

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TWF: NEA: VET VOICES

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**TheatreWorks Florida Receives 4th \$10,000 Grant from
the National Endowment for the Arts to launch “Vet Voices”**

DAVENPORT, FL - TheatreWorks Florida is thrilled and proud to announce The National Endowment for The Arts (NEA) Chairman, Jane Chu, has approved a grant in the amount of \$10,000 to launch the company’s TheatreCares program, Vet Voices. This is TheatreWorks Florida’s 4th NEA grant and they are so appreciative of the agency’s support for this project.

The grant is in the Challenge America category and features NEA support for projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations - those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.

TheatreWorks Florida has been working on their new program, Vet Voices, for over one year and the NEA Challenge America grant will finally bring the program to life for Polk County and all of Central Florida. TheatreWorks Florida 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 will begin outreach partnerships with James A. Hailey Veteran’s Hospital (Tampa, FL) and the Lake Nona VA Hospital (Orlando, FL) then expand across Central FL.

Vet Voices will create an ongoing “arts and health” program for Central Florida military veterans that nurtures life-long healing and learning through the art of live theatre. The year-long program will consist of workshops that allow veterans to explore the theater arts and ultimately find healing through creativity from the effects of war. The end result will combine theatre professionals with veterans on stage in a fully produced, original musical play, developed by the veterans themselves, that incorporates creative writing, music, songs and visual art generated from the workshops.

Scott A. Cook, TheatreWorks Florida’s Artistic Producer, says, “For TheatreWorks Florida, it began with the simple need to find a new project focus for our highly successful community outreach program, TheatreCares. One day, I Googled “arts military” and suddenly fell down an unexpected rabbit hole of research. This profound “arts and health in the military” movement was soaring across our country like wildfire and was 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 within a week of my research. I contacted them and we attended an utterly amazing weekend of passionate, motivated and inspiring clinicians, creatives and military vets and families. It was beyond clear... TheatreCares had found their next community outreach. One year of research and more summits and symposiums brought our company to the realization that not only was our new program an incredible opportunity to create a theatrical experience unlike any other, but it was absolutely necessary for our military veterans. Our ultimate goal is to create an ongoing artistic “safe space” of healing for our vets while educating our Central FL communities through public awareness workshops and events.”

The Vet Voices program will be free of charge to active duty military members, veterans, their families and their caregivers. It will be presented to the Central FL public in a continued effort to create awareness of our disabled veterans, their health issues that need attention and the normalization of their lives after war.

Recruitment to the Vet Voices program will begin March 2018. For more information please visit TheatreWorks Florida’s website at TheatreWorksFL.org or email at vetvoices@theatreworksfl.org.

TWF Key Designers and Staff: Scott A. Cook (Artistic Producer-Director), Mark S. Graham (Associate Project Director), Shannon Kropf (Music Direction), James F. Beck (Scenic & Lighting), Ty Menard (Props/Set Decoration), Mandy Brumby (Costumes), Heather Franklin (Hair & Makeup), Brad Breaux (Audio Operator), Jennifer Roman (Production Manager), Abel Gonzales (Company Manager/Military Specialist), and Alexis Senge Johnson (Development Director).

ABOUT THEATREWORKS FLORIDA

TheatreWorks Florida is a 501(c)(3) professional Central Florida-based theatre company. Formed 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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