

USVAP ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

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MISSION/PURPOSE

To increase the representation of veterans in the arts community

We will achieve this mission by considering the following objectives:

To provide "Artistic Tools" (musical instruments, painting supplies, art scholarships, cameras, computers, etc.) to wounded service members from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars; and to bring visibility to the power of art and how it might bring cathartic inner solace for those Americans who have sacrificed in service to their country.

To provide "Artistic Tools" (through veteran initiatives) to selected individuals who wish to continue their pursuit of artistic expression but are unable to do so, due to some aspect directly related to the consequences of war.

To provide opportunities for US Veteran artists to collaborate with Vietnamese artists on artistic projects; to offer encouragement and support for the collaborative process particularly across cultural boundaries; and to positively bring together new and existing audiences to discover or rediscover the cultural and artistic traditions of both countries.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The United States Veterans Arts Program (USVAP) is a Chicago-based non-profit 501c-3 that has melded contemporary veterans issues with community-based support, in order to highlight one of the most crucial concerns of our times: improving the health of the military and veteran population that suffers not only from physical disabilities, but also from PTSD and other mental health needs. USVAP believes that art can address many of these issues.

By encouraging and supporting an aesthetic response to the military experience, we hope to emphasize the diversity of the veteran population and to create a new identity of veterans as people who are capable, gifted, and resilient, and also that they often possess the very voice that society needs to hear and to heed.

We have received support from public and private organizations including Operation to Support our Troops, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, Disabled American Veterans, Wounded Warriors, Coalition to Salute America's Heroes, American Airlines, Illinois Arts Council, and many others. Through our Artistic Tools® program, we have presented resources to both individual veterans and to VA Medical Centers. We are currently developing and broadcasting USVAP programs on Chicago Cable Access Network.

Ultimately, we strive to encourage veterans to use their innate, intuitive pursuit of art: not necessarily as a profession, but as part of the universal human drive to create a powerful form of communication, one that contributes not only to the arts community, but to our society in general.

The idea for USVAP began in 1998, when Vietnam Veteran and musician Kimo Williams returned to Lai Khe, where he was stationed with the US Army 25th Combat Engineer Battalion in 1970. Originally, the purpose of that trip back to Vietnam was to complete work on his composition "Symphony for the Sons of Nam". However, his journey became the inspiration to create an organization that would provide opportunities for American and Vietnamese artists to collaborate on projects. Since then, USVAP has sponsored traditional and contemporary concerts by performing artists, master classes and multi-media events. In 2008, USVAP re-defined its' mission in order to include and encourage veterans of Afghanistan and Iraq to take up the cause of artistic expression.

As Kimo stated about his military experience: *“The first time I came to Vietnam, I brought my M-16. The next time I came, I brought my guitar. I liked the second trip much better than the first.”* USVAP exists in the hope that other veterans can also make that “second journey”, and share their experience with the rest of us through art.

DEMOGRAPHICS

We defined our market as those who are: an individual between the ages of 40 and 65. This person typically is educated at least to the college level, and is most likely to be associated with a veterans group or has a military (veteran or active) family member and has an understanding of the need to make a difference in the lives of our veterans and active military. Additionally, our typical donor is a professional who is responsive to international arts initiatives, academically, or professionally. Our typical donor has a household income of between (\$25,000.00 to \$80,000.00) per year. Our typical donor lives in a household consisting of him or herself, a spouse or partner, and children living away from home

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Those who serve and have served our country are multi-dimensional, with skills and abilities in many areas that are sometimes not recognized by the public in general. We value the contributions that our service members have made to our way of life, and as a country we provide for them through federal, local and private programs and initiatives that can give them resources for development of their quality of life. However, we also see a strong need for looking at the “inner self” of these veterans, and tapping into the voice that cannot always find a mechanism for expression. USVAP feels that art can be the conduit between the veteran and his/her need for expression both for themselves and for those external to them. At the same time, the audience is exposed to these expressions and can have a more informed understanding of the veteran as a service-member and as a human being. Through informal focus groups and surveys, USVAP feels that the community (our target market) embraces and supports the ideas of art as a mechanism for the expression and better understanding of American service-members and veterans.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED

Throughout each year USVAP, through the Artistic Tools program, serves approximately 500 veterans and staff in VA Medical Centers. We do this through performances at the centers and marketing the Artistic Tools® brand. During the performance, USVAP presents the Artistic Tool, to be used by patients, family members, and medical staff personnel at the center.

