

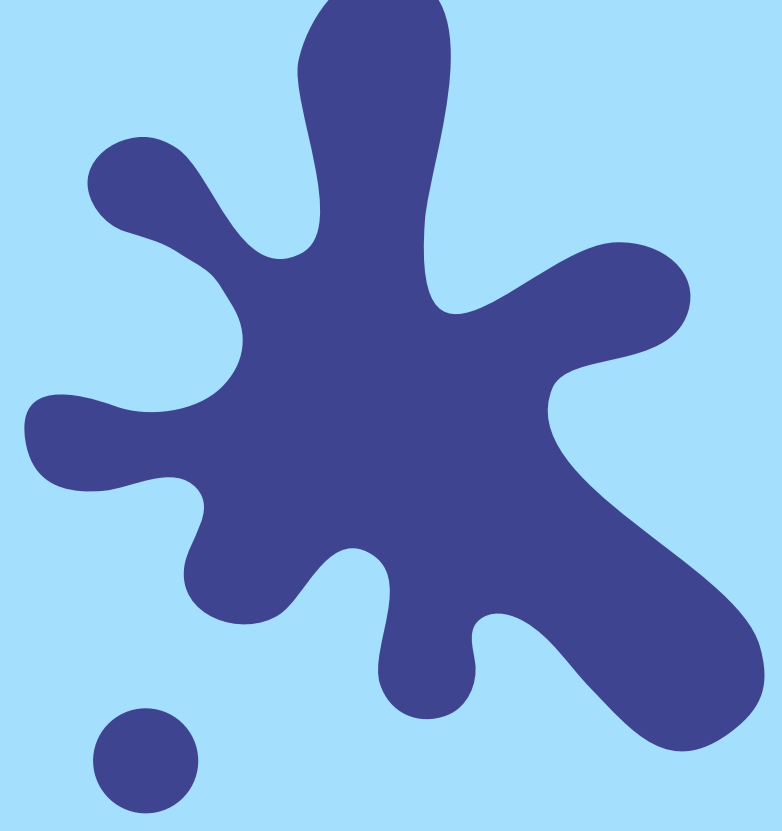
MAIL ART ACTIVITIES IN A DIFFERENT WAY



Introduction

The goal of art activities is to stimulate both the body and mind through, as the name implies, artistic methods. Arts activities are commonly used for seniors who have experienced trauma, or suffer with mental illnesses such as Alzheimer's. The use of art allows for an alternative method of communication for the elderly, especially when verbal speech is limited. Art is a more visual and sensory way for seniors to express themselves, and can help them reduce stress, combat depression, better their well-being, and connect with memories they may otherwise have forgotten.

Art activity can encompass many different mediums, such as painting, drawing, photography, scrap-booking, writing, etc.



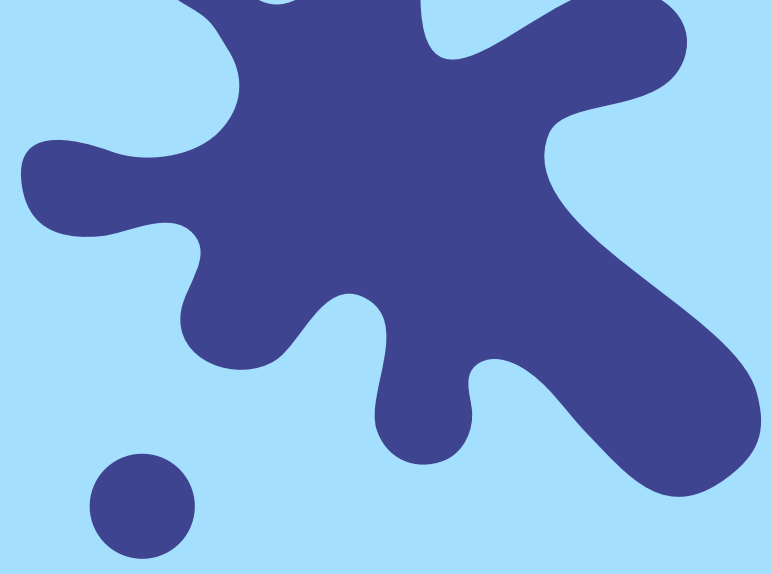
What are the Benefits of Art-based activities for Seniors?

