

## Prototype 1 - Cradle to Community Scholar

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SARAH

I am a publicly engaged scholar, I think. After volunteering in a nursing home as a child, I worked there after graduating college with an art degree. Working there raised many questions for me, which lead me to study aging in graduate school. I found support in a professor who also served our community as a child psychologist. Her mentorship gave me the encouragement I needed to bridge my interdisciplinary interests in art and aging.

I am Sarah and I am a publicly engaged scholar, I think. Growing up, I went with my mom every Monday to the nursing home to serve dinner and do an arts and craft project with the residents. In college, I majored in art and continued volunteering when the opportunity presented itself. After college, I worked in the nursing home. Within the year, I longed to be back in the classroom. I loved my art major, but had new questions about death, dying, and aging. I wanted to learn how artistic expression could serve as a communication tool for people who were dying. After conducting a national search, I found a graduate program that supported my interests in both psychology and art. Shortly after starting my program, though, I realized my department was not as open to interdisciplinary studies and community engagement as I hoped. Fortunately, I had one professor who was a child psychologist and used art therapy with many of her patients. She took me under her wing and got permission for me to observe some of her clients. That same semester, I learned about Imagining America. After poking around on IA's website, I realized I was not alone in having a thirst for interdisciplinary study and wanting to merge theory with practice. I defend my dissertation shortly, and hope to be an adjunct faculty member and work with a non-profit hospice organization when I graduate. I would like my future business cards to read, Dr. Sarah Elder, Public Scholar and Practitioner of Art and Humanities.