AITP Presenter: No

Did the Event/Performance have Multiple Dates: Yes; four dates – one of them at Lee Lifeson Park.

Did the Event/Performance have Multiple Locations: Yes; they had workshops at three other parks after Lee Lifeson.



Legend

● Lee Lifeson Park

Percentage of Respondents in Area

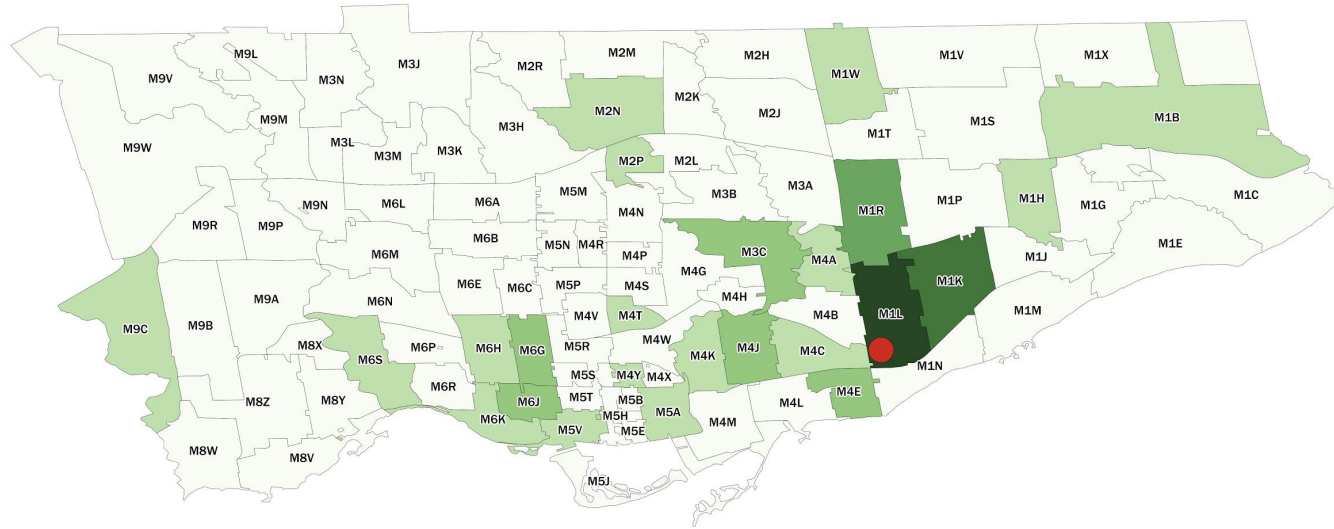
0

3.45

34.48



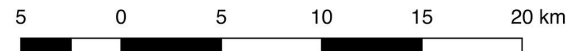
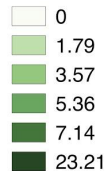
Arts in the Parks 2017 Case Study: Parks 'N Wreck in Prairie Drive Park



Legend

● Prairie Drive Park

Percentage of Respondants in Area



Type of Performance: Dance
Workshop

Date: September 10, 2017

Estimated Attendance: 175

Previous AITP Presenter: Yes

Did the Event/Performance
have Multiple Dates: No

Did the Event/Performance
have Multiple Locations: No

Overall Experience

- Audiences appreciate opportunities to attend arts activities – performances or workshops – in neighbourhood settings.
- They appreciate that the activities are free and family-focused.
- In the future they would like to be able to hear more about other local opportunities when they are attending Arts in the Parks.



“Great show! Interactive!”

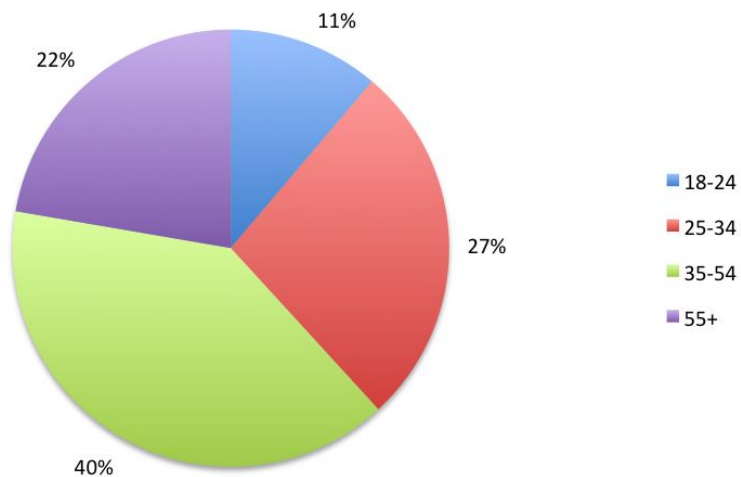
Audience member from Clay & Paper event

DATA

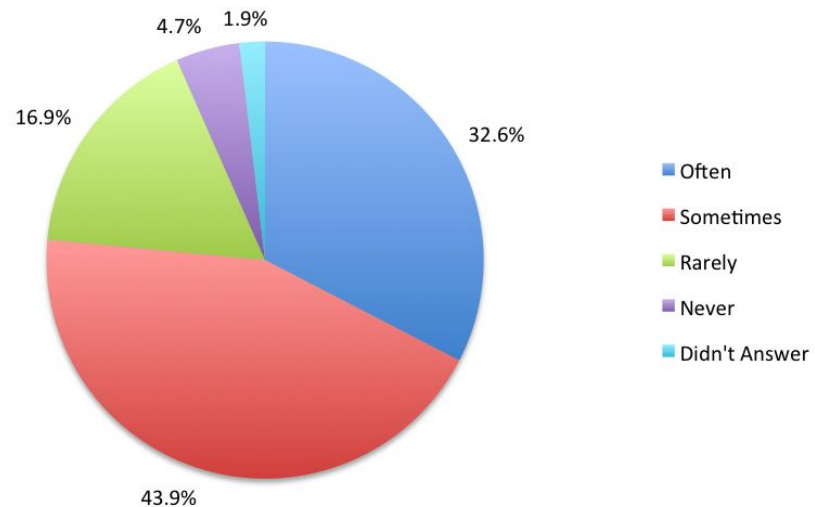


About

Age

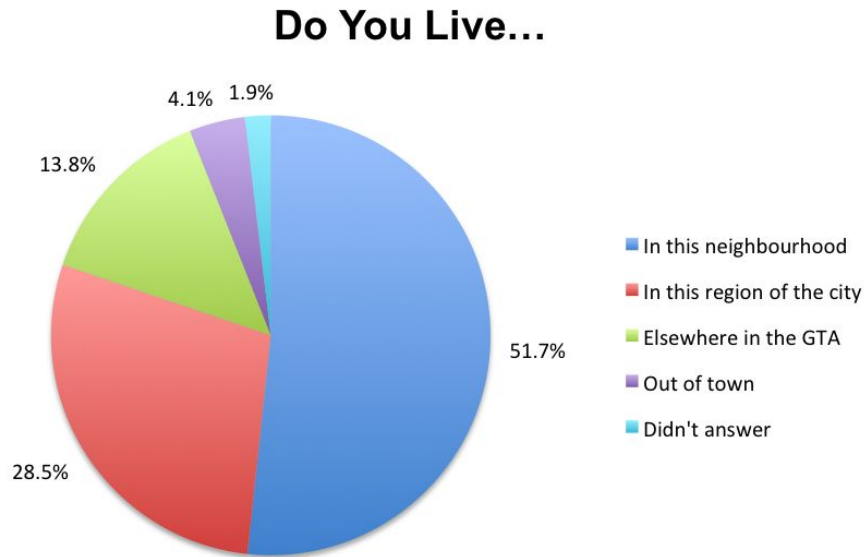


Do You Regularly Attend the Arts?



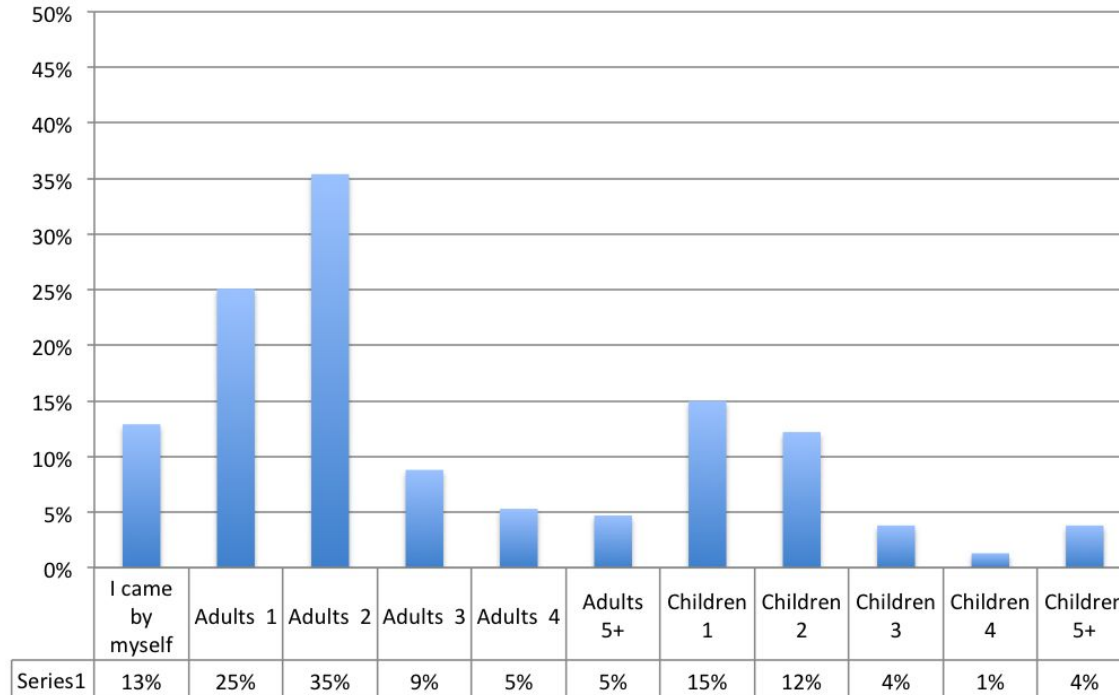
Where Audience Live

- The **majority** of attendees live in the neighbourhood or region of the city where the park is located
- Over **10%** come from elsewhere in the city to see the work
- Almost **4%** come from outside the city, including 905 region, provincial, national and international locations