Some positive effects of art activities include:

- **Reducing stress**, confusion, and lowering the risk of depression;
- Coping with **traumatic memories** through artistic expression;
- **Increasing cognitive function**, and triggering previously forgotten memories;
- A **decrease in frailty** and an increase in physical ability (creating art helps promote coordination, also decreases pain from diseases such as Arthritis)
- Promoting a **sense of accomplishment for seniors** by creating something themselves;
- Helping a senior **learn to effectively use their hands** when dealing with pain, through art projects such as knitting, painting, and drawing;
- **Promoting communication**: elderly persons who have difficulty expressing themselves through verbal or written language may find art useful for connecting with loved ones, helping to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness;
- Certain types of art may **remind the elderly** of their younger years;
- **Restoring many mental and physical functions**, while providing a general sense of well-being.



In order for your activity to be successful, follow these steps



1. Have fun and don't stress. You can use Five Steps to Feeling Calm:

a) Spread your hand and stretch your fingers out like a star. You can choose your left hand or your right hand. Pretend the pointer finger of your other hand is a pencil and imagine you are going to trace around the outline of your hand and fingers.

b) Start at the bottom of your thumb and slide your finger up your thumb, pause at the top, and then slide your finger down the other side. Now slide your pointer up your second finger, pause, and slide down the other side. Continue tracing your fingers up, pause, and down. Slide your finger slowly, watch your finger move and notice how it feels. Keep going until you have finished tracing your fifth finger (pinky).

c) Now you are ready to add some breathing. Breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. Remember to keep it slow and steady.

d) Place your pointer finger at the bottom of your thumb, and breathe in as you slide up. Breathe out as you slide down. Breathe in as you slide up your second finger, and breathe out as you slide down. Keep going until you have finished tracing your fingers and you have taken five slow breaths.

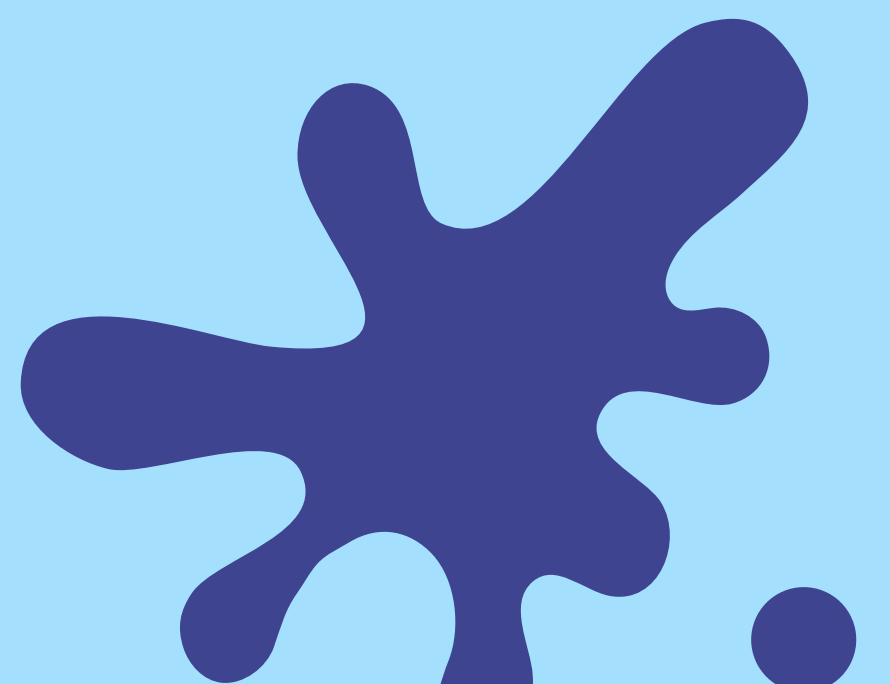
e) How does your body feel now? Do you feel calm or would you like to take another five?

