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★ The Joel Fund ★

Reconnecting Veterans to life at home





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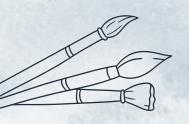
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OPERATION ART

BRINGING OPERATION ART TO YOU

Operation ART is partnering with Durham VA Whole Health, Raleigh Vet Center, Wake County Veteran Services, Granville County Veteran Services, and Granville Arts Council to pilot the 'Deploy' Operation ART initiative. This project is designed to meet veterans where they are by bringing quarterly workshops to partner locations. By reducing barriers such as travel and cost, this expansion reflects our dedication to prioritizing accessibility while creating opportunities where every veteran can connect, heal, and thrive. This initiative is funded in part by Creative Forces®: NEA Military Healing Arts Network, an initiative of the National Endowment in partnership with the U.S. DOD and VA. Creative Forces Community Engagement Grant program is managed by Mid America Arts Alliance.

'Deploy' Operation ART hosted the first workshop on Sept 12 with Wake County Veteran Services. We met with a group of veterans to create paracord bracelets and keychains. While knot tying has some familiarity, bracelet making offers challenges that encourage communication throughout the group. By the end, everyone was proud enough to wear their bracelets out of class. Multiple staff members have expressed thanks to The Joel Fund for providing this class; saying they have not seen these men laugh and smile like that before and they cannot wait for the next class.



TOTE-ALLY AWESOME FAMILY STUDIO SUNDAY

In September's Family Studio Sunday, families cut and design foam shapes to create unique canvas totes using fabric paint and simple screen printing techniques. The ability to host a project that appeals to a wider age group made this project a lot of fun for the students and the Instructor. We met some new families and were excited to see some familiar faces!



OPERATION CONNECT

CHAMPIONING COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION

This quarter, we have taken a new approach to our monthly meetings to deepen the connections made between the veterans we serve and our community partners. A new "Show & Tell" Veteran Coffee Connection format has brought a personal touch to our monthly peer-support meeting. Veterans have enjoyed sharing photos from their time in service and the stories behind them. In September, the Greater Triangle VMFA met at Lake Johnson to shake up the regular monthly meeting and enjoy a social enrichment retreat for community partners. Partners enjoyed painting rocks to be placed at The Joel Center and taking a scenic walk around the lake.

The Joel Fund's new resource connection initiative, RECON, has proven to be a powerful event for veterans and their families to connect to service providers and other military-connected individuals. At the most recent RECON event, one veteran expressed an obstacle to receiving medical care for a service-connected complication. Not only did the service providers in the room offer insights and solutions, but other veterans with similar experiences shared advice for how they got the help they needed. Connections like this are the reason why RECON was started; to sit the community together around one table to help each other.

CASE UPDATE

A veteran reached out in Q2 seeking assistance acquiring a mattress. During the intake, it was revealed that the veteran needed various resources including furniture, employment, and a car repair. With help from NC4ME, the Gary Sinese Foundation, and Military Missions in Action, the veteran received over \$10,000 in assistance for his needs. In just 3 months, the veteran went from struggling to pay his bills to gainfully employed, car repaired, and furniture for his home. Stories like this are why we do things differently. We believe in taking the time to explore all areas of potential need, follow up regularly with our veterans, and correct as needed to ensure they are in a stable and supportive environment.



ROOTED IN RESILIENCE

The Joel Fund hosted the inaugural event, Voices of Resilience: A Suicide Prevention Dialogue, to spark crucial conversation and break the stigma around suicide and mental health in the military community. The powerful event featured inspiring remarks from NC First Lady Anna Stein, compelling guest speakers, a critical panel discussion led by experts, table discussions, and a moving performance by the band Over, Never Out.



OPERATION

VESSEL

THE JOURNEY TO STABILITY

Earlier this year, we assisted a veteran with a past due power bill to give him the ability to acquire a HUDVASH voucher and move into permanent housing. Due to no fault of his own, it was discovered that a water bill was missed and the veteran risked disconnection. With joint efforts of TJF, NC Heroes Fund, and Carolina Arbors Veterans Club, the bill was paid and the veteran is no longer at risk. Recovering from financial hardship isn't always linear, and our team is eager to help in whatever way we can to get our veterans back on their feet.

THRIVING WITH THE LIGHT ON

A veteran was referred to VESSEL in mid September for a past due utility bill that was risking disconnection. While he was getting assistance from partner organizations to resolve rental and employment issues, the potential disconnection was looming and causing stress. TJF gladly stepped in and paid the full balance of \$600 to give the veteran a fresh start. We believe in helping our veterans not just survive, but thrive.