The USVAP annual fund raiser with actor/musician Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band reaches approximately 10,000 people (through newsletters and email databases), and brings visibility to the mission of USVAP. Direct contact is approximately 1000 for each fund raising event.

Through our USVAP Chicago cable TV programs we reach 3 million Chicago city viewers.

Once exposed to our programs and activities, those served generally have a better understanding of the military service member and veterans and their contribution to the arts. Through our programs we are able to achieve our mission of bringing visibility to veterans and service members as artistic contributors to our society. The stereotypical image of the veteran only as a suffering combatant in need of medical and social services is balanced with their intrinsic ability to use art as a form of communication.

WHY WE ARE UNIQUE

Our audiences will compare our events and programs with those of our direct competitors on the basis of our uniqueness (relative to an arts emphasis), international impact (with an emphasis on veterans art expression), and the mission and objectives of USVAP. Donors will also choose our offerings over our competition based on the quality and uniqueness of our sponsored events and programs with a veteran emphasis.

Though in some cases our program is smaller than our closest competitors, size differences are not a significant advantage in the veteran specific market due to the impact our program will have on our targeted market and the uniqueness of our mission. That uniqueness will drive our targeted market to participate in our offerings.

Appendix A: PAST USVAP Activities

Project Title: *Lt. Dan Band Benefit Concert*

Project Description: Performance with Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band

Purpose: Benefit Concert

Year Presented: 2006

Key Artists/Personnel: Gary Sinise, Kimo Williams, and members of the Lt. Dan Band

Location: Joe's Concert Venue on Weed Street in Chicago, Illinois

Date of Project: April 7, 2006

Attendance: 900 (full house)

Fees paid: \$5000.00

Project Title: *Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music Curriculum Development*

Project Description: Consultation and development of an American Jazz curriculum for the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory and the coordination of a five-week practicum in Jazz Improvisation with Chicago instructors.

Purpose: To develop a jazz improvisation workshop curriculum for the HCMC based on 2007 anticipated Needs

Year Presented: 2006

Key Artists/Personnel: Kimo Williams

Location: Ho Chi Minh City and Hue City Vietnam

Date of Project: May 27, 2006.

Attendance: Not an audience-oriented project

Fees paid: In-Kind

Project Title: *Lt. Dan Band Benefit Concert*

Project Description: Performance with Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band

Purpose: Benefit Concert

Year Presented: 2007

Key Artists/Personnel: Gary Sinise, Kimo Williams, and members of the Lt. Dan Band

Location: Joe's Concert Venue on Weed Street in Chicago, Illinois

Date of Project: May 3, 2007

Attendance: 900 (full house)

Fees paid: \$5000.00

Project Title: *Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music Jazz Improvisation and American Culture*

Project Description: Developed and taught a workshop on American Jazz History and the concepts of Improvisation. Workshop included Vietnamese instrumentalists learning Jazz on their traditional instruments as well as standard instruments. The workshop was co-taught by saxophonist Ted Hogarth.

Purpose: To help the Vietnamese musician understand the music and culture of America through conceptualizing Jazz Improvisation

Year Presented: 2007

Key Artists/Personnel: Kimo Williams and Ted Hogarth.

Location: Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam

Date of Project: July 14-28, 2007

Attendance: 30

Fees paid: \$4500.00

Project Title: *Lt. Dan Band Benefit Concert*

Project Description: Performance by The Lt. Dan Band to raise funds for USVAP

Purpose: To raise money for USVAP Vietnam Tour with Kimotion

Year Presented: 2008

Key Artists/Personnel: Kimo Williams, Gary Sinise, and the Lt. Dan Band

Location: Joe's Concert Venue on Weed Street in Chicago, Illinois

Date of Project: May 2, 2008

Attendance: 900 (full house)

Fees paid: \$5000.00

Project Title: *Kimotion at the Hue Festival*

Project Description: The Music of Vietnam Veteran Kimo Williams

Purpose: To collaborate with Vietnam counterparts to execute a concert of the music of Kimo Williams, utilizing American and Vietnamese musicians working together, and incorporating Vietnamese traditional instrumentalists performing jazz oriented compositions

Year Presented: 2008

Key Artists/Personnel: 26-member Kimotion Ensemble

Location: Ho Chi Minh City and Hue Vietnam,

Date of Project: June 4-6, 2008

Attendance: 1500

Fees paid: \$40,000.00

Project Title: *Artistic Tools Presentation and Lt. Dan Band Benefit Concert*

Project Description: Performance by The Lt. Dan Band to raise funds for USVAP and to present the first Artistic Tools to two wounded Iraq and Afghanistan service members.

