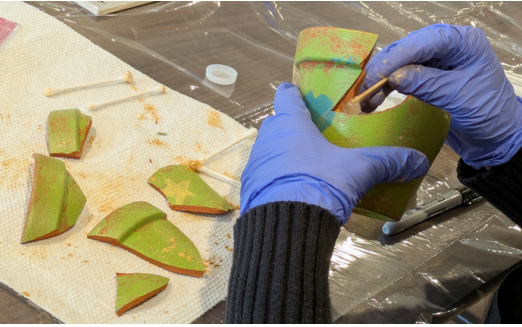


★ The Joel Fund ★

Reconnecting Veterans to life at home



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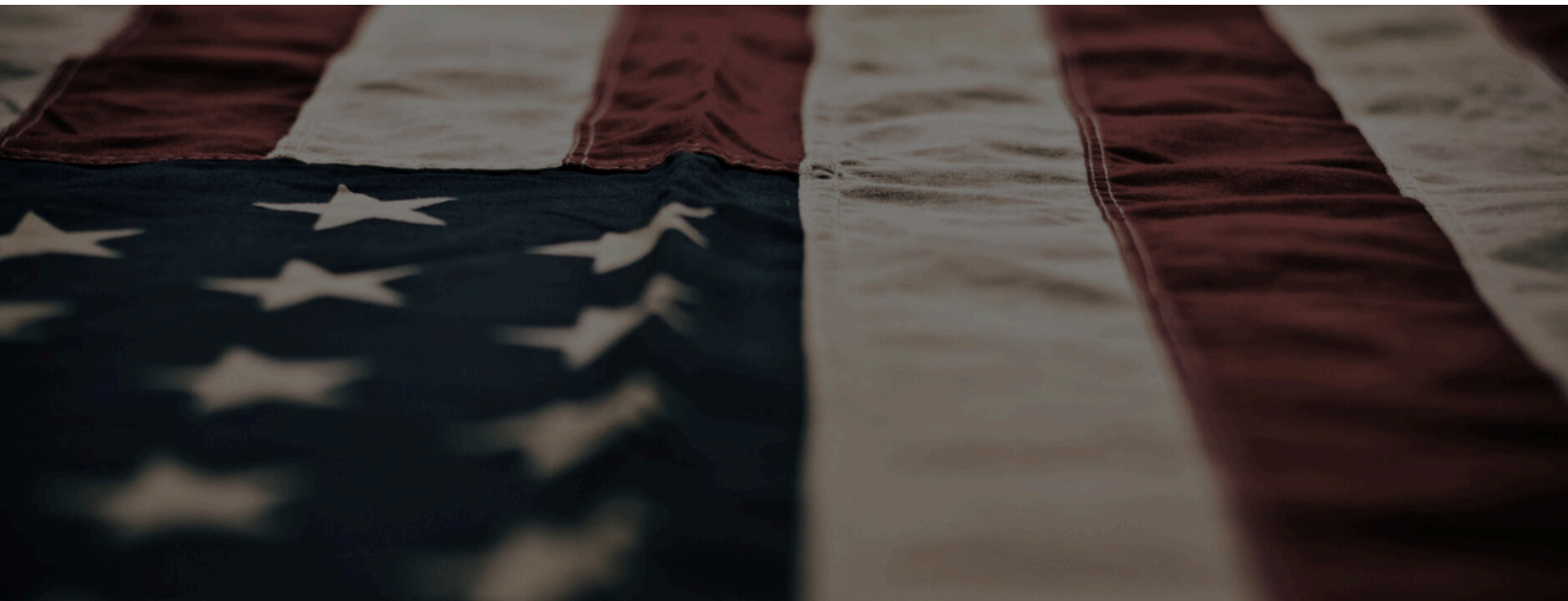
TJF LOCATIONS

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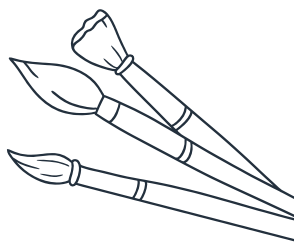


SUMMER OF SERVICE

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OPERATION ART



Summer at the Studio

The Joel Center opened this summer and we had a great time making art in the new space. Students created dreamcatchers, built clay tumblers, repaired tiles with gold, made paper from scratch, took lots of pictures, spent the day sewing, drafted editions of stories, sketched a variety of subjects, and more. It was amazing to hear stories and laughter in the studio and we are excited to see what students create in the fall!