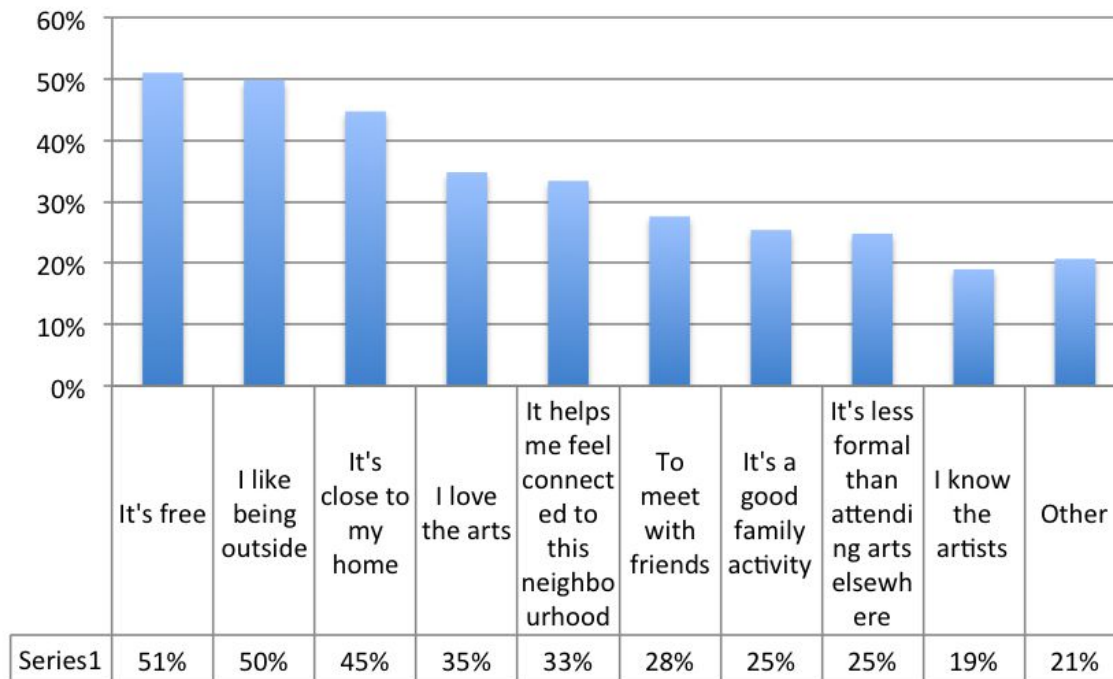
Attendance Habits

How many people did you come here with today?



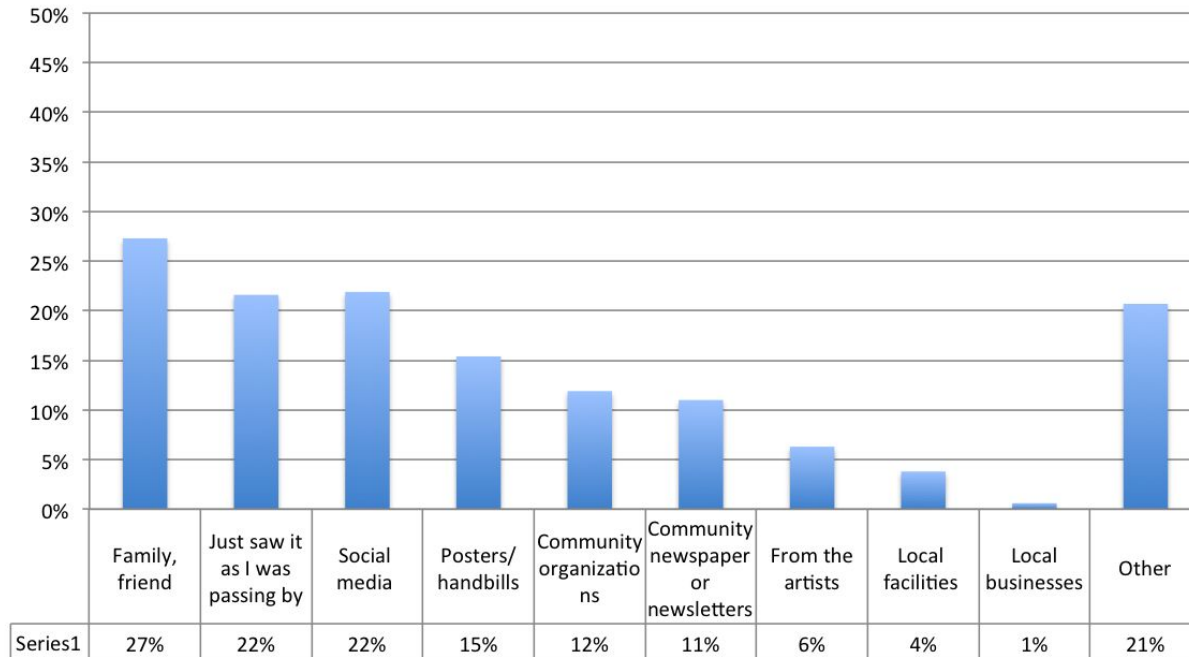
Reason for Attending

Why Did You Attend?



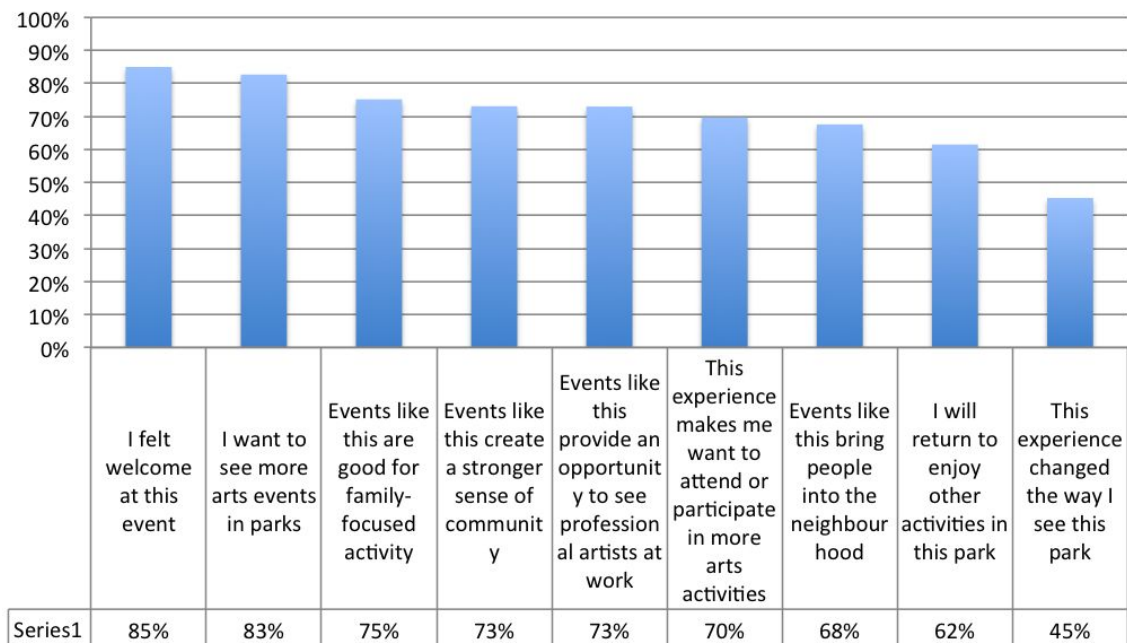
How did they find AITP?

How Did You Hear About the Event?