2. Do your best work;

3. It's okay not to like your art but keep working. You never know what can happen through the process.

4. USE YOUR IMAGINATION. Be creative and dream.

5. Be positive.



Before you start, please consider the following:

- Do not use materials that are toxic if ingested;
- Start the activity off with an easy task, such as drawing a picture with markers, so the participants feel comfortable in their abilities;
- Talk to them throughout the process, encouraging them to continue, praise their work;
- Use bright coloured materials;
- Whatever the technique you choose for the crafts, ask the participants to think of something from their youth – that could be their topic;
- Once they have completed their art pieces, make copies and place them somewhere they can see it, ensuring the benefit of self-satisfaction and sense of accomplishment.

Group

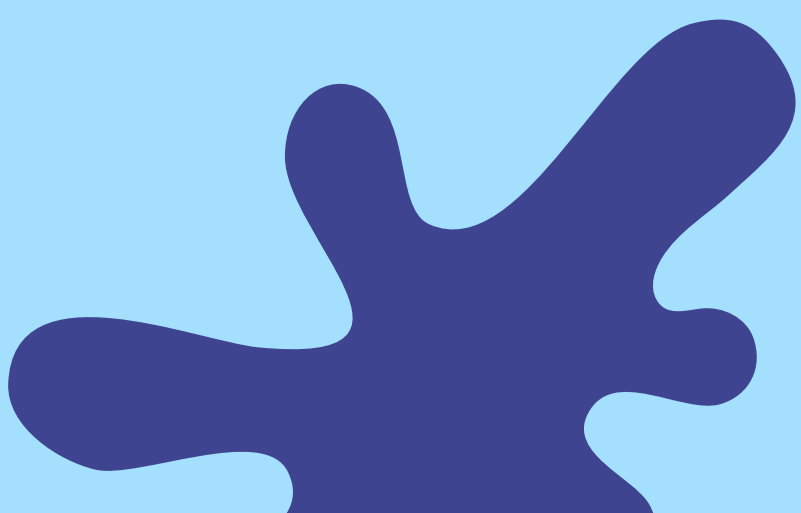
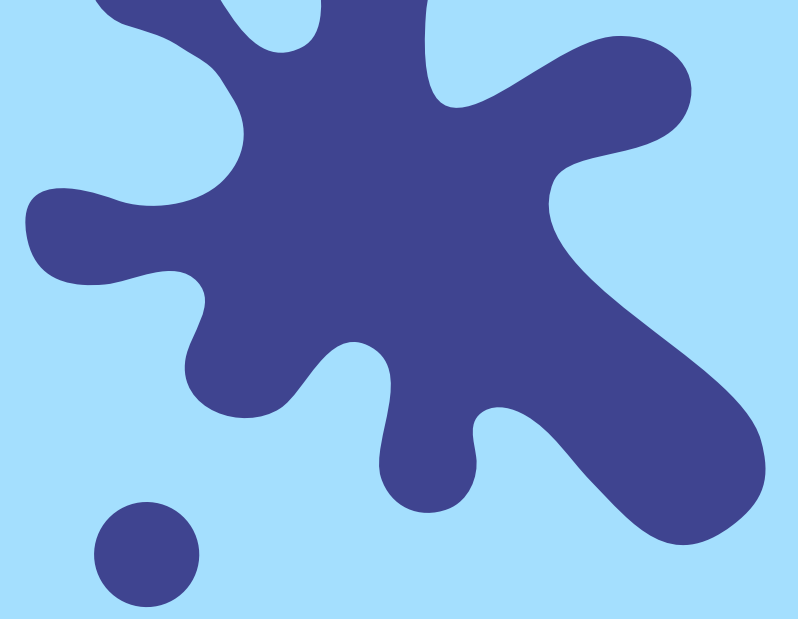
4-6 seniors per group.

