

Manchester VA Creative Arts Program



Manchester VA began the Creative Arts Program in 2018 and has aided in the physical and emotional needs of the Veterans of New Hampshire.

As a way to help veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities, [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#) medical facilities across the country are turning to a different form of rehabilitative treatment — creative arts. Each year, veterans enrolled at VA health care facilities showcase their talents in local creative arts competitions. For some, this provides an opportunity to open up and express themselves. “It’s an honor to be chosen out of so many talented people,” said one performer. “Being in the festival builds up my confidence. It brings joy into my life.” The visual arts division includes 51 categories, ranging from oil paintings to leatherwork to paint-by-number kits. In the performing arts division, there are 100 categories related to all aspects of music, dance, drama, and creative writing. “It’s given back a different life for me,” another performer said. “I always say if you get that second chance, grab it, run, and don’t look back.” Through a national judging process, first, second, and third place entries in each category are determined. Only selected first place winners are featured at NVCAF.

Since 2000, the Auxiliary has co-presented NVCAF, alongside the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#). Carrying out the Auxiliary’s mission of Service Not Self, members, units, and departments make generous monetary donations to help carry out this event. Best of all, Auxiliary members have had the opportunity to meet and develop relationships with these heroes who participate, leading to a life-changing experience for many. “What surprises me is how giving the ALA is, how unselfish they are,” said a performer. “I’ve had the time of my life here.”

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. Veterans participate in many mediums, including visual arts such as painting, sculpting and drawing, as well as creative writing, dance, drama and music.