Purpose: To raise money for USVAP Artistic Tools programs, and to present two Artistic tools.

Year Presented: 2009

Key Artists/Personnel: Kimo Williams, Gary Sinise, and the Lt. Dan Band

Location: Joe's Concert Venue on Weed Street in Chicago, Illinois

Date of Project: April 17, 2009

Attendance: 900 (full house)

Fees paid: \$5000.00

Project Title: *Operation Home Front: The Kimo Williams Band Concert*

Project Description: Music and the Vietnam War

Purpose: Benefit Fundraiser for Operation Home Front

Year Presented: 2009

Key Artists/Personnel: Kimo Williams Band

Location: McHenry County University Auditorium

Date of Project: August 28, 2009

Attendance: 40

Fees paid: \$1500.00

Project Title: *Artistic Tools Concert and Presentation: Remembering Hendrix and Vietnam*

Project Description: Performance by The Kimo Williams Band to raise funds for USVAP and the second presentation of Artistic Tools to a wounded soldier.

Purpose: To present an Artistic tool to a wounded Veteran and to raise funds for USVAP.

Year Presented: 2009

Key Artists/Personnel: the Kimo Williams Band

Location: Joe's Concert Venue on Weed Street in Chicago, Illinois

Date of Project: September 17, 2009

Attendance: 40

Fees paid: \$4500.00

Project Title: *Williams and Williams at Snowball Express*

Project Description: Perform for the Snow Ball Express Military Family program

Purpose: To provide entertainment for the children and families of service members who lost their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Year Presented: 2009

Key Artists/Personnel: Kimo Williams and Carol Williams

Location: Dallas, Texas

Date of Project: December 11, 2009

Attendance: 800

Fees paid: In-Kind

Project Title: *Artistic Tools Concert and Lt. Dan Band Benefit Concert*

Project Description: Performance by The Lt. Dan Band to raise funds for USVAP and the presentation of Saturday, February 19, 2011

Artistic Tools to two wounded soldiers.

Purpose: To raise money and to present Artistic Tools

Year Presented: 2010

Key Artists/Personnel: Kimo Williams, Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band

Location: Hard Rock Café, Chicago, Illinois

Date of Project: May 10, 2010

Attendance: 700 (full house)

Fees paid: \$12000.00

Project Title: *Lambeau Field Welcome Home Vietnam Celebration*

Project Description: The state of Wisconsin implemented a "Celebration to Welcome Home Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans": USAVP presented a portion of the music.

Purpose: To bring music of the Vietnam War era to those in attendance at the celebration.

Year Presented: 2010

Key Artists/Personnel: Kimo Williams, Carol Williams, and members of "Kimotion" band

Location: Lambeau Field, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Date of Project: May 22, 2010

Attendance: 10,000

Fees paid: \$1800.00

Project Title: *Kimotion at Ho Chi Minh City and Hue Festival, plus Artistic Tools Presentation to Victims of Agent Orange, and Music Production Workshop*

Project Description: The 4-member Kimotion perform the music of Hendrix and the Beatles. Additionally, consult with the Hue Academy of music in curricula development and instructions. During this project USVAP also presented Artistic Tools® to a Ho Chi Minh City orphanage where many are afflicted by the effects of Agent Orange.

Purpose: This project was in combination with the Fulbright International program (Kimo Williams is a Fulbright Specialist) where USVAP helped support the Fulbright program through developing a music technology curriculum and presenting a 67 day workshop on music recording and producing.