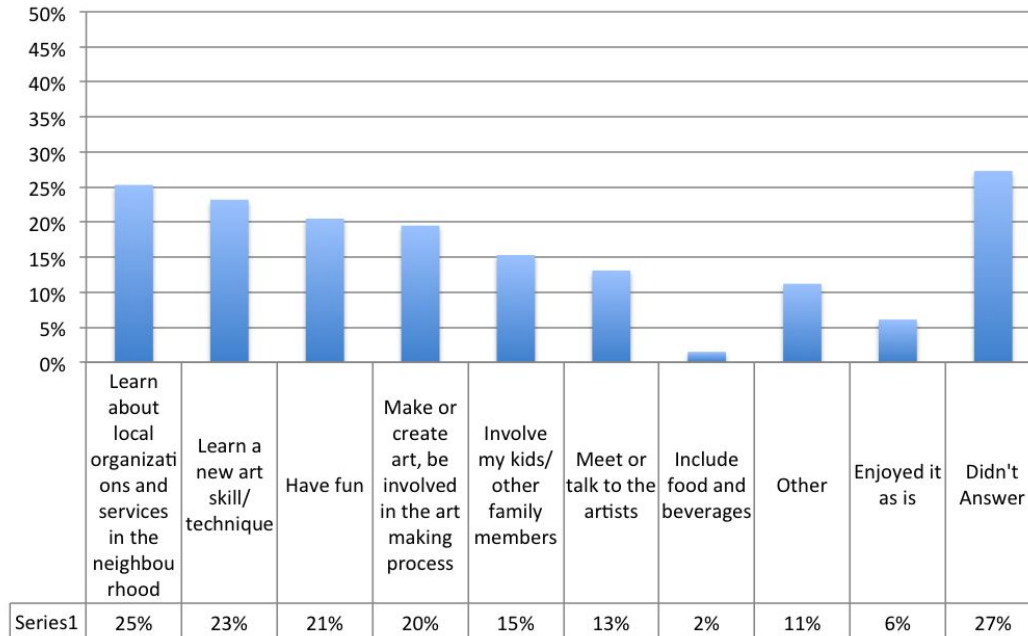
Opinions

Attendees Strongly Agree With the Statements...



Future of AITP

How Could Your Experience be Improved?



WHAT I LIKE

I like Art
Because it really has different textures
like drawing, painting and lots more

ABOUT

Jennifer Lee

I like art
Because it is
Fun to do it

ART



Art is
amazing



Everything is
Art
Life
MARIA



Art carries
many
meanings



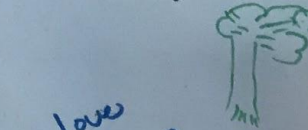
COLOUR

Being able to
express myself
through art!!



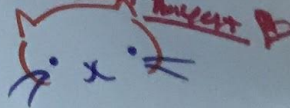
Art.

I love
listening to
music



I love
everything
about art!!

to U I dont like the way art is



Volunteer Feedback

of surveys sent: 120
of responses: 55
Response Rate: 46%



Little Pear Garden. Photo Credit: Josh Clavir

Volunteers

Like to help

71% of Arts in the Parks volunteers also volunteer for other organizations on a regular basis.

Are motivated

The majority of volunteers said they were motivated to volunteer because they like the arts (**78%**) and the idea of free arts in local parks (**66%**).

Are loyal

86% of volunteers would volunteer again for Arts in the Parks or other Toronto Arts Foundation programs.

Volunteers

Volunteer contribution

79% of Arts in the Parks volunteers worked in 2 or more parks

58% volunteered over 6 hours to the program

78% volunteered because they like to support the arts

Value of volunteering

58% felt the experience helped increase their confidence and **just over half** said that volunteering helped them feel that they were making a difference.

Three quarters felt welcomed and appreciated and **64%** felt volunteering was a good use of their time

22% of volunteers are youth

Seeing and learning

From their observations, volunteers noted that approx. **78%** of attendees had a good time

62% said they were provided with enough information to feel confident in describing Arts in the Parks to attendees



“I was interested in getting involved with a new organization. I liked that this one was outdoors and had to do with community arts. I also liked the flexibility/commitment level.”

AITP Volunteer

Challenges

- Getting to the location was the most challenging aspect of volunteering for **47%** of volunteers
- **31%** of volunteers found the weather to be challenging and **16%** felt the instructions they received were not clear
- Sometimes events were cancelled and volunteers were not notified
- Some volunteers felt there wasn't enough for them to do and at times there were too many volunteers in the park
- Some noted problems in collecting surveys because of the timing, nature of the event, or the needs of artists

Suggestions

- Take care of volunteer needs. Shade, water, washrooms and somewhere to change into volunteer T-shirt
- Staffing needs to align with the needs of the event
- Experienced ambassadors should be given more to do
- In large parks make it easier for volunteers and the audience to find the event
- Better communication between planners, staff and volunteers
- More guidance from supervisors about interviewing audience members and artists
- Better plan for collecting audience surveys

A Learning Opportunity for Volunteers

Volunteering was an opportunity to:

- Make connections with arts community
- Find out about arts initiatives in the city
- Talk with the public about the event
- Participate in workshop events



"I enjoyed meeting with new people, learning something new (about the arts exhibits, shows happening on the day of volunteering) and saw new areas and parks."

AITP Volunteer

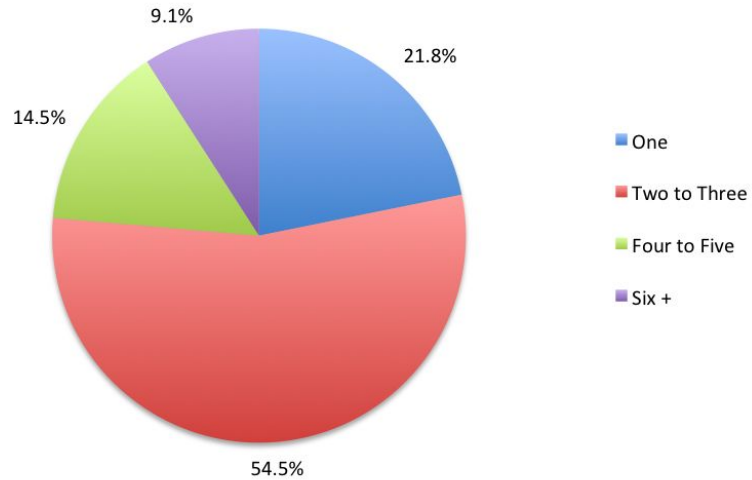
Volunteer Party. Photo Credit: Sean Howard

DATA

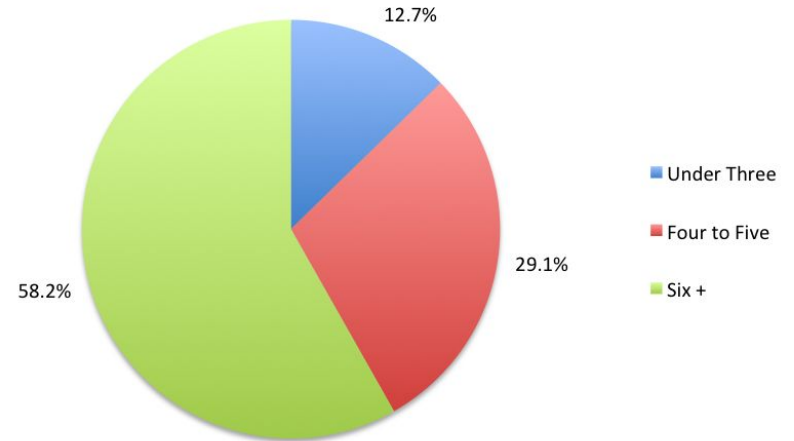


Workload

How many parks did you volunteer in?

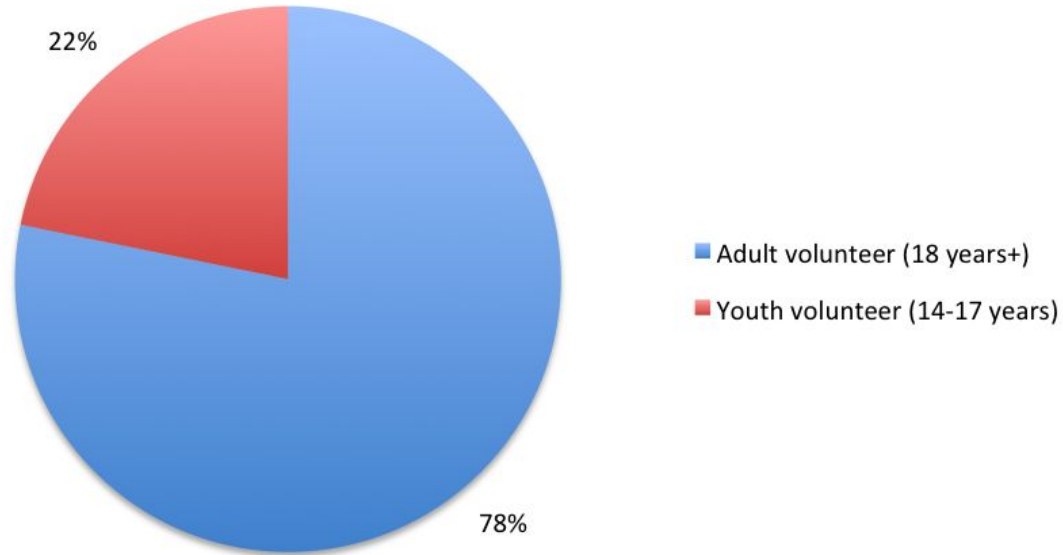


How many volunteer hours did you work?