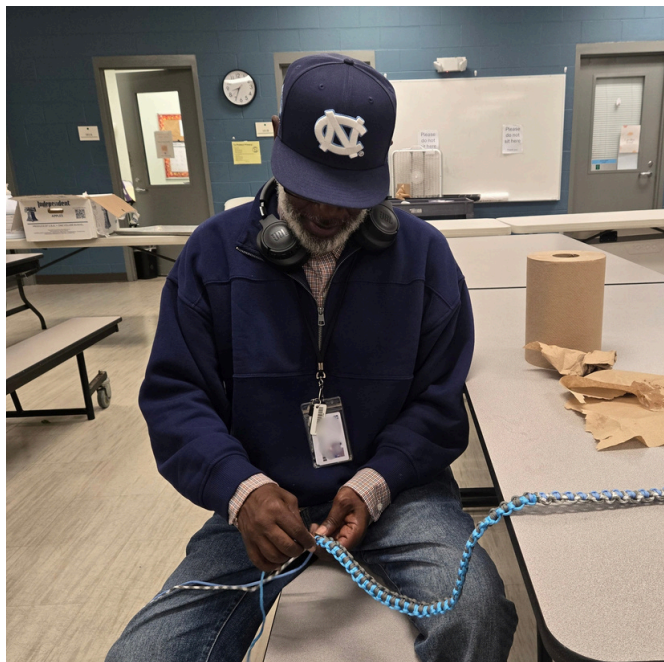
*"I enjoy The Joel Fund and appreciate all they are doing for my veteran community. **It feels like a safe and welcoming space.** The staff and instructors are the best!!"*
- Operation ART Student

A New Cycle of Deploy Operation ART

We are thrilled to have started the next cycle of Deploy Operation ART workshops with the support of the North Carolina Arts Council and the Creative Forces NEA Military Arts Healing Network. In addition to the returning partners from last cycle, **we are working with new partners to expand Deploy Operation ART's reach within the Triangle, including TROSA in Durham, and throughout the state with the USO North Carolina and Sawtooth School for Visual Art in Winston-Salem.** Deploy Operation ART workshops are free and designed to meet students where they are creatively, while connecting them with their military peers.

Bringing ART to the VTRL Summit

Operation ART was invited to organize a small exhibit to showcase veteran artists at the Veteran Transition Research Lab (VTRL) Summit held at Duke University. Artists and attendees discussed the artwork together and how veterans use art as a tool for self-expression. We are grateful for this partnership and opportunity to showcase veteran artists.





OPERATION CONNECT



Real Stories, Real Solutions

Behind every statistical gap in veteran services lies a human story. This quarter, the Greater Triangle Veterans, Military, and Families Alliance (VMFA) evolved its monthly hybrid meeting format to launch **VMFA: Real Stories, Real Solutions**. Rather than relying on standard panel presentations, each session now begins with a 1-on-1 chat featuring a local veteran or military family member sharing their authentic lived experience.

By anchoring expert discussions around a specific personal journey, community partners across the social determinants of health see precisely where local safety nets fray.

Following the chat, local specialists collaborate in real time to map out tactical referral pipelines, share underutilized resources, and eliminate organizational silos.

