



“Empowering All through Arts and Culture”

Objective: To provide newly returned combat military and veterans with educational performing and visual arts programs. To support collaborating charities in their efforts to offer therapeutic experiences to wounded warriors by offering coordinating arts programming adapted to participants’ unique needs.

The Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation’s All Kinds of Art outreach program (AKA) offers impactful arts experiences featuring performances, classes, and hands-on workshops in the visual and performing arts---customized to meet the needs of diverse audiences. AKA’s 21 years of experience funding and facilitating educational arts programs qualifies it as an excellent resource for teaching artists who are nationally recognized for their efforts in crafting programs tailor-made for unique populations.

A local favorite venue for outdoor concerts and its annual Festival of the Arts, Mattie Kelly Art Foundation (MKAF), a 501c3 non-profit organization, is also dedicated to serving the powerful benefits of the arts to those who lack access to public events, or whose unique needs warrant a more intimate and accessible setting. These include those with physical or mental disabilities, as well as the economically disadvantaged. In this case, AKA delivers the arts directly to schools and other institutions in Okaloosa and Walton counties. In 2015, MKAF broke its record for community outreach when AKA’s programming served one person remotely for each attendee of its popular spring and summer concert series, reaching a total of over 10,000.

MKAF not only enhances the quality of life for local residents, but positively impacts those welcomed as seasonal visitors and tourists. Destin and its environs are therefore a cultural destination, as well as a tourist destination. Recent developments have also shown it to be an ideal *therapeutic* destination. National charitable organizations are currently organizing retreats offering treatment and recreational opportunities for wounded warriors, such as the Elk Institute for Health and Human Performance---which is providing ground-

breaking therapy for individuals suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Recently, MKAF's All Kinds of Art outreach program served as art education sponsor for an Elk Institute Clinic/Retreat; along with clinical sponsors including Special Operations Wounded Warriors, the Green Beret Foundation, and Jeep Sullivan. MKAF offered meditative drawing coursework (Zen Drawing) to participants who were undergoing treatment, allowing them to capitalize on the area's unique local offerings for a relaxing setting ideal for a holistic healing approach.

Benefits of Arts Programming for Wounded Warriors

For those undergoing physical rehabilitation, arts activities enhance motor skills---such as dexterity and eye-hand coordination; and sustain cognitive functioning---increasing attention span, improving memory and reasoning. Art-making activities can be customized to reconcile physical changes and injuries, capitalizing on participants' strengths while reinforcing key physical skills. Performing and visual arts further enhance quality of life by providing a meaningful creative vocation to improve self-esteem and increase personal self-worth. Additionally, for those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress, the arts can provide opportunities to express, process, or reframe painful experiences; or assists them in staying in the present moment. Hyper-arousal, intrusive memories, and avoidance reactions are often noticeably reduced through art-based relaxation techniques. Overall, MKAF offers the opportunity for individuals to experience the empowering process of creating something new and gaining artistic skills.

Program Selection

All programs offer customized adaptations to meet the physical and cognitive needs of individual participants.

Music

Drumming Workshop: Interactive percussion workshop with nationally acclaimed musician, composer, author, and music educator, Zig Wajler, of Hands On With Zig, featured on ABC, NBC, PBS, Disney and VHI Save the Music, with the Red Hot Chili Peppers. This workshop is an engaging interactive drumming experience where participants become members of an ensemble or drum circle. Zig teaches basic rhythms through his 'Say what you play' teaching method which produces immediate results. The participants will learn proper technique, vocabulary, notation, by playing authentic percussion instruments. Drumming improves hemispheric coordination, reduces tension,

promotes the production of endorphins and natural opiates; and helps alleviate feelings of isolation and alienation.

Songwriting: Professional composer, educator, and songwriter Zig Wajler guides participants to craft songs about their military experience through dialogue (real world experiences), listening, music, and collaboration. Participants are guided through the process of writing, recording, and performing their stories. This provides them with a unique way to process and re-frame experiences, forge new bonds, and re-connect with family, friends, and communities. All participants receive lyric books and CDs of their songs, and can be shared to promote awareness, as well as bridge the gap between military and civilian communities.

Visual Arts

Zen Drawing: Drawing classes in the style of the Zentangle drawing method, a meditative art form consisting of drawing structured patterns. A Zen Drawing is an intricate and patterned artform that is built one line at a time. This open-ended drawing activity increases focus and creativity, provides artistic satisfaction along with an increased sense of personal well-being. Simple “tangles,” or patterns are combined in an unplanned way that grows and changes in an improvisational style. While the mind is engaged in drawing, the body relaxes, alleviating stress and anxiety. Often, new insights are uncovered along with a sense of confidence in creative abilities.

Pottery: An exploration of working with clay, including basic hand-building or wheel-throwing techniques. Participants are guided through a variety of methods to build, decorate, and glaze a ceramic project. Workshops include production of individual vessels or sculpture, or a customized collaborative project. Instructor Steve Ruder is a Masters Level Therapist and a specialist in adaptive arts. Working with clay promotes joint movement and dexterity, and strengthens hands, wrists, and arms. Other benefits include stress reduction, creativity, and improved focus.

Collaborative Mural Experience: Renowned inventor and professional artist/facilitator Dwayne Szot, of Zot Artz, brings the joy of mural painting, printmaking, and drawing to his unique and naturally inclusive art-making events utilizing his invented adaptive art tools. Printmaking tools have been specially invented to attach to wheelchairs or adapted for easy use by people

with physical disabilities. Participants take part in creating a super-sized mural, which is then modified into large works on canvas and other artistic products. Artists of all abilities are empowered to create in this collaborative experience and reap the visual arts' therapeutic benefits whether or not they have the manual dexterity to paint or draw.

Other Performing Arts

Magic Therapy/Magic for Rehabilitation: Kevin Spencer, of Hocus Focus Education, is a true magician. In addition to enacting sensory-friendly magic performances and intimate classroom workshops for people with disabilities; he is a leading authority on the therapeutic use of magic in rehabilitation, as featured in the award-winning documentary film, 'Powerful Medicine – Simply Magic.' After suffering a brain injury, Spencer noticed striking similarities between his occupational therapy sessions and development and performance of various magic tricks as part of his performance repertoire. He developed magic therapy as a high-interest activity which provides the same benefits. Spencer is also an approved provider of Continuing Education by the American Occupational Therapy Association.

Improv Comedy: Improv is a spontaneous form of theatre, where what happens on stage is almost completely improvised. Originally used as a warm-up routine for actors, improv has taken off as a form of performed comedy across the world; and has gained attention for its ability to provide a safe, powerful, and fun way to overcome and re-frame personal struggles, promote critical thinking skills, and seamlessly assist with transitions. Benefits include breath control, body language, interpersonal skills, and other methods for relaxation. Improv with veterans, in particular, is reported to help deal with hypothetical situations and perform better on job interviews.

“Art is a personal act of courage – something one human does that creates change in another.” - Seth Godin

Other customized programming, and/or adapted versions of above samples available upon request.

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