



The Joel Fund™

MARCH 2023

Vol 2 Issue 1



OPERATION ART

A full 1st Quarter
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**OPERATION
FURNISH**

Very generous donation from C3
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**OPERATION
CONNECT**

Community connections so far
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OPERATION ART



Creative Forces National Community Convening:

Operation ART Program Coordinator Isabella Brezenski was able to attend the **Creative Forces National Community Convening** January 29-30, 2023, in Washington, DC. The Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network is an initiative by the National Endowment of the Arts that started in 2011 at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) Walter Reed Bethesda and expanded into a network of clinical creative arts therapists at VA and DOD sites nationwide. In 2017, the network grew to include community arts engagement sites near the VA and DOD sites where clinical arts programs existed. The network allowed veterans to access community arts programming specifically for military personnel in addition to dance/movement, art, and music therapies provided by creative arts therapists.

In 2021 and 2022, in connection with the Creative Forces community arts network, The Joel Fund conducted a virtual Writing class at **Walter Reed Military Hospital** with **Operation ART Writing Instructor, June Guralnick**, for veterans and hospital staff.

The National Convening was a chance for the clinical and community arts networks to come together to learn, connect, and network. For some, this was the first time meeting fellow organizations in person! Isabella attended this convening in person and connected with military arts organizations near and far. Her time was filled with discussions surrounding military competency, brand storytelling, data collection, and measuring success.

Women-Only Classes:

Operation ART started 2023 with a brand new class for women only! The **Fiber Arts Sampler for Women** class began to provide female veterans with a safe space to create. Isabella received feedback from a few female veterans who did not feel comfortable in some of our classes because they were the only woman in a classroom full of men.

A women-only class taught by a female veteran was created to serve this group of students best. The instructor for this class, **Grace McFetters Caldwell**, is an Army veteran working in fiber arts for many years. The Accessible Weaving for Women started in March, and we plan on offering a women-only class in future sessions to provide the option for our female veterans.



2023 SUMMER SESSION CLASSES MAY 14 - JULY 14

Please keep an eye out for Operation ART Summer Session Schedule! The session dates are May 15th - July 14th.

Summer classes will be virtual this summer. Fall Session starts August 7th, 2023, and will feature in-person classes.



OPERATION ART CONTINUED

Handbuilding Pottery Class for People with Visual Impairments:

This Spring, The Joel Fund introduced a **Handbuilding Pottery Class for People with Visual Impairments**. The **NC Arts Council** supports this class after The Joel Fund received a grant to attend the LEAD Conference in August and establish an accessibility initiative. Striving to bring more accessible classes to all veterans in our community, Isabella connected with **VA Recreational Therapist Demetris McLeod** to plan an Operation ART class for veterans with visual impairments. Students will handbuild and glaze multiple ceramic pieces over this five-week class.



FAMILY STUDIO SUNDAY
IN HONOR OF MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD
APRIL 16, 2023

OPERATION FURNISH

C3 Church Serve Team Donation:

TJF's Executive Director **Brooke Dickhart** and **Operation Furnish Program Coordinator Emily Karrick** visited **C3 Church of Clayton** to receive a generous donation for veterans and their families. C3's Serve Team gathered forty-four laundry baskets filled with items such as non-perishable food, paper towels, toilet paper, toothbrushes, kitchen dishes, can openers, notebooks, pencils, and tissues. Their generous donation also includes gift cards to Food Lion, Target, and Walmart. C3's generosity will go a long way in serving veterans and their families through our Operation Furnish Program. As of **March 27, 2023**, we have served **nine households** this year.



OPERATION CONNECT

Women's MilVet Summit 2023:

Women's MilVet Summit host, **NCDMVA**, invited The Joel Fund to share our services and conduct a breakout session during the summit on March 7th, 2023. This event provided women veterans, caregivers, and military spouses with resources and information on benefits, employment tips, mindfulness, and art expression. **The Joel Fund Operation ART Instructor, Grace McFeters Caldwell**, taught participants a small needle felting project they could take home. It was a fantastic event, and seeing women veterans getting the support they needed was beautiful. TJF was honored to present to this group.



2023 Veteran Resource Fair and Stand Down in Durham:

TJF is gearing up for the annual **Veteran Resource Fair and Stand Down in Durham on September 16, 2023**. Sixty-eight local resource providers registered as vendors last year and over 300 people were in attendance. Vendors consisted of community partners offering services such as housing, employment, education, hygiene, mental health services, a dental bus, legal aid expunction clinic, COVID-booster shots, a mobile shower unit, and homeless kits. We are well ahead of the curve this year in terms of planning and look forward to continuing to grow this event every year.

If you are a **service provider** and want to register as a vendor, you may visit [thejoelfund.org/resource-fair-vendor/](https://www.thejoelfund.org/resource-fair-vendor/).

If you or your group are looking to **volunteer** at this event, you may visit www.thejoelfund.org/veterans-stand-down-and-resource-event/.

Monthly Hybrid NC Veteran Coffee Connection:

The Joel Fund hosts **monthly veteran coffees on the fourth Wednesday of every month**. Our coffees provide a safe space for veterans to exchange stories and experience camaraderie within the community. We take pride in having a guest speaker at each event share about their time in the military and any personal experiences related to their service or transition out of service. You can **join us virtually or in person at The Joel Fund**, 822 South White Street, Suite 106, Wake Forest, NC 27587. Visit [thejoelfund.org/north-carolina-veterans-coffee/](https://www.thejoelfund.org/north-carolina-veterans-coffee/) to let us know how you will be joining us.

"It's never too late to
make it make sense."

AMY DOZIER

NC VETERANS COFFEE CONNECTION
2/22/2023



OPERATION CONNECT CONTINUED

Veterans Benefits–Live VA in My Town Cary, NC:

TJF had an amazing three days at the **Herbert Young Community Center** during the **Veterans Benefits Live – VA in My Town Cary, NC**. Over 1000 veterans were served from March 23rd through March 25th. **Operation ART Program Coordinator, Isabella**, shared a felting project with Veterans and their families while passing the time to receive face-to-face assistance with VA claims. We loved talking with everyone about our programs and networking with other service providers and community partners.



COMMIT TO GIVING BACK CONTINUES

Heading into 2023, TJF continued our goal of gaining **20 monthly donors**. The 2022 year-end giving campaign allowed us to add several monthly commitments. The support we receive from our monthly donors is incredibly impactful. It allows us to invest strategically and plan for the future.

Whether TJF is connecting veterans through art classes or delivering furniture to veterans transitioning out of homelessness, we look at the resources we have now and the resources we project down the road - monthly gifts provide valuable insight into where we will be in the future.

We can't do this work without you! **If your situation allows, will you start a monthly gift to The Joel Fund today?**

SATURDAY
APRIL 22, 2023

\$100 PER TICKET

POOL AT WAKEFIELD COUNTRY CLUB
3350 CANES WAY
RALEIGH, NC 27614

PURCHASE TICKETS AT
WWW.THEJOELFUND.ORG/HOT-HAVANA-NIGHT/

HOT *Havana* NIGHT

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