Setting

Choose any space that is comfortable for both seniors and trainers. Activities can also take place outside.

Materials

Water color paint, show card paint, brushes, crayons, pencils, clay, lettering pens, weaving materials, chalk, paper of different sizes, beaver board, linoleum, dyes, wool for weaving or stitchery, sheet cork, journals or any material you like to use.



ACTIVITY USING CARDS



Activity

You can use 38 cards from our set. Have each participant pick a card by pulling it out of the pile without seeing what task it contains. The picked card will be their topic to begin the art activity. After the seniors finish the task they picked, they send their piece to another participant in the group who will extend their work. These works of art can go around in a circle and each senior has a part of art in each craft. When the trainer sees a senior not knowing what to do, he offers to take another card with another task.



Cards

You can print the cards using Annex 1.

Goal of the activity

This activity seeks to promote the sense of community, creativity, participation, involvement, to know others, see yourself from a humorous side and discover what connection you have with others.

HISTORY

This activity is an opportunity for participants to create something to leave behind that will remind others of them. To capture memories from their childhood, they can then send their work to someone they have not seen for a long time, to record family history. This activity can enable the participants to feel a sense of importance for others.



Materials


For this activity you will need: envelopes, something tack them on the wall (eg. Blue-tack), pens or pencils, crayons or coloured pencils, small pieces of paper for writing messages, and anything you would then like to put into the envelope as a surprise for that person).

Steps of this activity

1. Envelopes – draw your name (not write, but draw).
2. Tell the story of your name.
3. Show a movement that describes that person/illustrate the name.



4. Find another similar drawing (on the envelope) and talk to that person - discover three things that connect you. Present what you have found.
5. Hang the envelope on the wall.
6. Write your name on blue pieces of paper and put it in a hat/jar/bag). Draw the name of the person whom you will take care of for a certain period of time (if you draw your own name, draw again).
7. The withdrawn person needs to be observed and taken care of for a certain period of time (by writing compliments and supportive words on sticky notes, to show that you care for that person (cute little things are also welcome).
8. On the last day, we take the envelopes, examine them and discuss what we received and how we feel. If you want, you can confess who you have been taking care of or try to guess who has been taking care of you.



COMPLIMENTS CARDS

Materials

A postcard (where it would be possible to write - you can print Annex 2 for this activity if you want), a pen or coloured pencils, a stamp (if possible to buy it), a smartphone (to take a picture of the postcard and send it digitally).

Steps of this activity

1. All participants receive a postcard and a pen.
2. Draw a symbol in the corner of the postcard, by which it can be recognized when the postcard returns to you again.
3. Write a compliment/supportive message and send it clockwise to the other person. This person writes the compliment and sends it again until your card returns to you. (If there are few participants, we send the postcard again);
4. After one/two rounds, the postcard returns to you.
5. Take a picture of the postcard and send it to whoever might need it digitally

Goal of this activity

You can read these words of support/compliments when you have difficult times or you can use the postcard as a book tab. You can also mail this postcard to someone who may be in dire need of those supporting words. If you decide to send it by mail, you need to write the address. There is also a space left for a post stamp.

LETTER TO YOURSELF



Materials

Annex 3 (or you may want to make your own templates), pens, envelopes, glue, scissors,

Writing down the story (give printed sheets (Annex 4) + pen).