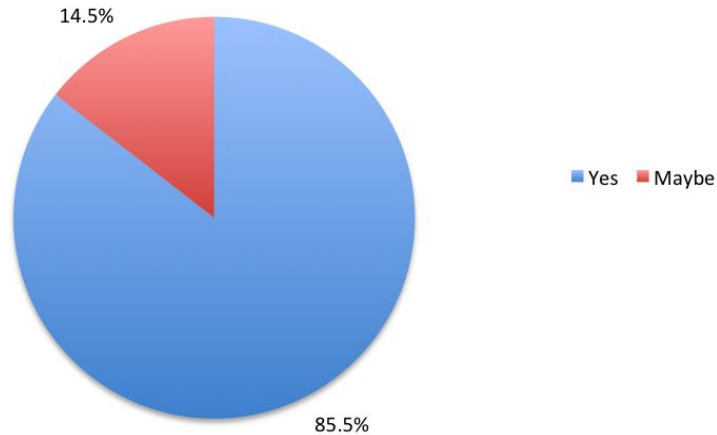
Youth Involvement

Are you an adult or youth volunteer?

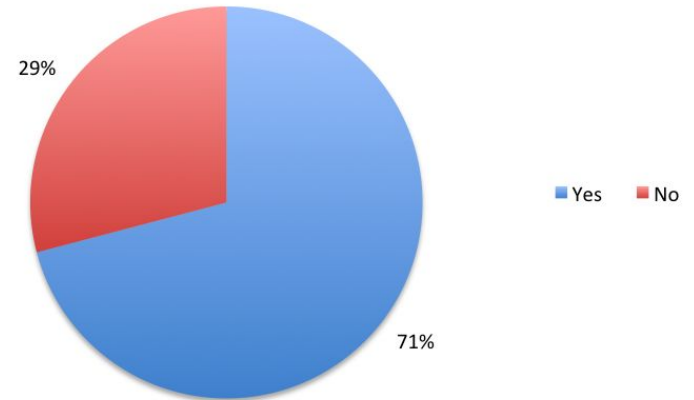


Volunteer Habits

Would you volunteer again for Arts in the Parks or other Toronto Arts Foundation programs?

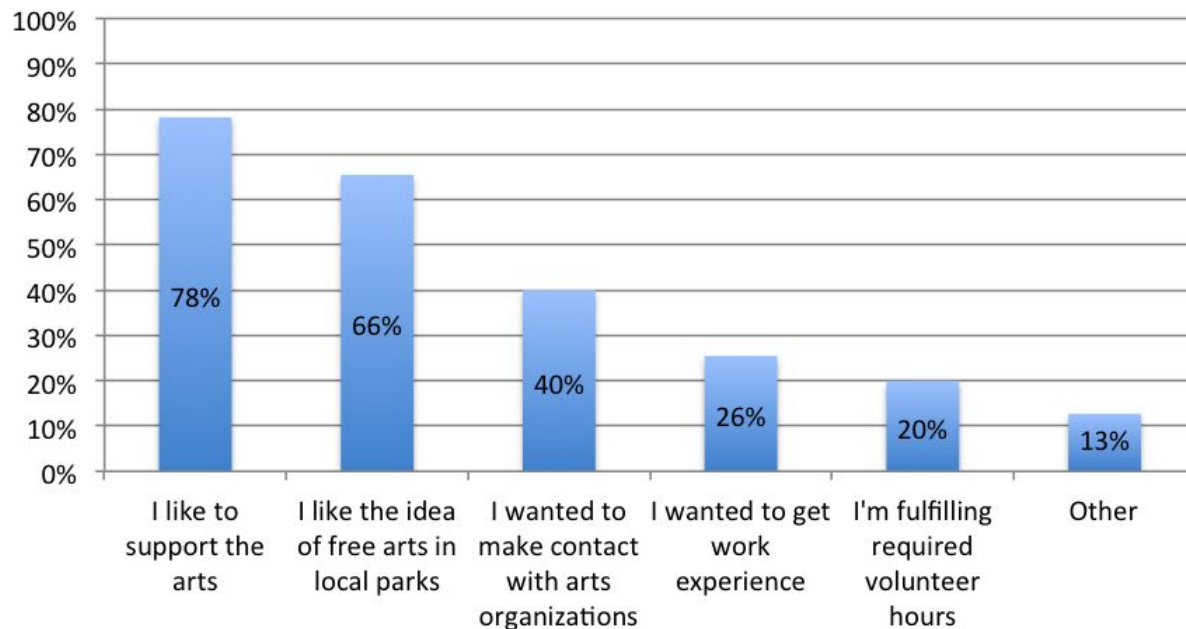


Do you volunteer for other groups (other than Arts in the Parks) on a regular basis?



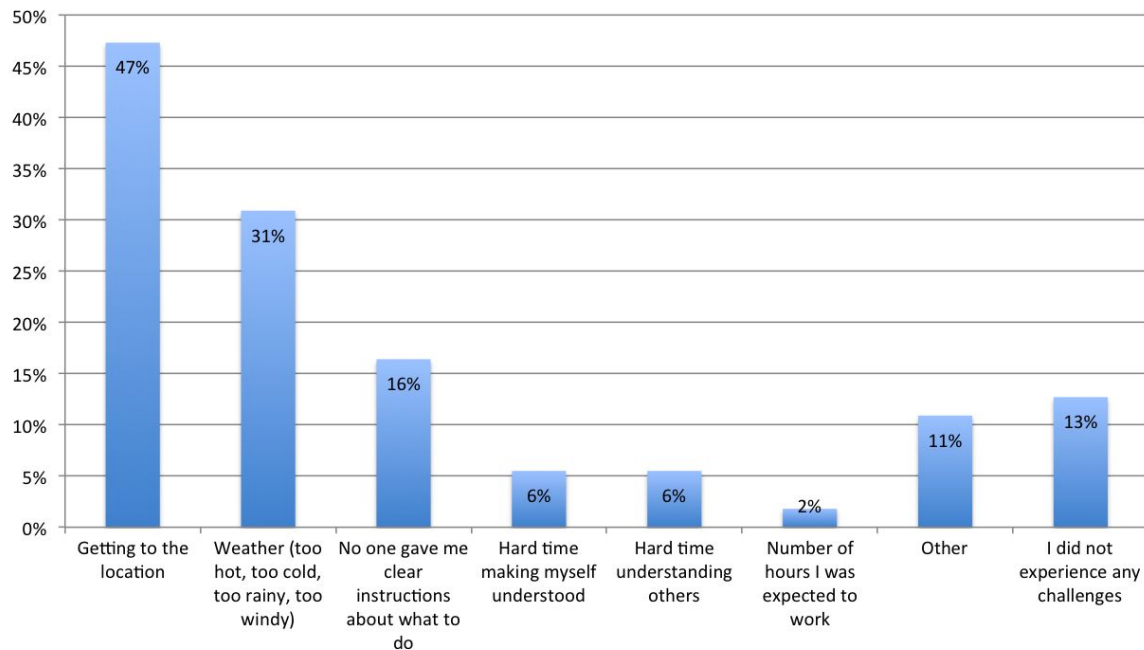
Motivation

Why did you decide to volunteer for Arts in the Parks?



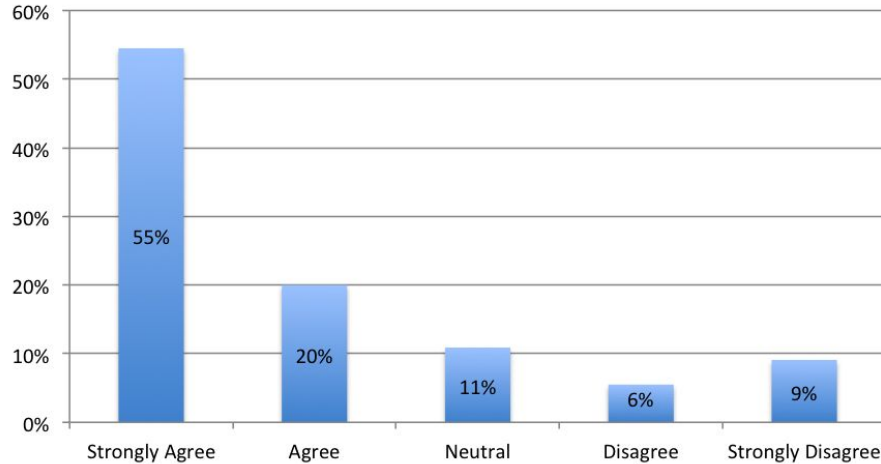
Challenges

What was the most challenging thing about volunteering for Arts in the Parks?

