

The Blog: California Arts Council Advancing California through the Arts and Creativity



Honoring our veterans through arts programming

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By California Arts Council

With Veterans Day just around the corner — a day dedicated to acknowledging as a nation the hard work, commitment, and sacrifices of our service men and women — we felt it appropriate that our latest blog be dedicated to our country’s veterans as well.

At the California Arts Council, we honor the veteran experience year-round, through our Veterans Initiative in the Arts (VIA) program. VIA is centered upon developing veterans’ creative expression by providing opportunities to be a part of arts programming tailored to their unique experiences. Veterans gain personal insight through the making of art, and help to cultivate a greater public understanding of those experiences through sharing their work.

We asked three of our VIA grantees to give us a glimpse into their projects and, in their own words, tell us what the experience has meant for them:

The PGK Dance Project

The PGK Dance Project aims to change society's preconceived notions of who a veteran is. The contemporary dance company collaborated with veterans and working artists accomplished in painting, music, and spoken word to perform before live audiences. Military and family received free admission to the public performances.



“Vets are not just the images and ideas we perceive but also people who, beyond their service, are artistic assets,” says artistic director Peter G. Kalivas. “These veterans protected our quality of life, and through the Veterans in the Arts program, they now help create the landscape and elevate the quality of arts and culture.”

Resounding Joy

Resounding Joy believes firmly in the power of music as medicine for those in all walks of life, veterans included. The organization's Semper Sound program assists veterans with physical and psychological rehabilitation by enlisting music as a strategy for overcoming their obstacles.



“Music therapy isn't only musicianship or music instruction,” says founder Barbara Reuer. “Therapists are trained on evidence-based techniques that help participants achieve their goals.”

VetArt

“VetArt believes our Veterans have an important role to play in our communities,” says program developer and instructor Mark Jesinoski. “We use art-making to honor their service, to connect them with each other and to share their perspective and stories to the broader community.”

CAC’s support helps VetArt employ three veterans as sculpting artists, teaching introductory bronze casting courses to other active duty or retired military.

“When Veterans leave the military, they lose the sense of camaraderie that was part of their daily lives,” Jesinoski adds. “This project is designed to build peer support ... it’s about connecting veterans with each other and their communities through art.”