



# NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

art • music • dance • drama • creative writing

## \* About the Festival \*

Nationwide, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities use the creative arts as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities. Across the country each year, veterans treated at VA medical centers compete in a local creative arts contest. This competition includes 50 art categories that range from oil painting to leatherwork to paint-by-number kits. In addition, there are 120 categories pertaining to all aspects of music, dance, drama and creative writing. The creative writing division is a more recent addition to the competition and includes original works in poetry, essay, short story, and personal experience writing. A national selection committee chooses first, second and third place winners among all of the entries. Select winners are invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival each year.

In 2008, 3100 veterans from 113 VA facilities entered the contest nationwide, with nearly 150 of the medal-winning veterans earning an invitation to participate in the 2008 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Riverside, California. In 2009, the event will be held in San Antonio, Texas, October 5-11, hosted by the South Texas Veterans Health Care System.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is a week of learning, exploring, fellowship and celebration of the healing power of the arts. Because the gold, silver or bronze medal winners are already selected to participate in the Festival, there is no competition at the event itself; rather, it serves as a showcase for the top national winners. During the week of the event, participants may attend classes such as paper art creations, print making and leatherwork and a craft art workshop, all taught by local artists. As part of the Festival, veterans will also visit a variety of local attractions including art museums and galleries as well as other venues of interest to area visitors.

The Festival event will culminate on Sunday, October 11, 2009, with an art exhibit featuring all first-place art entries in the lobby of the beautiful San Antonio Municipal Auditorium, followed by a gala stage show performance in the Municipal Auditorium itself. The stage show is professionally directed with live orchestral accompaniment generously provided by the Music Performance Fund. Tickets will be free and actively distributed to assure a full house for the veterans' performance.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is co-sponsored each year by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the American Legion Auxiliary and Help Hospitalized Veterans.