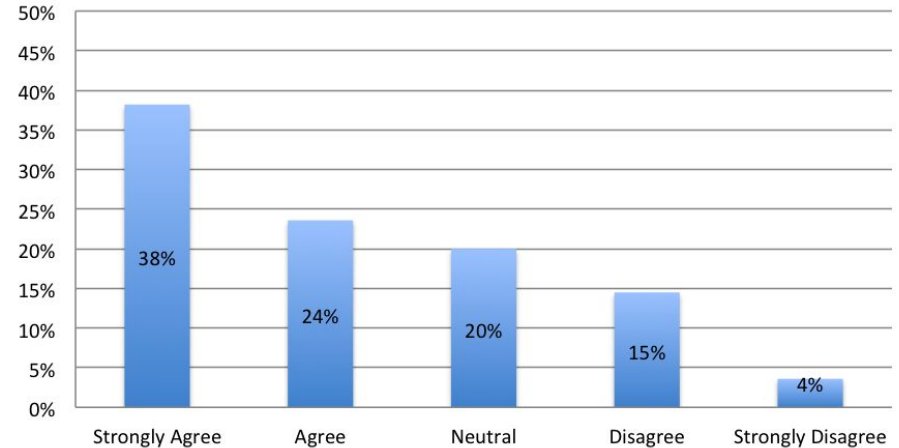


Arts in the Parks Experience

**I felt welcomed and appreciated by
Arts in the Parks team**

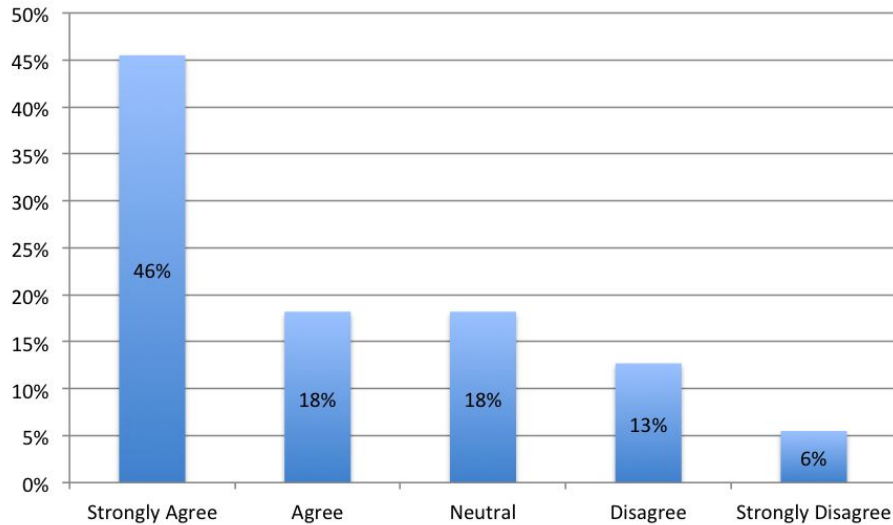


**I was provided with enough information to feel
confident describing Arts in the Parks to
attendees?**

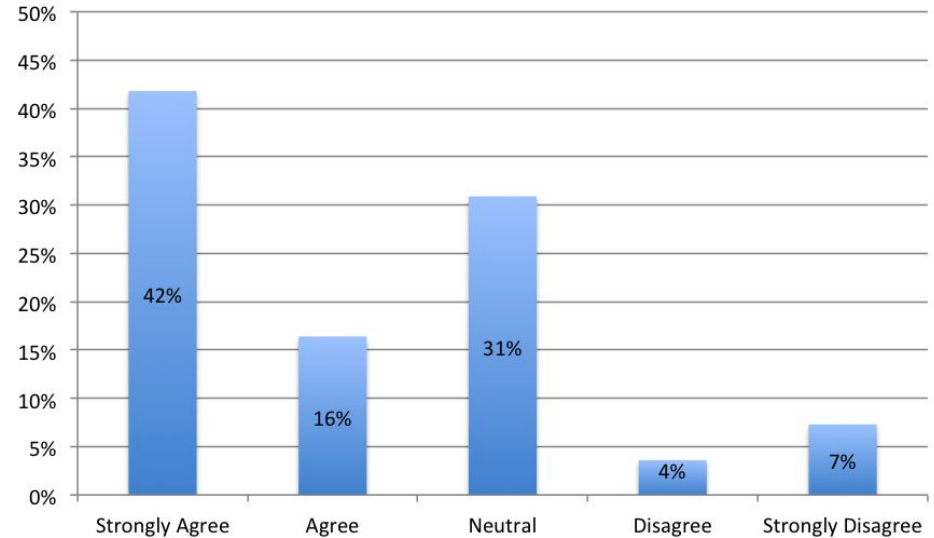


Arts in the Parks Experience

Volunteering was a good use of my time

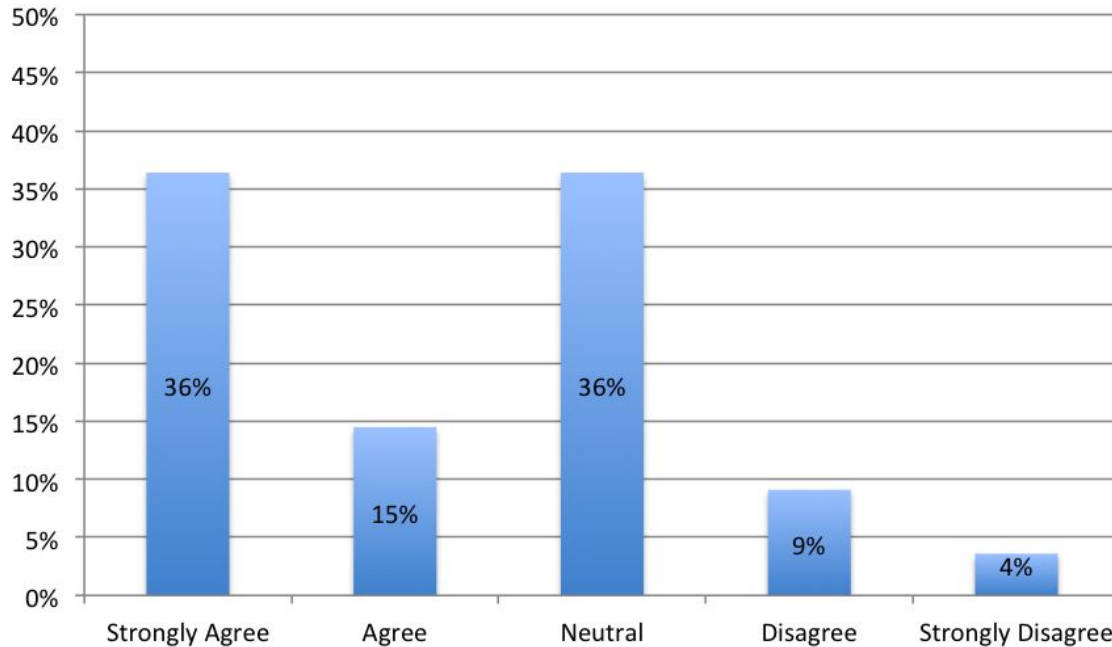


This experience gave me more confidence



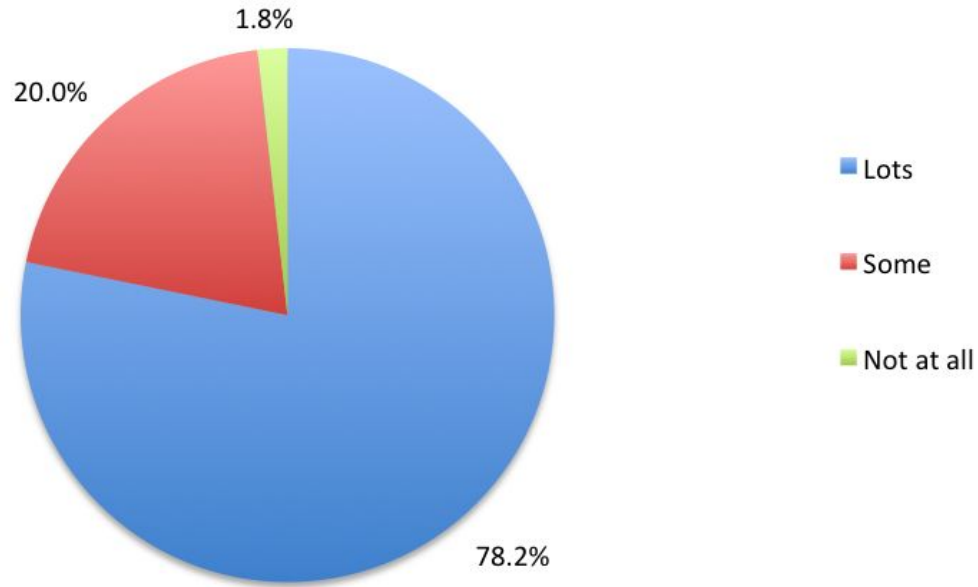
Arts in the Parks Experience

I felt like I was making a difference



Observations

In general, do you think people who attended Arts in the Parks had a good time?



Community Organizer Feedback

of surveys sent: 17
of responses: 12
Response Rate: 71%



Nia Centre for the Arts. Photo Credit: Sean Howard

Community Organizers' Survey

This survey was designed and distributed by Arts in the Parks partner, Park People. The survey was completed as part of their assessment process.





“The area is a diverse community and having an event that is multicultural and enjoyable lessens the isolation of newcomers & seniors. The park has also ample space and venue to host these kinds of performances.”

Community Organizer

Driftwood Theatre, Othello. Photo Credit: Morris Cai

Community Organizers

Reaching out

66% of community organizers reached up to 400 people.

67% of organizers said over **50%** of attendees came from their neighbourhood

Feeling supported

58% noted that the community volunteer training session was very good or excellent

67% said working with artists/arts organizations had been a very good or excellent experience

A good fit

83% felt the overall experience was very good or excellent.

