

The
ARTSGRAM

NATIONAL VETERAN THE ARTS FESTIVAL



Veterans Jerry & Tarama Davenport
rehearse for the stage show.
Photo by Bruce Thiel

OCTOBER 11, 2012

DANCING DUO GRACES THE STAGE

For him, it's the disconnection from the real world and into the imagination. For her, it's the sense of peace found when dance and music connect. Together, they experience serenity, hope and understanding when therapy intersects with art.

Since 1989, Jerry and Tarama Davenport have been dancing together with their minds, bodies and souls.

She said, "We communicate while we dance, sometimes without even saying a word."

He said, "I can simply look into her eyes, and just know what move she wants to do next."

That's what more than 20 years of togetherness can create – a unique language between two different people who share a common bond.

By way of New Orleans, La. and Tuskegee, Ala., the couple lives in Shreveport, La. and share more than their southern heritage and love of dance. Both are Veterans and served 10 years in the Air Force. They each come from talented, supportive families, who saw in them early what most people don't realize until they hit the dance floor.

"We unintentionally steal the show everywhere we go," Tarama said. "When we dance, people stop what they're doing to watch and enjoy us. It feels great."

The Davenports dance at weddings, anniversaries, fundraisers and various other events. Most times their performances hardly even qualify as performances. They're mostly impromptu and not rehearsed. Yet, they enjoy the spontaneous spotlight as well as the planned performance, such as the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

"I'm no stranger to hard work," Jerry said, "but this [Creative Arts Festival] is no cakewalk. And that's a good thing... a great thing."

Jerry said he appreciates that VA gives Veterans an opportunity to showcase their skills and talents in a comfortable and therapeutic environment.

"The festival is the culmination of hard work and dedication," Tarama said. "It's what all of us Vets can relate to from our military and life experiences."

The couple said they always encourage Veterans to participate in the competition for a shot at an invite to the Festival. Their journey began with an unexpected phone call.

Jerry and Tarama are both contract educators for the Shreveport Regional Arts Council. As well-respected citizens in their community and VA supporters, it was no surprise when Jerry received a call to judge visual art for the local competition at Overton Brooks VA Medical Center. But Jerry suddenly realized he had a dilemma. He knew he couldn't judge if he was a participant, so he chose the latter. Less than one year later, the dancing duo graces the stage.

Although they partake in in-line dancing, two-step, swing-out and various other forms of group and couples dancing, their chosen entry this year was ballroom dance. These gold medalists can do it all and didn't hesitate to accept the invite as chorus members for a group performance.

She said, "My greatest joy in dancing comes from the joy I give to others."

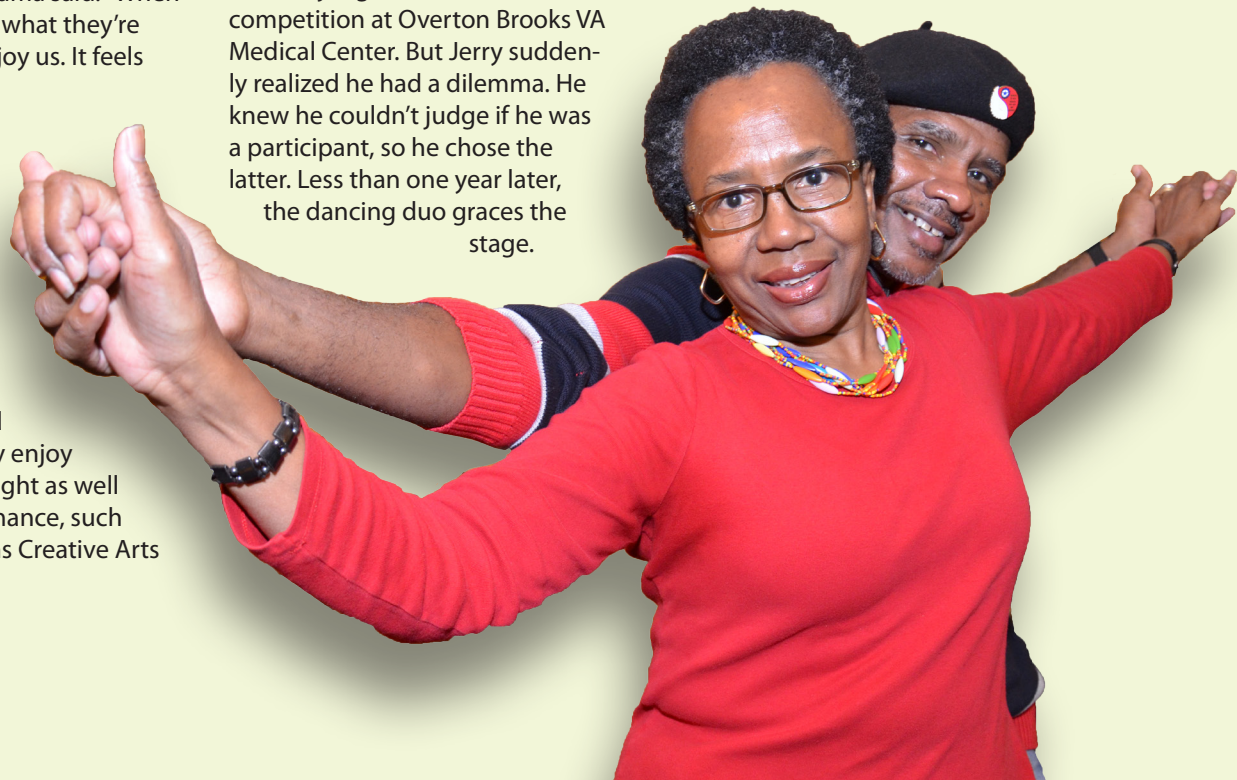
He said, "My greatest joy in dancing comes from seeing others enjoy it. The smiles on their faces, that look of peace in their eyes, are reasons to keep doing what we do."