Year Presented: 2010

Key Artists/Personnel: Carol Williams, Kimo Williams, and Hiep Do

Location: Hue Vietnam

Date of Project: June 7-20, 2010

Attendance: 3000

Fees paid: \$10,000.00

Project Title: *USVAP Artistic Tools Presentation in White River Junction VAMC, Vermont*

Project Description: Performed and presented an Artistic Tool to White River Junction VAMC.

Purpose: To provide Artistic Tools for the staff and serviced military at the VAMC in White River Junction, Vermont. This center is home to the PTSD National Research Center. Director/Performer Carol Williams visited the PTSD center, performed in one of the in-patient units, and then presented a new keyboard (Artistic Tool) to the Recreation Services of the hospital.

Year Presented: 2010

Key Artists/Personnel: Carol Williams

Location: VA Medical Center in White River Junction, Vermont.

Date of Project: September 20, 2010

Attendance: 30

Fees paid: In-Kind

Project Title: *USVAP Artistic Tools Presentation in St Louis, MO*

Project Description: Performed and presented an Artistic Tool to VAMC in St Louis, MO

Purpose: To provide Artistic Tools for the staff and serviced military at the VAMC in St Louis, MO. Director/Performer Carol Williams visited the facility, performed at the Jefferson Barracks Community Living Center and presented a Fender Squire electric guitar to the Recreation Services department there, along with a concert at their facility

Year Presented: 2010

Key Artists/Personnel: Carol Williams

Location: VA Medical Center in St Louis, MO

Date of Project: November 12, 2010

Attendance: 25

Fees paid: In-Kind

Saturday, February 19, 2011

Project Title: *CAN TV Monthly Multimedia Program Broadcast*

Project Description: USVAP is one of the Veterans' Consortium on cable TV in Chicago (CAN TV 21), which will allow USVAP to host a 30-minute show every month, as opposed to just 4 times per year. Recent guests have been painter and Vietnam Veteran Konrad Hack, Army veteran, writer and English professor Tom Nowrocki, and US Marines veteran Iris Feliciano from the Warrior Writers Workshop. USVAP present veterans artist as guest to this call-in format. Additionally, CAN TV 19 also broadcasts USVAP multi-media produced programs

Purpose: USVAP is an organization that seeks to support veterans in the arts, so that their unique voice, combined with their universal experience, can be amplified.

Ones' military background should not disqualify them from contributing a valuable message to the essence of the cultural aestheticism. However, too often that is the case, as veterans appear to be disproportionately underrepresented in the arts community.

If the root of this disparity is arts education, then we strive to send the message that arts education should be accessible to all levels of learning. If the cause of the disproportion is the actual cost of the resources needed to express oneself through art, then we attempt to level that field by providing Artistic Tools® that would support the artist. If the cause is a skeptical attitude towards the ability of veterans to enrich our culture with their unique perspective, then we challenge that with proof that art by veterans is the equal of any trained artist who has achieved commercial success. If the problem is that veterans themselves do not see themselves as a valuable reservoir of cultural spiritual aesthetic, then we seek out veterans who may not value their own worth as artists, and encourage them to use art not only as a way to communicate their experience to us, but also as a catharsis for their own solace.

Year Presented: 2010

Key Artists/Personnel: Carol Williams and Kimo Williams

Location: CAN TV studio, 322 S. Green St., Chicago, Illinois

Date of Project: monthly

Attendance: Cable TV viewing audience (3 million viewers)

Fees paid: \$200.00 month

Project Title: *USVAP Artistic Tools Presentation in Dallas Texas*

Project Description: Carol and Kimo traveled to Dallas, Texas, to perform and donate Artistic Tools to three facilities: the Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center, the Dallas VAMC, and also the Ft. Worth Outpatient Clinic (the largest in the VA system). They donated a Cort Guitar, art supplies, and other tools to the Recreation Therapy and Volunteer Departments for people to use while they are there.

Purpose: To provide Artistic Tools for the staff and serviced military at the Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center, the Dallas VAMC, and also the Ft. Worth Outpatient Clinic. Director/Performer Carol Williams and Kimo Williams visited the facilities and performed at the Community Living Center

Year Presented: 2011

Key Artists/Personnel: Carol Williams and Kimo Williams

Location: VA medical facilities in Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

Date of Project: March 21-26, 2011

Attendance: 250

Fees paid: In-Kind