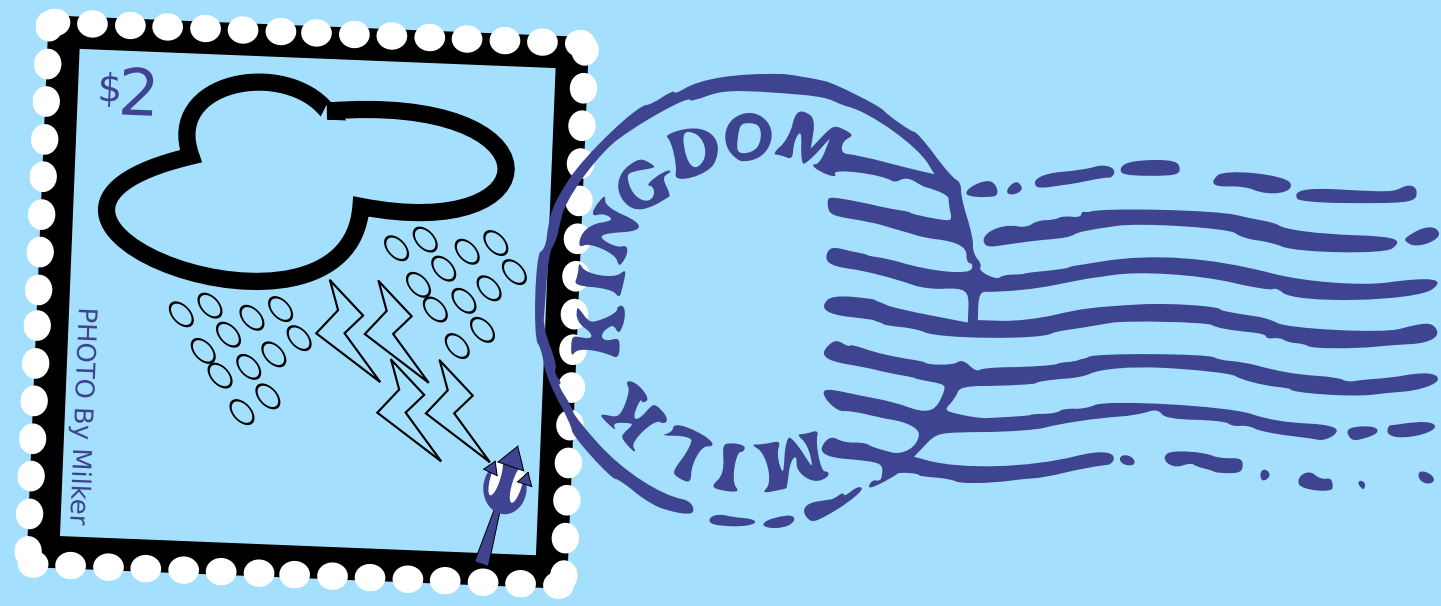
Steps of this activity

1. Write down a childhood memory.

OR

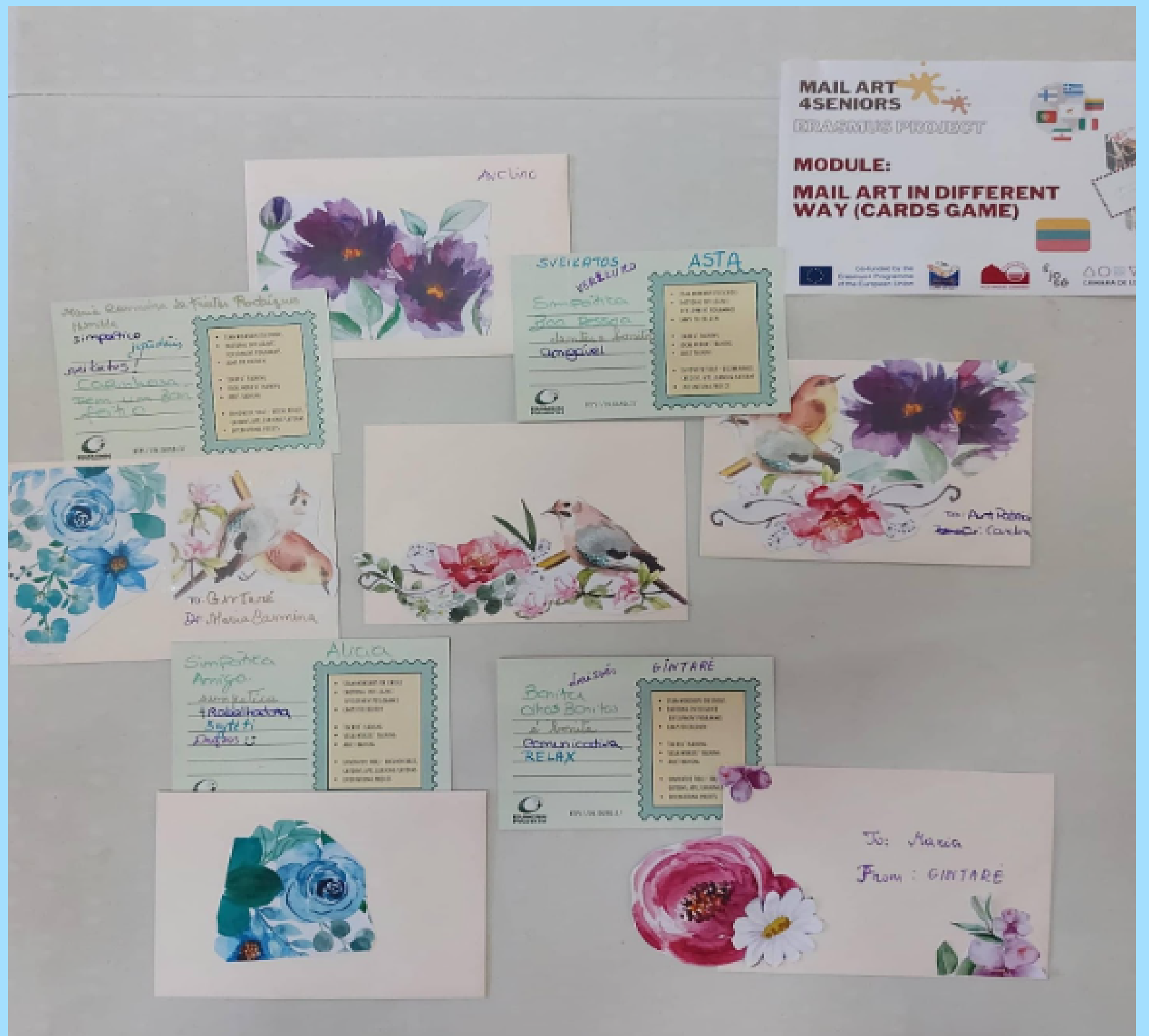
1. Write a letter to yourself.
2. The letter/story can be enhanced with a drawing/clipping, etc. (you can use Annex 4 for decoration templates)
3. Ask the participants if you can take a photo of their story - if it's too personal - don't take a photo.

ENVELOPE DESIGN



Materials

To decorate the envelope, you will need to use glue, scissors, envelope, printed illustrations, instead of them you can use newspapers, magazines, cut out illustrations and words.



Steps of this activity

1. Write down the address (yours or your relative's, to whom you would like to leave/pass the story).
2. The envelopes need to be photographed (in the way that addresses won't be visible). These photos might be used for dissemination and exhibition.
3. Collect the envelopes. You will send them after some time for their owners in order to make the surprise.

PORTRAIT MAKING

Materials

1. A shape of a random object to make a face (Annex 5);
2. Scissors
3. Glue
4. Felt-tip pens
5. Stickers (can be shop bought or printed out from here <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/372109987944318338/>);



Steps of this activity

1. All the participants pick a random shape for their face and write their name on it
2. The faces are then sent round the table and each participant glues one part of a face and passes the face round
3. The faces are passed around until a full face is completed
4. Each participant then takes a picture of their faces and uploads it to social media using #MailArt4Seniors