Blooming Where We're Planted

The Joel Fund recently hosted the **2nd Annual Voices of Resilience: A Suicide Prevention Dialogue**, bringing together veterans, service members, and community supporters for an afternoon of **candid, transformative conversation with the goal of breaking the stigma around mental health care in the military community.**

The event featured opening remarks from Secretary Jocelyn Mitnaul Mallette, personal stories shared by guest speakers Evan Slusser and Tony Ursone, and a closing performance by Amy Johnson. Guided by facilitators, attendees engaged in small-group table discussions exploring life transitions, overcoming mental health stigma, and leaning on community.

This powerful gathering was made possible through the generous support of our sponsors: Blue Cross NC, Soul to Sole Connection, and Homewood Nursery and Garden Center.

To keep this momentum going year-round, we are launching **Voices Echoed**, a quarterly series of intimate, small-group gatherings. The first session will be on December 2nd, featuring a fire-pit gathering focused on navigating mental health during the quiet months.

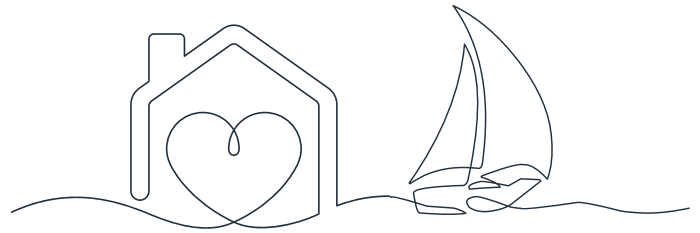


"This event feels like home for survivors & veterans."

- Voices of Resilience Participant



OPERATION VESSEL



CASEWORK

50 Cases from
July-Sept

Housing

Employment

Benefits Navigation

Social Enrichment

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

\$7,050.50 Total Spent
in Q3

12 Total Payments
Made in Q3

9 Utility Payments, 2 Hotel Stays,
1 Rent Payment

“During one of the most challenging transitions of my life, I was fortunate to receive support from three remarkable women representing organizations dedicated to serving veterans: Victoria Knott with The Joel Fund, Kendria Sweet with NC Heroes Fund, and Sophie Magee with Semper Fi.

*Throughout this process, Victoria remained engaged, encouraging, and genuinely concerned about my well-being. She communicated with others involved in helping me and continued to follow my progress. Her compassion and willingness to advocate for veterans reminded me that sometimes **support is not only about financial assistance, it is also about having someone who listens, encourages you, and helps connect the pieces when life becomes difficult.***

*What impressed me most was seeing different nonprofit organizations, each with the same mission of serving veterans, work together to help one veteran successfully navigate a difficult transition. **I never felt like I was simply a name or a case number.** I felt heard, respected, encouraged, and supported.*

Your support made a meaningful difference in my life, and I hope those who donate to and support organizations like yours understand the real impact their contributions can have.

Thank you, Victoria, Kendria, and Sophie, for being there when I needed you most.”
- Veteran, Sept 2026



UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT
2-16

5th Annual North Carolina Veteran Art Show

Please join us for the 5th Annual North Carolina Veteran Art Show from **October 2-16, at the Durham Art Guild Golden Belt Gallery.** The Joel Fund and Heart2Hand Veteran artist Lt. Colonel (retired) Bernardine Donato are excited to host the exhibit in partnership with Durham Art Guild. This event is presented by Johnson Automotive. For gallery information, visit <https://www.thejoelfund.org/nc-veteran-art-show/>



OCT
17

RECON: Supportive Services

RECON is a series of free resource connection events for service members, veterans, and military families. The next event will be on Saturday, Oct 17, focusing on Supportive Services. Join us to learn about available resources and enjoy breakfast on us!

OCT
24

TJF x Dog Tag To-Go

We're excited to share our new partnership with Dog Tag Inc, bringing their entrepreneurial program to The Joel Center! **Join us on Saturday, October 24 from 10am-1pm for this free entrepreneurship workshop,** where you'll leave with business tools, hands-on experience, resources and information to take the next steps, local connections, and Dog Tag Bakery treats!



