

VA**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

VA San Diego Healthcare System

3350 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161
www.sandiego.va.gov

October 29, 2019

In Reply Refer To: 11k

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to offer support for VETART submission of grants. The San Diego VA Healthcare System's partnership with VETART began in 2016 with the Veterans Art Project offering a unique weekly Arts engagement program for our Veterans. Through their sponsored weekly "bronzing" classes, they have been connecting our Veterans to the therapeutic benefits of Art; their demonstration of respect, dedication, compassion and donation of supplies has improved countless Veteran's lives.

In my position as Recreation Therapist at the VA, we strive to provide programs which will improve the physical, cognitive and psychosocial well-being of our clients. Participation in the VETART program addresses these functions by improving confidence, mood, fine motor and social skills, as well as, decreased stress, anxiety, and anger. I observe these therapeutic clinical outcomes first hand, along with Veteran's responses of reduction of pain, PTSD symptoms and improved coping mechanisms.

The VETART classes held on site at the VA, led by knowledgeable and respectful instructors, provide the initial process of live casting/documenting our Veterans in wax. As this is always a positive experience, the Veteran is motivated to travel independently to the VETART foundry in Fallbrook, CA to finish their projects; VETART assists the Veteran achieve the treatment goal of improved community re-integration skills. This demonstration of commitment illustrates the validity and success of this program.

Many world class portraits and statues have been made through our unique collaboration. VETART's dignified and display of completed pieces has culminated in numerous VA first place and "Best in Show" at National VA Art Competitions. Also, VETART is offering free community classes in ceramics, tile, and glasswork for our Veterans to attend as follow up from their treatment in our clinics. This community resource is an integral part of the rehabilitation for our patients.

The San Diego VA Recreation Therapy staff is looking forward to a continued relationship with VETART; community partnerships are essential to providing the best care to our Veterans and the successful transition back into the community. Thank you for giving their grant applications all due respect and consideration for funding. I believe this world class organization is deserving of support so they can continue to provide the amazing service and programs to our Veterans, their families and caregivers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ellen Berman".

Ellen Berman, RTC

Physical Medicine & Rehab Service