Goal of the activity

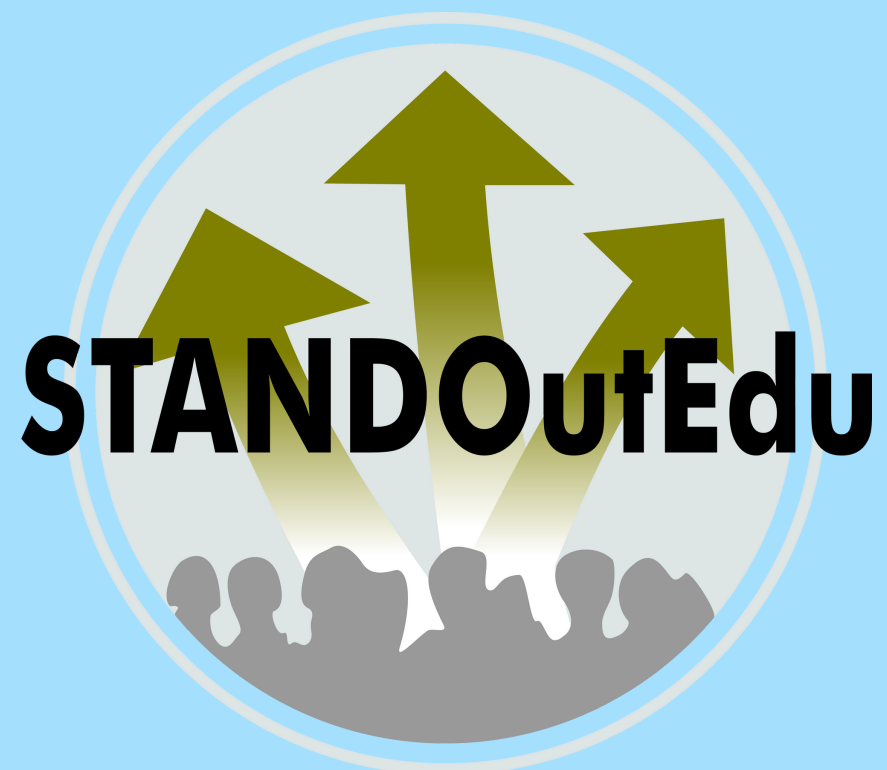
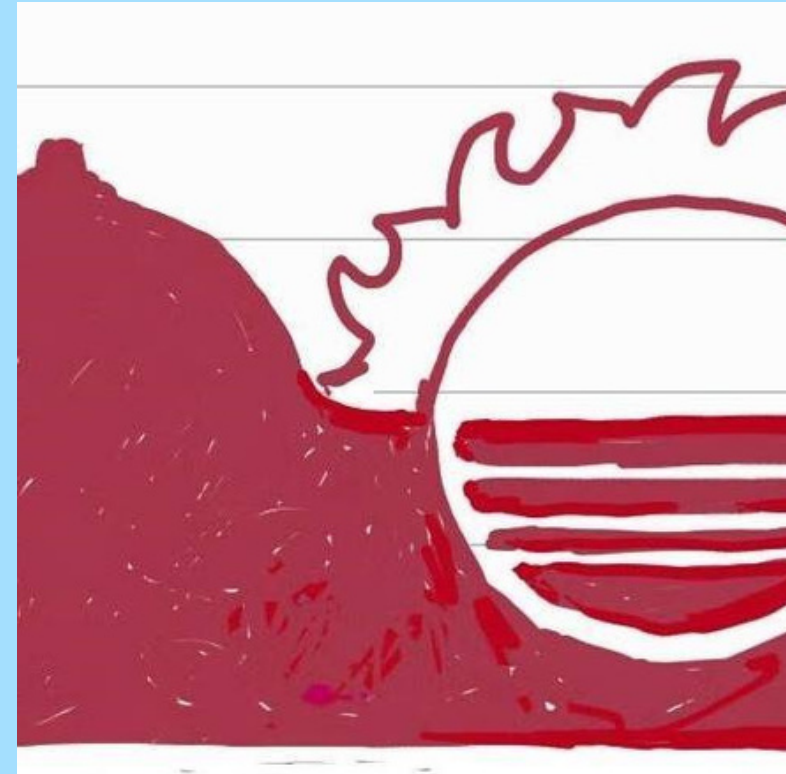
All the participants have their unique portrait that's been done collectively. Positive emotions guaranteed.



**WE HOPE YOU
ENJOY THESE
MAIL ART
ACTIVITIES!!!**



PROJECT PARTNERS





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