84% agreed that this year's event was a good fit for their neighbourhood and park.

Community Organizers

Local attendance and events

In addition to AITP, **75%** of the parks host other events during the year

Value of partnership

92% of organizers said that working with Toronto Arts Foundation was positive experience.

Looking to the future

92% said they would like to host an Arts in the Parks event again.

58% said they would like to welcome back the same artist(s)



“It helps bring different people together that wouldn't ordinarily have a reason to associate and lets people experience the park in a different way than they ever would have imagined.”

Community Organizer

Nagata Shachu, Toronto Taiko Tales. Photo Credit: Tania Fitzpatrick

Community Organizer Observations

The community showcase event provided a positive platform for community members to express themselves and celebrate each other's talents.

Good to see arts organizations expand their reach into underserved communities.

The program brought more traffic and people into the park. This helps make the area more safe.

Arts in the Parks provides residents with increased opportunities to participate in events they would not normally be able to see.



Little Pear Garden Dance Company. Photo Credit: Josh Clavir

Benefits for the Community

- Helps address isolation by inviting residents to come to the park; an opportunity to meet neighbours and socialize
- Brings arts programming to an underserved area; program like this fill a gap
- A valuable volunteer opportunity for local residents
- Introduces diverse artistic talent to the neighbourhood



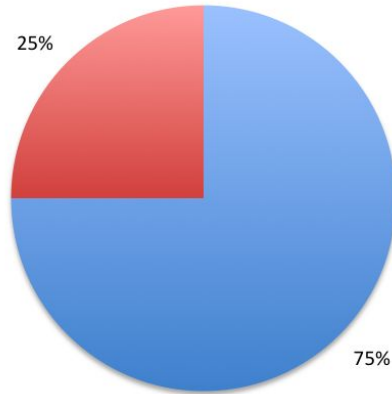
Little Pear Garden Dance Company. Photo Credit: Josh Clavir

DATA

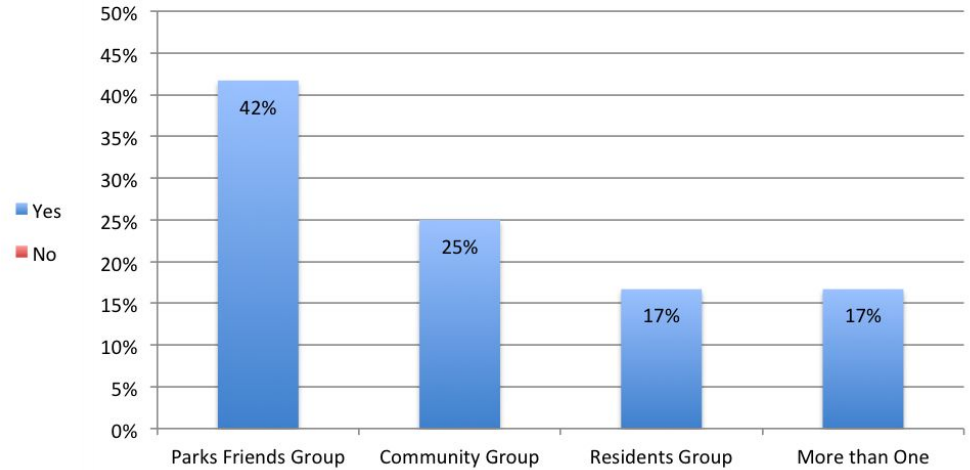


Park Programing Year Round

Besides Arts in the Parks Events, Do You Host Other Events in this Park During the Year?

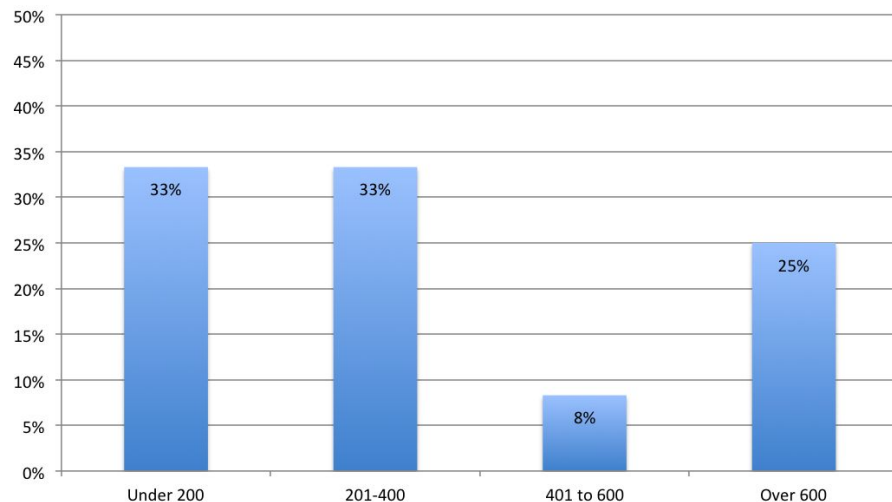


Which of the Following Best Describes Your Group?

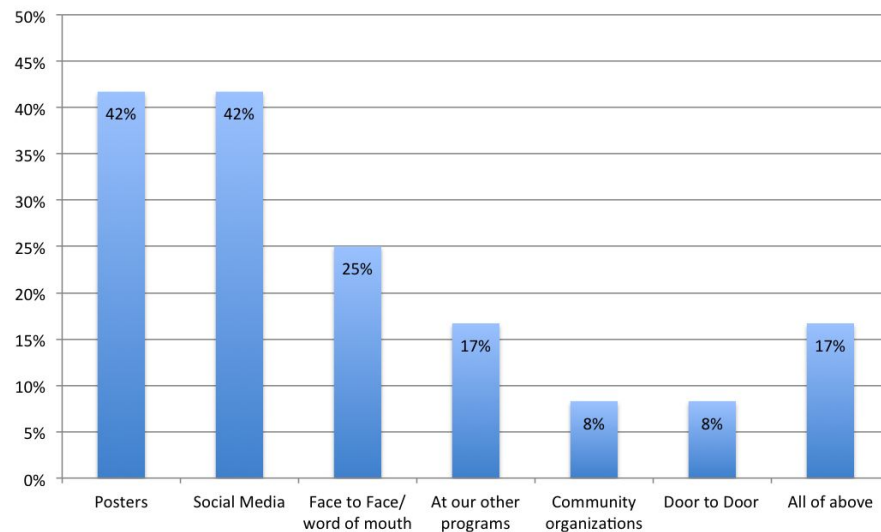


Outreach

How Many People Did You Do Outreach to About the Event?

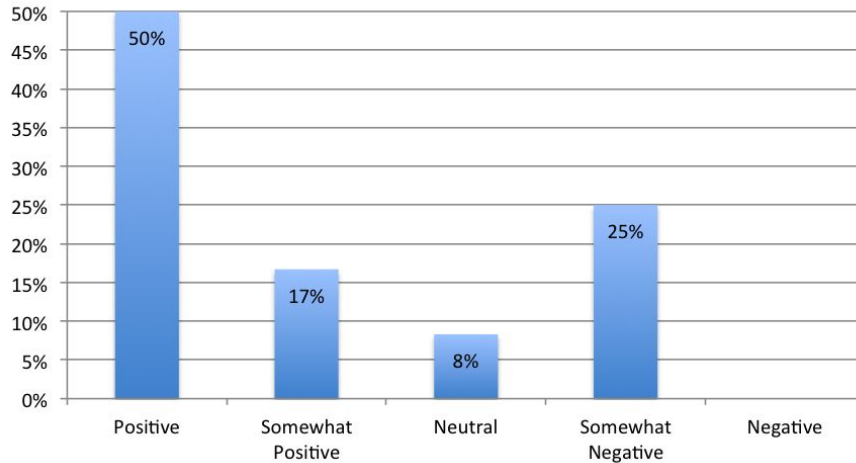


How Did You Let People Know About the Event?

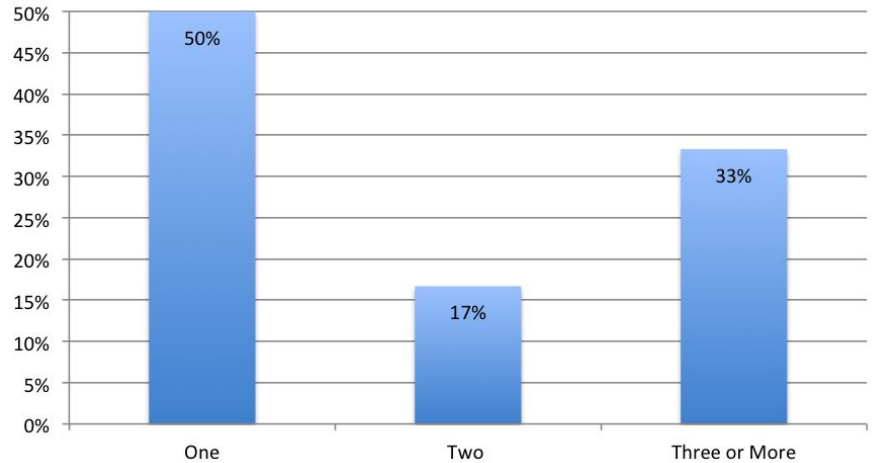


Working with the Artists

How Would You Rate Working with the Artist?