NOV
14

Evening of Honor

Our annual Evening of Honor Benefit will be on Saturday, November 14. Enjoy a celebratory night with us, featuring dinner, a live and silent auction, raffle, music, and more! This formal event will be taking place at the incredible Carolina Exotic Car Club in Raleigh, NC. **Tickets are on sale now!**

DEC
2

Voices Echoed

Following the momentum from Voices of Resilience, Voices Echoed will feature small-group gatherings, exploring resiliency and support for mental health.

DEC
17

The Shared Table

The Shared Table Holiday Meal will be a chance for veterans and military family members who are far from home to gather and break bread.

THE JOEL CENTER

Volunteer Day at The Joel Center

"Yesterday the family and I spent the day at TJF helping clean up the grounds and pitching in wherever we could. The weather was perfect, the turnout was great, and with that many hands pitching in we made progress fast."

Giving back to your community is fulfilling on its own. Doing it side by side with your family makes it even better. Shared work builds shared memories.

*Doing it for an organization like The Joel Fund makes it special. They support veterans across Triangle area, and they're a cornerstone of the veteran nonprofit community here. **It felt good to show up for the people who show up for so many.**"*

- TJF Ambassador, Sept 2026



VETERAN CO-OP

**Opening this Fall!
Grand Opening to
be announced soon.**

A Message from Veteran Co-op Site Manager, Zac Buck

The Veteran Co-op may seem, to some, to be some sort of conclusion to years of planning and buildup. To me, however, **the Co-op is just the beginning, a springboard into the future of what The Joel Fund is and can be.** The Veteran Co-op is just that, a cooperation between many community partners to serve our veterans. Partnering with VFW Post 2740, Women Veterans Support Services, and the Bragtown Community Association will literally create a COMMUNITY in which we strive to connect our veterans with.

As a disabled combat veteran, I have walked in the very shoes that many of our community have. Bringing these partners and their vast resources into one space that is designed specifically to reach our veterans is such an amazing concept that I cannot wait to bring to life. **I am excited to bring all of our combined efforts to the frontlines and be at the "tip of the spear", to be the face of the Veteran Co-op, becoming not only a resource, or a provider, but an active member of the very community in which we are serving.**



SUMMER OF SERVICE

Reflections from TJF's Summer Intern, Emily Austin

This past summer, I had an incredible opportunity to intern at The Joel Fund. I had the privilege of listening to stories from veterans both young and old, I was able to talk to military families with service members who are still serving and helped individuals who only had the military legacy of their loved ones to reflect back on. Although I may not have been able to relate with every individual who walked through the doors of The Joel Fund, this experience illuminated the simple fact that leadership and service may not always place me in comfortable experiences where I can relate with everyone. **I realized that being a strong leader means being able to serve those who are different from oneself without hesitation, leading to a greater sense of community.**

At The Joel Fund, I helped support a mission of creating spaces where connections and conversations are held intentionally. A memorable event that I witnessed was a round-table discussion about resources for female veterans who often do not get the same treatment as male veterans. I was impacted by the creation of a safe space that elevated the voices of all veterans, and I hope to continue building spaces like that during my time on campus.

I was also able to spearhead a resource fair that provided military families with resources for their children and teens, which gave space for dialogue concerning an often-overlooked group within the military-connected atmosphere. Through my comprehensive investigation of educational resources and social enrichment programs, I realized that many veterans and their families are unaware of the opportunities they are eligible for given their service. As I worked to improve literacy surrounding benefits and resources, **it reinforced my commitment to my personal goal of ensuring military families are equipped to thrive and succeed.**

As my intern experience comes to an end, I am so grateful to the entire Joel Fund team for their dedication to service and their commitment to enhancing the lives of veterans both locally and nationally.





“I wish that I had known that there are other organizations like The Joel Fund that I could have turned to... that are on my side.”

- Community Partner



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