





# 10

## REASONS TO SUPPORT SHOW CHOIRS

Based on "10 Reasons to Support the Arts in 2022" by Randy Cohen:  
<https://blog.americansforthearts.org/2022/03/21/10-reasons-to-support-the-arts-in-2022>  
Adapted by Lisa E. Gibbs

Practitioners and educators of show choir intrinsically know the benefits of participating in this dynamic art form.. Something just feels good about learning new music and choreography, about working with a group to create something special and magical while at the same time making the most of every personal contribution. The physical, mental, social, and personal benefits of being in a show choir are at times unquantifiable. What we know innately is often difficult to express to administrators, school boards, and other key players in funding and support for show choirs.





Enter Americans for the Arts, a national non-profit organization with the mission “to build recognition and support for the extraordinary and dynamic value of the arts and to lead, serve, and advance the diverse networks of organizations and individuals who cultivate the arts in America.” With a focus on advocacy, research, building connections, and leadership, Americans for the Arts is a comprehensive resource for the arts in America.

In March of 2022, Randy Cohen, vice president of Research at Americans for the Arts, published a blog titled “10 Reasons to Support the Arts in 2022.” Using formerly published research as the base for his list, Mr. Cohen provided 10 quantifiable reasons for supporting

the arts in general. The results illustrate tangible benefits of participating in show choir.

### **1. Arts unify communities.**

The study states, Seventy three percent agree “that the arts ‘helps me understand other cultures better’—a perspective observed across all demographic and economic categories.” Other research supports the concept that singing fosters social closeness. *Productions* magazine has published many articles with anecdotes about how show choir becomes like family to both students and educators. Additionally, show choirs often volunteer within their communities and perform at service clubs like Rotary and Kiwanis.

## 2. Arts improve individual well-being.

Many research studies support the idea that both singing and dancing improve posture, balance, breathing, and help sustain a healthy immune system. These activities have also been shown to boost mood and improve self-esteem. For those involved, show choir can be an experience that will “lift [people] up beyond everyday experiences,” as the study found 69% of the population believes the arts can do.

## 3. Arts strengthen the economy.

According to the study, “the nation’s arts and culture sector—nonprofit, commercial, education—is an \$876.7 billion industry that supports 4.6 million jobs. That is 4.2% of the nation’s economy—a larger share of GDP than powerhouse sectors such as agriculture, transportation, and utilities.” Consider all the pieces that go into a show: lighting, sound, risers, costumes, sheet music, rentals, and so on—plus the people who do the work to provide such items and services—and the economic impact of a show choir becomes very apparent.

## 4. Arts drive tourism and revenue to local businesses.

Show choirs go on tour, participate in competition, and attend summer camps. Similarly, many schools host competitions and camps, as well. These activities increase local businesses revenue as people attending the event spend money on meals, lodging, and other recreational activities while visiting the city.

## 5. Arts improve academic performance.

Cohen’s study found that “students engaged in arts learning have higher GPAs, standardized test scores, and college-going rates as well as lower drop-out rates.” These results are consistent among all socio-economic levels. Many choir directors notice that their students excel in other academic classes as well as in show choir; these students often choose to continue their education after high school.



**“Research on creativity shows that Nobel laureates in the sciences are seventeen times more likely to be actively engaged as an arts maker than other scientists.” This data from the study suggests that innovation in the sciences is enhanced by engagement in the arts. Both the sciences and the arts require creativity, and creativity leads to discovery.**





## 6. Arts spark creativity and innovation.

Cohen reports that “research on creativity shows that Nobel laureates in the sciences are seventeen times more likely to be actively engaged as an arts maker than other scientists.” This data from the study suggests that innovation in the sciences is enhanced by engagement in the arts. Both the sciences and the arts require creativity, and creativity leads to discovery. Consider the innovations that many educators developed or discovered during the pandemic that kept students engaged. Show choir is also a live performance art, which can mean adaptations mid-flow. No matter how many rehearsals were run, something unpredictable can happen that the performers need to quickly and creatively work through.

## 7. Arts have a social impact.

The study demonstrates that a “high concentration of the arts in a city leads to higher civic engagement, more social cohesion, higher child welfare, and lower poverty rates.” Bringing arts activities and arts based businesses to a

town positively impacts the community. Schools that offer show choir contribute to this benefit the arts bring to the area. Additionally, the content of the show can have a social impact by using music and choreography to explore current social issues.

## 8. Arts improve healthcare.

Cohen states that “nearly one-half of the nation’s healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and even staff.” This data point from the study gives strong support for the arts in healthcare. Quantifiable healing benefits for those in a healthcare setting include shorter hospital stays, better pain management, reduction of stress, and improved mental health. In addition to those benefits, a show choir performance at an assisted living facility, local hospital, or outpatient facility can provide entertainment and enjoyment to patients and staff. Arts in medicine programs in healthcare settings are increasing in availability and popularity as are degree programs in higher education institutions, a career field students may consider.

## 9. Arts for the health and well-being of our military.

Undoubtedly, military service members and veterans deal with mental, physical, and moral injuries as a result of choosing to defend our country. The study explains that veterans of our armed forces “rank the creative arts therapies in the top four (out of 40) interventions and treatments.” As part of community outreach, show choirs can perform at Veterans Hospitals and other events for our military such as parades and awareness days.

## 10. Arts strengthen mental health.

Participating in an arts activity has been shown to reduce depression and anxiety and increase satisfaction. Several articles in *Productions* magazine cite anecdotes from students who were once reluctant to admit they enjoyed singing and dancing because of the negative response from other students. Once they decided to do what they loved instead of listening to others, they found the show choir community to be very supportive.

Ample research continues to quantify the benefits of involvement in the arts. Practitioners and educators of show choir understand the impact of the arts because they witness their students' transformations as they engage in the work of show choir. While putting the benefits of the arts into practice, every choir director can use resources such as Americans for the Arts data to explain to administrators, school boards, and other key players how impactful this work truly is.

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Lisa Gibbs earned her Ed.D. in Higher Education

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