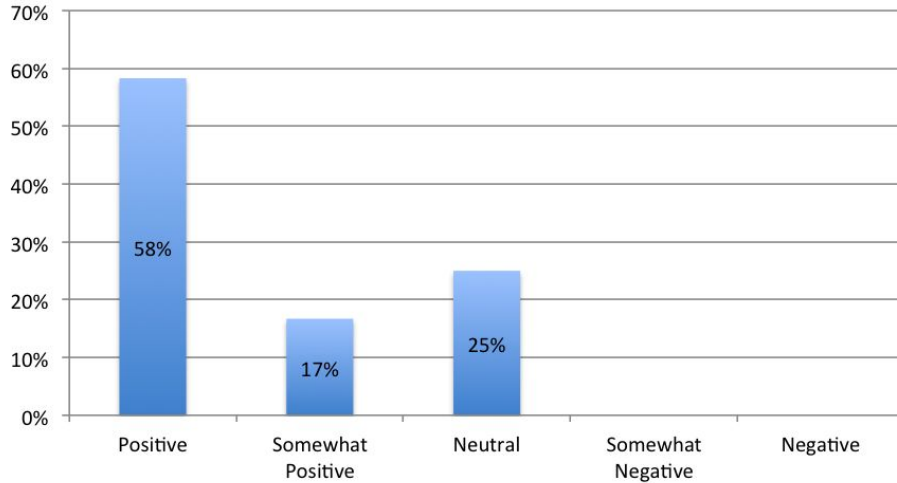


How Many Different Artists Hosted Arts in the Parks Programs in Your Park?

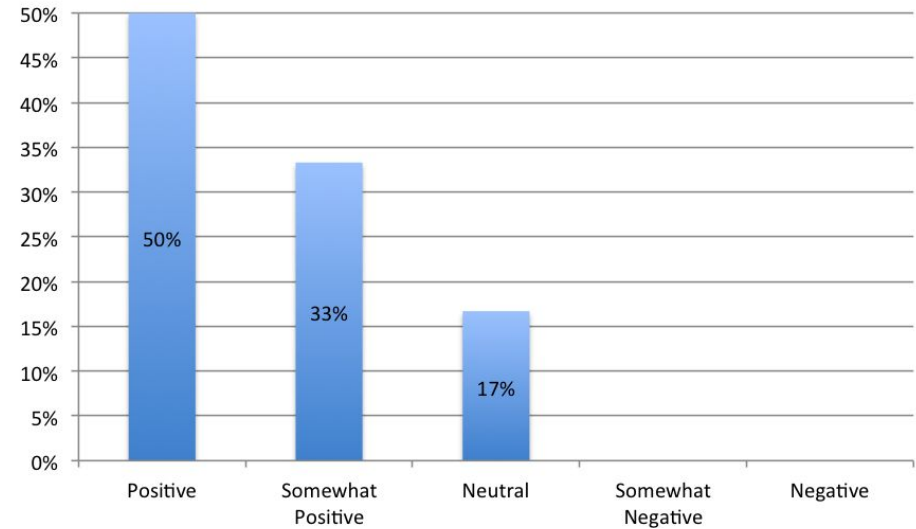


Program Evaluation

How Would You Rate the Quality of the Event?

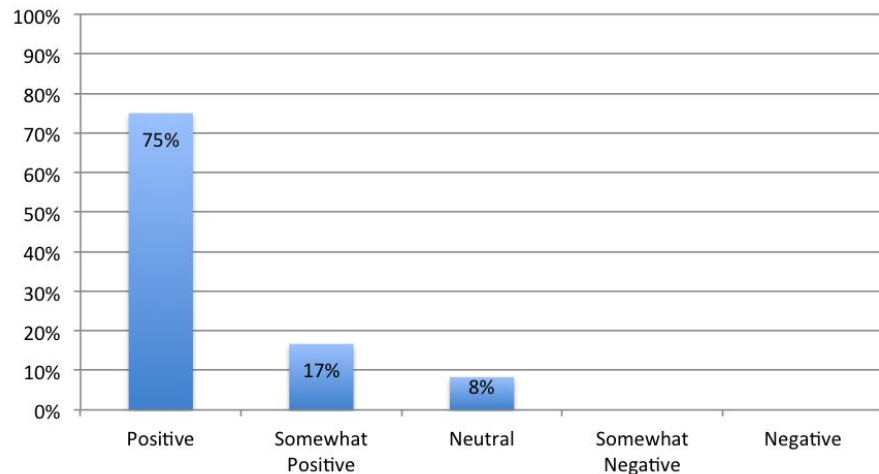


How Would You Rate the Honorarium?

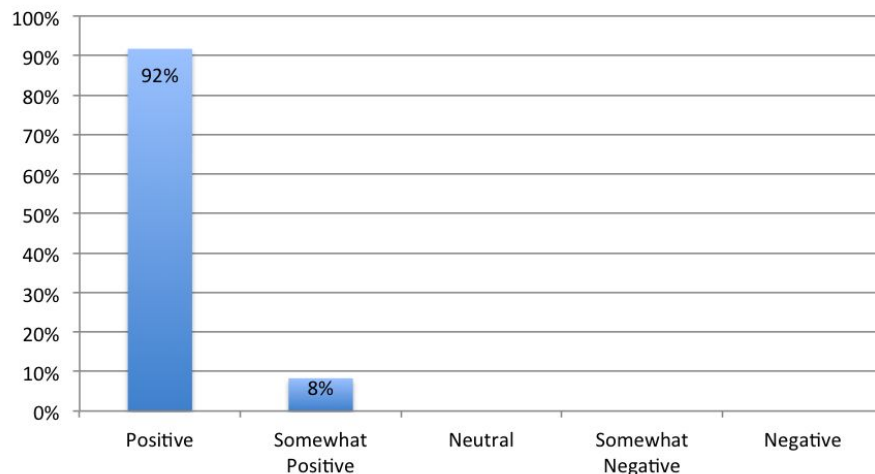


Program Evaluation

How Would You Rate Working with the TAF?

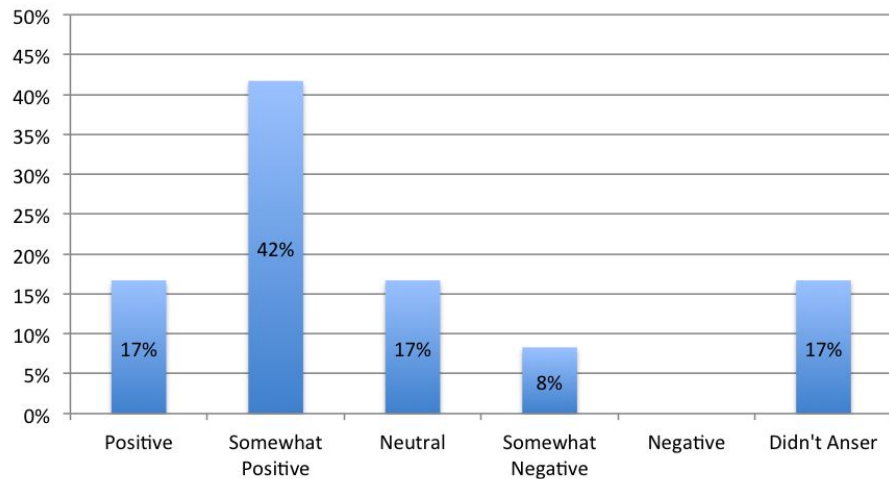


How Would You Rate Working with Park People?

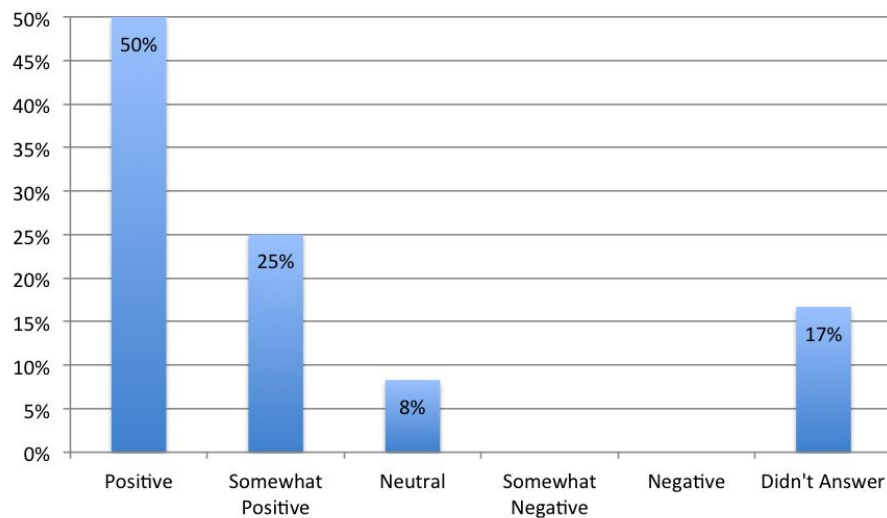


Program Evaluation

How Would You Rate the Community Volunteer Training Session?

