

# **Creative Arts**

## **Program Action Plan – 2016-2017**

### **Nancy Gunning, Chairman**

**Purpose:** The National Creative Arts Program is one form of rehabilitative treatment to help Veterans recover from and/or cope with physical and/or emotional disabilities. Veterans across the country compete in local creative arts competitions. A National selection committee chooses winners in each category. Select winners are invited to attend and participate in the National Veteran Creative Arts Festival each year.

#### **History of the National Veteran Creative Arts Festival**

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival originated as two separate competitions. Muriel Barbour, then chief of recreation therapy at the McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, VA, created the visual arts competition, VET ARTS, in 1981, as an observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

Shirley Jefferies, a recreation therapist at the VA Medical Center in Waco, TX, initiated the performing arts competition, The National Music Competition for Veterans, in 1981. The premier live winners' stage show was held in 1981 at the VA Medical Center in Tuskegee, AL. The second show was staged in 1982 at the VA Medical Center in Coatesville, PA. In 1984, the live stage show was presented in Washington, DC, and the music competition was renamed "The Music Festival." The following year, the stage show took place in historic Constitution Hall. The Music Festival and VET ARTS merged and drama and dance divisions were added, to create the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in 1989. Designed to spotlight the four creative arts therapies of art, music, dance and drama. This landmark Festival was performed to an audience of 4,000 in Fox Theater in St. Louis, MO. In 2005, a fifth creative arts division, creative writing, was added to the Festival roster.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival continues to evolve each year as it showcases the artistic achievements of Veterans from across the country in each of the five artistic divisions. Each Festival features an art exhibit showing the first place artwork from 54 categories. A live stage show, complete with orchestral accompaniment generously provided by the Music Performance Fund, is performed by Veterans who have achieved medal-winning status in a variety of categories from the performing arts divisions of music, drama and dance, as well as creative writing. Workshops are offered during the Festival week for participants and staff, educating them in a variety of artistic modalities by utilizing the talents of local community artists. There is no competition at the Festival itself, as it is a showcase for previously judged medal winners.

In 2014, 3,208 Veterans from 129 VA Medical facilities entered the art, music, drama, dance and creative writing competitions. Of those approximately 150 medal-winning Veterans earned an invitation to participate in the 2014 Festival in Milwaukee, WI. In 2015 the event was held in Durham, NC. In 2016 approximately 120 Veterans will exhibit their artwork or perform musical, dance, dramatic or original writing selections in a gala variety show. All Veterans invited to participate are selected winners of year-long, national fine arts talent competitions in which thousands of Veterans enter, from VA medical facilities across the nation.

VA medical facilities incorporate creative arts into their recreation therapy programs to further the rehabilitation milieu for both inpatients and outpatients. This annual competition recognizes

the progress and recovery made through that therapy, and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our Nation's Veterans after disease, disability or life crisis.

### **Upcoming Creative Arts Festival**

The Creative Arts Festival will be held in Jackson, Mississippi on October 10-17, 2016. The events are open to the public, but the stage show on the 16<sup>th</sup> require tickets. For additional information contact Host Site Coordinator Susan Varie at 601-368-4477.

### **Indiana's VA Medical Centers Participate**

The Department of Indiana has two VA Facilities who are participating in the Creative Arts Program – the Northeast Indiana Veterans Administration Medical Center in Marion and the Indiana Veterans Home in Lafayette. Both of these facilities could use funds to assist them with this program. It would be great if we could raise \$500.00 to \$600.00 for each one. In addition, there are items that each facility could use on a daily or weekly basis. See attached list.

### **Art Supply List for Indiana's Medical Centers**

- Adult coloring books
- Artist paint brushes – various sizes
- Mod Podge - (gloss/luster) 16 oz.
- Acrylic Paints - 8 ounce size (Apple Barrel, Basics, Anita's, etc.)
- Canvases - various sizes
- Birdhouse kits
- Wooden or ceramic items to paint
- Poster boards – white or colors – various sizes
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Elmer's glue
- Glitter – all colors
- Watercolor paints
- Watercolor paper
- Sketch pads
- Pencils and charcoal pencils
- Sharpies and color markers
- Seasonal artificial flowers
- Velvet pictures to paint
- Model cars and trucks to build
- Latch hook kits

### **Unit Donations**

Units wishing to donate, should pick something from the list and then fill out the provided donation form. Keep a copy for the Unit, give a copy when you deliver the item(s) and send a copy to Department Headquarters to receive credit for the donation. All monies received over that needed for these two (2) facilities will be sent to the National ALA for use in this program.

Recognition for larger donations received at National Headquarters by July 31, 2017 will be made at the 2017 National Convention during VA&R report. Donation levels are:

Bronze	\$1,000 to \$2,499
Silver	\$2,500 to \$4,999
Gold	\$5,000 to \$14,999

### **Ideas for Ways to Raise Money for Creative Arts**

- Order donation cans from National Headquarters.
- Plan to increase your Unit donations this year by \$5.00 to cover donations for Indiana Creative Arts.
- Place donation cans in your Post.
- Team up with your Juniors.
- Ask your Legion and SAL to help with fundraising.
- Have a bake sale or other fund raiser.
- Consult the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Facebook Page.
- Get the American Legion Auxiliary Veterans Creative Activities Action Guide at
  - [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Combine with your Poppy program by taking one day to collect funds for Creative Arts. Creative Arts is a great way to help Veterans.
- At each Unit meeting, ask members to donate the loose change in their purse for Creative Arts.
- Use your imagination to come up with additional creative ideas. Be sure to write about those ideas in your mid-year and annual reports.

### **Department Award**

- **The Charlene Walden Monetary Award** to the Unit over 200 members with the best essay of the Creative Arts Program.

### **Department Chairman Personal Award**

- A personal award to the District who gives the most dollar value to the Creative Art Program. This includes amounts given at Fall Conference, items donated by Units (Money Amounts) and Money sent through Department.

**Nancy Gunning, Department Chairman**  
**19 Crosby Rd. Apt. B**  
**Mooreville, IN 46158**  
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**Creative Arts  
Personal or Unit Donation List**

1. This form is to be used for the Art Supply items and monetary donations.
2. **All** money **must** be sent to Department Headquarters.
3. Checks should be made out to American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Indiana with a memo for IVH Creative Arts or Marion Creative Arts.
4. Put a copy of this form when you deliver the donated items.
5. Keep a copy for your Unit so you list your donation on the Annual Report.
6. Send a copy of this form to Department Headquarters to record your donation.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of item Donated**

**Value of Items**


Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unit name & number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Facility donated to: \_\_\_\_\_ Indiana Veterans Home \_\_\_\_\_ Marion VA

Person accepting item(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Use an additional sheet of this page if necessary.

Use a separate sheet for each time you or your Unit makes a donation.