They teach art. They do art. It's their life. It's their love. It's the therapy they vow to share with each other, fellow Veterans and hopefully the world.

By Erikka D. Neroes

Writer-Editor/TCF Intern

VA North Texas Health Care System



Artists and Performers

Please check with your team leader and/or the posted schedule in the Ballroom Foyer for any changes or updates to your daily schedule.



Performers

- 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. **BREAKFAST:** Salon 4
- 7:30 a.m. **TEAM LEADER AND TEAM SUPPORT MEETING**
with Amy Kimbler: Blue Hills
- 8 a.m. **TEAM LEADER AND TEAM SUPPORT MEETING**
with performers
- 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. **BLOCKING REHEARSAL - ALL VETERANS NEEDED**
Will run complete show in order as a FAST
cue-to-cue. No singing/acting, etc. We will move from
place to place understanding entrances and exits:
Salons 5-8
- 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. **CHORUS VESTS/COSTUME FITTINGS:**
Wollaston Room
- 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. **THE ART AND SCIENCE OF TREATING PTSD**
Presentation and panel discussion
Dorothy Quincy Ballroom A&B
- 11:30 - 12:30 p.m. **LUNCH:** Salons 4 & Dorothy Quincy Ballroom C
- 1:15 p.m. **LOAD AND DEPART FOR TRIP TO BOSTON**
U.S.S. Constitution Tours
Duck Boat Tours
- 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. **CHORUS VESTS/COSTUME FITTINGS:**
Wollaston Room
- 4 - 5:30 p.m. **CHORUS VESTS/COSTUME FITTINGS:**
Wollaston Room
- 6:30 p.m. **DINNER & TOUR OF MUSEUM OF SCIENCE**
- 8 p.m. **ELECTRICAL SHOW**
- 8:30 p.m. **LOAD BUSES AND DEPART FOR HOTEL**

- 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. **LUNCH:** Salons 4 & Dorothy Quincy Ballroom C
- 1 - 2 p.m. **CONTINUE WITH ART PROJECTS:** Salons 1 - 3
- 2:15 p.m. **LOAD AND DEPART FOR TRIP TO BOSTON**
U.S.S. Constitution Tours
Duck Boat Tours
- 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. **DINNER & TOUR OF MUSEUM OF SCIENCE**
- 5 - 6:30 p.m. **ELECTRICAL SHOW**
- 6:30 p.m. **LOAD BUSES AND DEPART FOR HOTEL**
- 8 p.m. **ELECTRICAL SHOW**
- 8:30 p.m. **LOAD BUSES AND DEPART FOR HOTEL**

Artists

- 6:30 - 8:30 a.m. **BREAKFAST:** Salon 4
- 8 a.m. **TEAM LEADER AND TEAM SUPPORT MEETING**
with Paula Moran: Dorothy Quincy Ballroom A
- 8:30 a.m. **TEAM LEADER AND TEAM SUPPORT MEETING**
with artists
- 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. **THE ART AND SCIENCE OF TREATING PTSD**
Presentation and panel discussion
Dorothy Quincy Ballroom A&B
- 10:30 a.m. **ART WORKSHOP #3:** Seashell Picture Frames
Salons 1 - 3







FOR MORE INFORMATION ON UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS VISIT WWW.VA.GOV/ADAPTIVESPORTS

WHAT “ALL THE WAY” TRULY MEANS...



If you've ever served in the US Army's famed 82nd Airborne Division, you'd know that "all the way" is much more than a motto to these fighting soldiers from the sky. The words are an ethos, a passion and a way of life. Brad Howe not only knows these words, he lives them. A former Army Ranger who served with the 82nd, Howe served a majority of his military career in Panama in the 1970's.