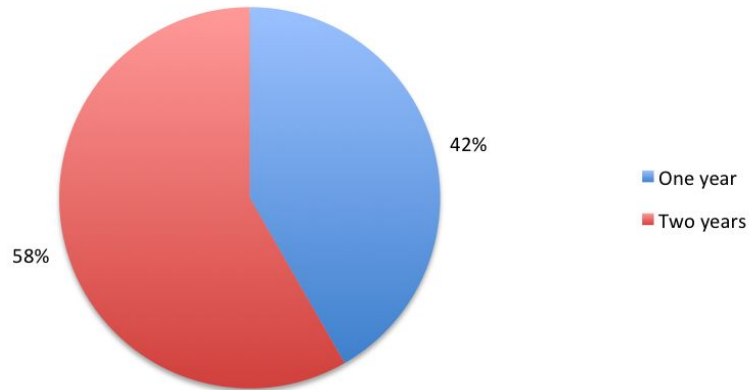


How Would You Rate the Site Visit?

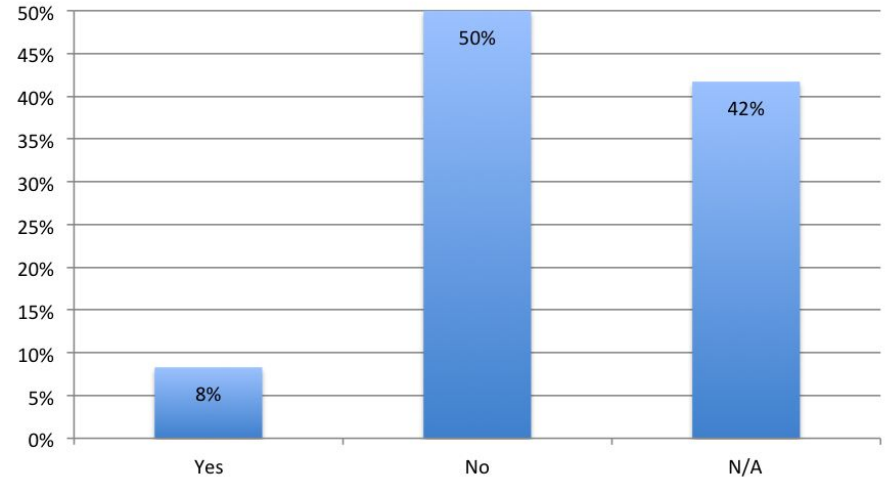


Year Two

How Many Years Have You Hosted an Arts in the Parks Program in the Same Park?

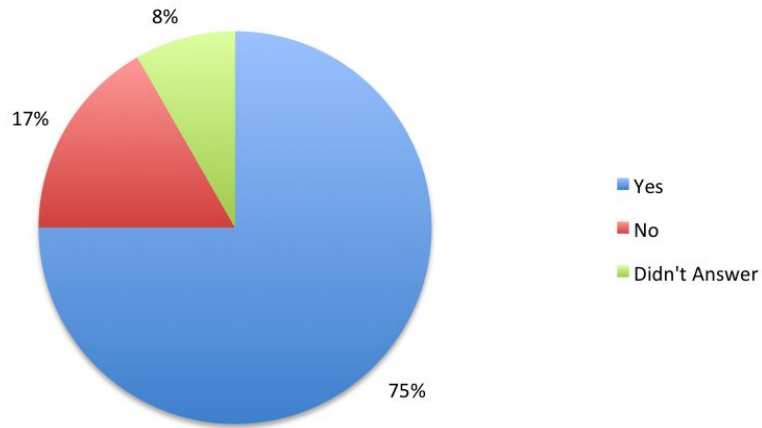


If This was Your Second Year, Did You Have the Same Arts in the Parks Program in Your Park?

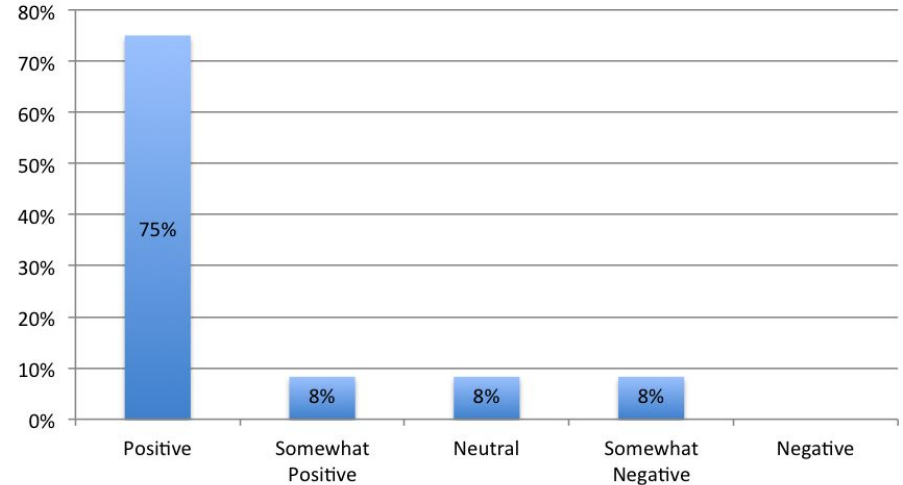


Community Experience

Was the Program a Good Fit for the Park and the Surrounding Community?

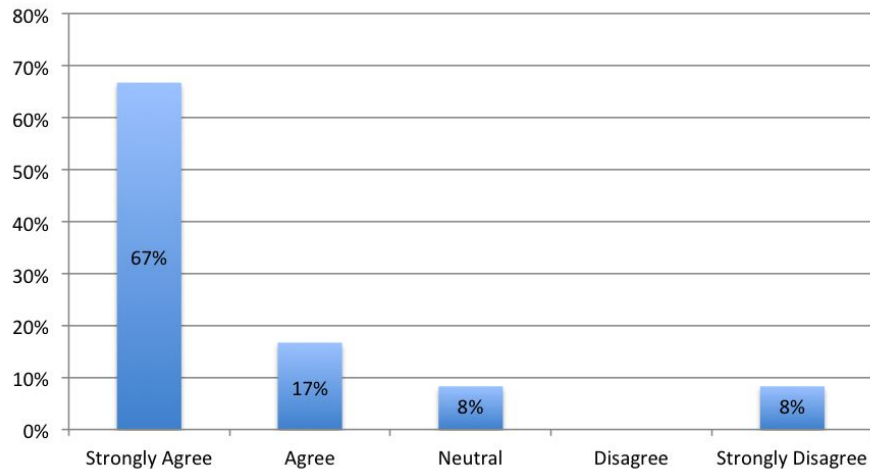


Please Rate Yours and Your Community's Overall Experience with Your Arts in the Parks Event

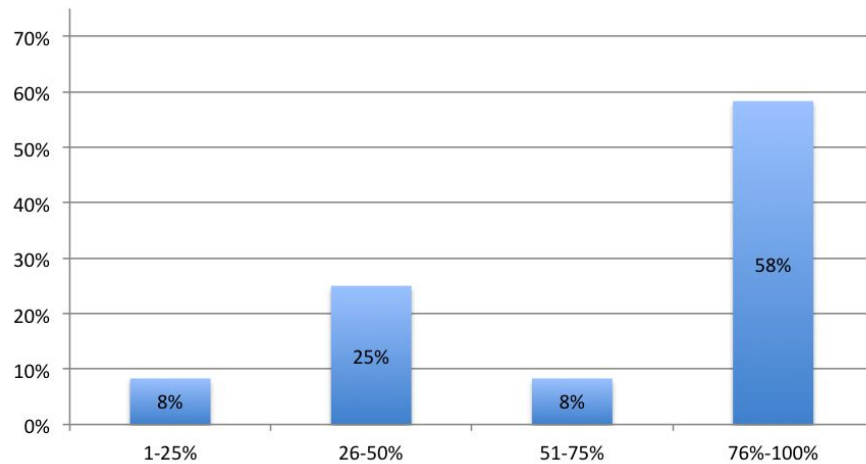


Community Experience

Was the Event a Good Fit for Your Community?

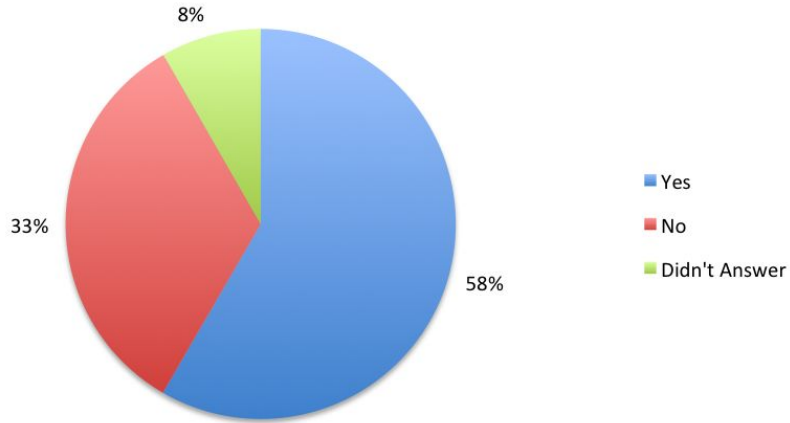


What Percentage of Attendees Do You Think Were From the Local Community?



Future Involvement

If You Had a Choice, Would You Have the Same Artist/s in Your Park Again?



Would Your Group be Interested in Hosting Arts in the Parks Next Year?