"Thank you for reaching out and your organization for helping me and my sons in my time of need. Your promptness and generosity in quickly assisting me with my utility bill was truly a blessing. After being let go from my job after 14yrs due to government changes since March, exhausting my savings and my son's education fund all while trying to hold it together without knowing if I could get through this was a sign of hope. Me and my little one are very thankful. And wish nothing but the best for you and your organization."
- Navy Veteran, Sept 2025

YOU CAN BE A PART OF THIS MEANINGFUL WORK

Our donors are the very reason Operation VESSEL can transform lives. Because our mission is funded primarily through private donations, it is your generosity that makes success stories like these possible for our veterans. You can help us continue to empower veterans on a journey to stability. A commitment of \$25 a month for one year can furnish a veterans home, provide food for a family for weeks, or prevent a utility from being disconnected.

Your dollars can make all the difference in the life of a veteran. Because of your support, this program will continue to change the lives of veterans in our community.

YTD 2025

\$11,650+

SPENT IN DIRECT ASSISTANCE FOR CRITICAL NEEDS

10
EVICTIONS
PREVENTED

25
VETERAN
HOUSEHOLDS
SERVED



ост **11**

VOLUNTEER DAY AT THE JOEL CENTER

Join us as we prepare for the opening of The Joel Center. We will be cleaning up debris and overgrown landscaping around the property. Bring wheelbarrows, shovels, trimmers, gloves, and closed-toed shoes. We will provide water and snacks, and you'll get a first glimpse at the construction underway at The Joel Center! Register at https://www.thejoelfund.org/volunteer/

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RECON: SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The Joel Fund will be hosting a series of resource connection events for service members, veterans, and military families. The next RECON will be on Saturday, Oct. 18, focusing on Supportive Services. Veterans and their family members are invited to join us to learn about available resources, enjoy breakfast and coffee, and collaborate with resource providers.

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EVENING OF HONOR

Save the Date! In honor of Veteran's Day, our annual Evening of Honor Benefit will be on Saturday, November 8. Enjoy a celebratory night with us, featuring dinner, drinks, a live auction, raffle, music, and more! This black tie optional event will be taking place at the incredible Carolina Exotic Car Club in Raleigh, NC. Tickets are now on sale at http://tjfeoh2025.givesmart.com/

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NORTH CAROLINA VETERAN ART SHOW

The Joel Fund and Heart2Hand Veteran artist Bernardine Donato are excited to host the 4th annual NC Veteran Art Show from Nov. 18 to Nov. 23 at the Durham Art Guild Golden Belt Gallery. Veterans artists in NC of all skill levels and mediums are invited to submit artwork to the showcase. To learn more about the show or to submit artwork, please visit https://www.thejoelfund.org/nc-veteran-art-show/



OPENING NOVEMBER 2025

We are excited to announce that The Joel Center will be opening this November! We ran into a couple roadblocks that pushed the completion date, but we are back on track. In Q3, demolition and remodeling began and we can already see the vision coming to life.

We will have a volunteer day on Saturday, Oct. 11 to help us get the property ready by cleaning debris and overgrown landscaping. Volunteers will get a behind-the-scenes look at the construction process!

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

CREATIVE FORCES NETWORK & MAAA

The Joel Fund's Operation ART Program has worked with the Creative Forces Network, an initative by National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs in various capaticties for the past few years and this year is the second year The Joel Fund has been a Community Engagement grantee. The Creative Forces network has been offering Community Engagement Grants in partnership with Mid-America Arts Alliance (MAAA) to support non-clinical, community arts programming for military-connected individuals for the past 4 years. MAAA and the greater Creative Forces network, host quarterly meetings for grantees to connect and engage with one another through conversation and shared learning online. In addition, MAAA is one of the partners to plan an annual national convening for grantees to enhance military competency, increase program evaluation techniques, network with fellow organizations, and learn from one another through various art workshops. These chances for connection and community have strengthened the Operation ART program to better serve in our community and we are even more excited to bring programming locally and beyond!

The Joel Fund received one of 48 grants nationwide to receive funds in the 2025-2026 program. This year's Community Engagement Grant will in part support the Deploy Operation ART Project which was based off of direct community feedback from individuals and partner organizations. Both entities expressed their interest in more Operation ART opportunities across the Triangle and we are grateful to the Creative Forces Network and MAAA for supporting this initiative to better serve veterans and military families.



"People count on [The Joel Fund] because they know when they say they're going to do something, they follow through and do it"

- Community Partner 2025



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The Joel Fund



The Joel Fund



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