Howe's record of VA Special Events volunteerism is quite impressive. This is Howe's 10th year with the NVCAF (he works with the stage crew). He has also volunteered 10 years in a row with the Winter Sports Clinic and all five years of the Summer Sports Clinic.

When you talk to Howe, you can't help but be affected by his can-do attitude; it's pretty infectious. Having worked for the VA for the last 32 years as a Maintenance Engineer at the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System, Howe decided some time ago that he wanted to do something "hands-on" with patients. An avid outdoor sports enthusiast, Howe became certified as an adaptive surf instructor. He can teach and coach Veterans with traumatic brain injuries (TBI), spinal cord injuries and visual impairments, to surf.

“Some of us have jobs in the VA that aren't patient related, and these opportunities give me a chance to see a side of the healing process that most clinicians don't even get to see,” says Howe.

When I asked Howe what his favorite part of the Creative Arts Festival is, he told me that he “loves to watch the transformation from fear to confidence that the artists undergo.”

Over the years, he has seen several artists take some of their worst memories and traumatic experiences and find some very creative ways to express them, to communicate them. According to Howe, “Courage is not an absence of fear, but rather the judgment that there is something more important than fear.”

Whether it's performing art or fine art, the healthy expression of emotion in a creative, safe way is very powerful, he

says. To witness that firsthand, and to be able to help his “brothers and sisters” fulfill that release, is a gift Howe says everyone should experience.

“When some of these Veterans come home, especially from combat, it is hard for them to communicate or explain their inside wounds. It's easy for us to see a Veteran who is blind or an amputee and mentally grasp the challenges they face, we don't always realize the courage we are seeing when they actually express that moment publicly. Especially when you take into account that for some, simply getting out of bed in the morning or driving in traffic can be daunting,” says Howe.

So, the next time you hear the phrase “all the way” you'll know that for some people it is more than an expression. Howe calls it a gift to experience this festival, and it is one that should be re-gifted. You truly have to see this festival firsthand to appreciate what healing really looks like.

By *Darin Farr*

Public Affairs Officer

VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System

The Art and Science of Treating PTSD



Clear your calendar for tomorrow's presentation. Dr. Terence Keane, internationally renowned PTSD expert, will present **"The Art and Science of Treating PTSD,"** followed by a question and answer session.

Dr. Keane's presentation will give Veterans, family members and the public background on the interest in psychological trauma through history and discuss ways of processing war trauma through art and literature.

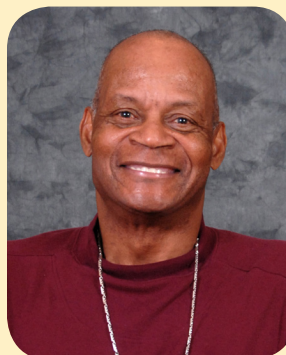
The lecture will also recognize the scientific bases of treating combat-related post-traumatic stress and examine how VA is disseminating evidence-based treatments and improving access to care.

Terence M. Keane, Ph.D., is Director of the National Center for PTSD-Behavioral Sciences Division and Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development at VA Boston Healthcare System.

The past President of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS), Dr. Keane has published thirteen edited volumes and over 250 articles and chapters on the assessment and treatment of PTSD. For the past 32 years, the VA, the National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense, and Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration have continuously supported his program of vital research on psychological trauma.

Dr. Keane's lecture is sure to cement what many Veterans already know: there is significant therapeutic value in artistic expression.

How has art promoted healing and enhanced your quality of life?



Ron McCampbell

Army Veteran
Anchorage, Alaska.

"When I needed something to hold onto, I gravitated to my roots, singing, and it is the greatest therapy. My voice and my music are my recovery tools."



Ronald Scarbough

Air Force Veteran
Detroit, Mich.

"The joy of creativity is what makes life a celebration for me, I am in my own wonderful world when I am working, it is the greatest form of love, an artist with his creation."



Dennis Linn

Air Force Veteran
Rapid City, S.D.

"Art gives me purpose in life, it gives me an outlet to pass on beauty to other people. It takes your mind off things and moves you to a more enjoyable place."



Cathy Fekete

Navy Veteran, Lyons, N.J.

"I tried everything else, but art is my healing and therapy. It allows me to connect with my feelings, but from a distance through character."

*By Pete Tillman
Public Affairs Officer
Durham VA Medical Center*

"IMAGINATION
is the beginning of
CREATION."

- George Bernard Shaw



**SOCIAL
MEDIA**



TWITTER:
[@VAAdaptiveSport](#)
[#NVCAF](#)



FACEBOOK:
[www.facebook.com/
VeteransAffairs](http://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs)



YOUTUBE:
[www.youtube.com/
DeptVetAffairs](http://www.youtube.com/DeptVetAffairs)



Flickr:
[www.flickr.
com/photos/
veteransaffairs](http://www.flickr.com/photos/veteransaffairs)