

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: THEATRECARES: VET VOICES: RECRUITMENT

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TheatreWorks Florida Receives \$10,000 Grant from the State of FL Division of Cultural Affairs to continue “Vet Voices” in 2019-20

DAVENPORT, FL – TheatreWorks Florida is thrilled and proud to announce the State of Florida Division of Cultural Affairs has approved an NEA Partnership Grant in the amount of \$10,000 to continue the company’s highly acclaimed community outreach branch, TheatreCares, and the inspiring theatre arts program, Vet Voices. Vet Voices is a FREE program for military war veterans, their families and caregivers that enlists creative arts therapy through active participation in workshops and events. This grant is made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). This marks the fifth NEA grant awarded to TheatreWorks Florida and TheatreCares.

Vet Voices launched in 2018 for Central FL military veterans and had a highly successful season, ending with an all veteran written and acted play called “*Breakfast in Baghdad*”, directed by Mark S. Graham. The play encompassed stories about the vets’ actual experiences in the military and was presented to the public on May 18 & 19, 2019. The 2019-20 sessions will now focus on music and theatre, whether it be singing, song writing, playing an instrument or just being behind the scenes to produce the Final Presentation in June 2020.

The Vet Voices program is free of charge to military veterans of war (Active, Retired, Reserve and National Guard), their families and their caregivers in the Central FL region. A final presentation of creative work will be presented to the Central Florida public in June 2020 as a continued effort to create an awareness of our war-time veterans and the health issues they deal with on a daily basis as well as how they adapt to normalizing their lives after war.

Recruitment to the Vet Voices 2019-20 program is already in progress from now until Oct 10, 2019. The program does have a participant cutoff so sign up early. For more information and to register for the program, please visit TheatreWorks Florida’s website at TheatreWorksFL.org or contact Abel Gonzales, TWF Company Manager, at: vetvoices@theatreworksfl.org | 407.340.0473.

Vet Voices is not a project but an ongoing “arts and health” program for Central FL military war veterans that nurtures life-long healing and learning through the art of live theatre. The program will provide veterans an opportunity for positive self-awareness and self-discovery in a creative “safe space” environment. Participation in a wide scope of workshops and events will allow veterans affected by war to explore music and the theatre arts and ultimately find healing through creativity. The end result will combine theatre professionals with veterans on stage in a fully produced, original play, developed by the veterans themselves, that incorporates creative writing, music, songs and visual art generated from the workshops.

Vet Voices creative partners include high profile national agencies such as: National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military, Americans for The Arts and NEA Creative Forces. The program also has outreach partnerships with James A. Hailey Veteran’s Hospital (Tampa, FL) and the Lake Nona VA Hospital (Orlando, FL).

Scott A. Cook, TheatreWorks Florida’s Artistic Producer, says, “For TheatreWorks Florida, it began in 2017 with the simple need to find a new underserved focus group for our highly successful community outreach program,

TheatreCares. One day, I Googled “arts + military” and suddenly fell down an unexpected rabbit hole of research. I discovered this profound “arts and health for the military” movement is soaring across our country like wildfire and is being supported at the national level. In fact, the National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military was holding their 4th National Summit in Tampa, FL within a week of my research. I contacted them and attended an utterly amazing weekend of passionate, motivated and inspiring therapeutic clinicians, creative types and military vets and families. It was beyond clear... TheatreCares had found their next community outreach. In 2018, the program launched after receiving a \$10,000 grant from the National Endowment for The Arts. What followed next was an unprecedented chain of events unlike anything I had ever seen in theatre. We took 10 vets who knew absolutely nothing about creative writing and developed a 2-hour play comprised strictly of the material that came from their hearts. Even more powerful were the personal revelations, the group comradery and utter self confidence they found throughout the 10-month long process. One of our veterans, Marielys Camacho-Reyes, was so inspired by Vet Voices that she wrote an entire book of her thoughts on the military that has now been published. We created a “safe space” of healing but the vets did all the work. The result was an underlying healing they didn’t even realize was happening until the Final Presentation. That’s crazy powerful. That’s Vet Voices.”

TWF Key Designers and Staff: Scott A. Cook (Artistic Producer-Director), Frida Söderdahl (Music Direction), James F. Beck (Scenic & Lighting), Ty Menard (Props/Set Decoration), Mollie LaTorre (Costumes), Heather Franklin (Hair & Makeup), Justin Black (Audio Operator), Jennifer Roman (Production Manager), Abel Gonzales (Company Manager/Military Consultant), and Alexis Senge Johnson (Development Director).

ABOUT THEATREWORKS FLORIDA

TheatreWorks Florida is a 501(c)(3) award-winning, professional Central Florida-based theatre company. Founded in 2007, TheatreWorks offers some of the finest theatrical musicals available today as well as produces new, original works from area artists and artists from around the country. For more information, visit Theatreworksfl.org

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WE WANT YOU!

vetvoices

Arts & Health for the **Military**

**RECRUITING CENTRAL FL
MILITARY VETERANS NOW
FOR 2019-20**

Have you ever been curious about Singing? Song writing? Playing a musical instrument? Being on stage or behind the scenes? Well, be curious no more because the "Arts Got Your 6" with an all-new, inspiring program from TheatreCares. Now is **YOUR** time to discover the world of Theatre Arts with Vet Voices!

Vet Voices provides our Central FL military war veterans an opportunity for positive self-awareness and self-discovery in a creative "safe space" environment. This arts and health program will nurture life-long healing and learning through the art of live theatre. The program will consist of workshops and events that allow veterans affected by war to explore the theatre arts through music and find healing through creativity.

THIS PROGRAM IS FREE!

RECRUITMENT IN PROGRESS

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