

Warrior Songs Upcoming Creative Arts Healing Retreat

Warrior Songs will host a Creative Arts Healing Retreat December 6th-10th, 2017 at the Siena Center in Racine, Wisconsin. This retreat is completely free to veterans. We accept any veteran from any time period with any discharge. The only requirement is that they suffer from military related PTSD and/or MST and have an earnest desire to heal from it. Our retreats host fifteen veterans. Two combat veterans, a trained civilian art therapist, a civilian trained in mindfulness/relaxation techniques, and a civilian assistant, facilitate the retreat. We only work with civilians who have a history of outstanding dedication and commitment to assisting veterans.

Our retreats are based on.

Warrior Songs Creative Arts Healing retreats are based on the work of our good friend, Dr. Ed Tick. In his book "War and The Soul", Dr. Tick outlined the warrior's journey and points to how our country is good at sending our veterans off to war, and how we often fail at bringing them home. He points to a need for civilians to bear some of the responsibility of the actions of the veterans, who went to war and served in their name. It's an oversimplification of Dr. Tick's work, but put simply, in order for veterans to fully heal from the psychological and emotional wounds of war, veterans need to be able to communicate the truth of their experience and civilians need to hear it. This, Dr. Tick claims, is a required step in bringing our veterans home.

Format of the retreat

Over the 4-day retreat, veterans use the creative arts to share the stories of their military journey. We start with boot camp and move all the way to deployment and finally to returning as a different person as the one who left and the new battle they face with the enemy in their mind (PTSD). Each phase is explored through a different art modality: writing, fine arts, and music. All of the art exercises are created and facilitated by a trained art therapist. No art experience is needed to participate. Just an earnest desire to heal from PTSD.

Why the creative arts?

Healing from PTSD requires processing the experience and the trauma, but recounting an experience in a detailed linear account will often aggravate a veteran's PTSD. Veterans are triggered by the memory and so try to repress the memories. They isolate, they avoid, they self-medicate...they do everything they can to not remember. PTSD makes it very difficult for veterans to talk directly about their experience. At Warrior Songs we foster healing through the creative arts, where they can paint a feeling, or write a poem about the part of the story that they are ready to tell. When veterans show their art, they can communicate their truth without having to be the subject of the conversation. Instead of the listener looking at the veteran eye to eye, which can be disempowering and very uncomfortable, both the civilian and the veterans can look at the artwork, adding a layer of protection to the veteran. The creative arts allow the veteran to explore what they *are* ready to talk about in a way that isn't as triggering as traditional talk therapy. This retreat is not a replacement for traditional therapy, rather it is meant to augment traditional therapies and equip veterans with other ways to share their trauma.

Sharing the art

The retreat culminates with an art show and presentation in which the community can witness the work the veterans have created. The veterans share only what they want and are in complete control of what is shared. The final art show allows civilians to hear the truth of our warriors and completing the often-missing final piece of the warrior's journey as outlined by Dr. Tick.

Testimony from Veterans Who Attended Past Retreats

It may sound simple, but we have witnessed miraculous healing from these retreats. Veterans write us afterwards to tell us how much this changed their lives.

I left Warrior Songs with such a peace that when I returned home and saw my sister, and my shrink. I didn't even have to say, "I did such and such" because I was glowing like Moses when he came down from the mountain after visiting with God. They saw the difference in me before I even opened my mouth.
Kimberly L. Heartsong, Lt Colonel (Retired) – Desert Storm, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan

As a Vietnam vet, what these retreats provide is so instrumental in not only our individual healing, but by providing a venue for, camaraderie with more recent war veterans, fills a need for not only us individually, but will reap benefits for generations to come. That our communities would donate monies for me, someone they will never meet, to an experience such as Warrior Songs, touches me deeply. In a demonstrative fashion, your donors' generosity, coupled with the empathy of your facilitators exposes a worth; and nurtures us resulting in expressions that to have witnessed such, even as one of the walking wounded myself, is so private, so personal, so precious; I'm returned to my family, my community, filled with compassion and appreciation for what we warriors carry. Rick – Vietnam Veteran

I can't say enough in praise for the Warrior's Song retreat I attended this past month. It's been over 40 years since my return from the conflict in Vietnam, for the first time I've felt acceptance among my peers. I feel that my isolation, failed relationships and sketchy career have been vindicated in the truth telling of our stories, my experiences have been validated. Now I am free to speak my truth because of you all, able to accept my place as "elder", no longer a pariah. Through art, through poetry, song and writing, Warrior's Song has made it possible to speak the unspeakable. Ray – Vietnam Veteran

The Warrior Songs Retreat helped me tell a story that until recently only a precious few people inside my tightest circles were privy to--that I had spent a decade trying to bury and forget. Until that point, I had never picked up a paintbrush, and was blown away by what I was able to create, without even trying and having no training whatsoever. Something inside me had changed, for the good, forever. When I returned home from the retreat, my wife immediately recognized that my eyes were clearer, I had more bounce in my step, and a massive burden had been lifted from my shoulders. In painting, I had the perfect way to put memories down on canvas, in order to get the bad feelings out of my soul Jesse – Iraq Veteran

PTSD is not a weakness and we don't leave our wounded behind.

Thank you,

Jason Moon

Founder & Executive Director of Warrior Songs

www.warriorsongs.org info@warriorsongs.org

VETERAN HEALING RETREAT USING THE CREATIVE ARTS
December 6 – 10 2017

Siena Retreat Center
5637 Erie St, Racine WI 53402

Registration Request

Please complete and send to info@warriorsongs.org

Or mail to:

Warrior Songs
PO Box 8805
Madison, WI 53708

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Cell phone: _____ Home phone: _____

Emergency Contact Person: Name and Phone

Branch of Service: _____

Approximate Dates of Service: _____

Where did you serve? _____

Please list any special needs due to disability and any dietary restrictions.

Please circle any of the following that pertain to you.

PTSD TBI MST Insomnia Depression Anger/Rage Flashbacks

Survivors Guilt Always On Alert Moral Wounding Other:

Why would you like to attend this retreat and what do you hope to gain from the experience?
(use other side of this form if needed)

WARRIOR SONGS: SAFETY RULES FOR THE WEEKEND

- 1. We will respect each other's anonymity. Everyone agrees to confidentiality. What happens at the retreat stays at the retreat. After the retreat you are free to tell your story, but please do not tell other peoples story, unless you have their explicit permission. Your participation, image, and anything you create is held with the strictest of confidence unless you tell us otherwise.**
- 2. We will use the buddy system. Tell your buddy where you are going during down time if you are leaving the retreat grounds.**
- 3. If you have concerns or questions go to:
Aly: logistics: food, rooms, meeting times
Penney: program concerns, relaxation, stress reduction
Larry: liaison and individual support, health and welfare
Jason M: music and song writing
Lin: art activities and supplies.**
- 4. There will be a designated on-call person should you need support during the night.**
- 5. There will be veterans at the retreat who suffer from MST. Men, do not enter the sleeping quarters of the women veterans. If you need to reach some who is in there room ask one of the women on staff to assist.**
- 6. Avoid "on upping" each other. Respect that everyone's experience and trauma is their own. Do not try to outdo anyone else's trauma.**
- 7. If you need to step away from the group at any time, there will be designated timeout area. Tell your buddy and Larry will be nearby to offer support if needed.**
- 8. No use of alcohol or drugs (other than prescription) during the retreat.**

- 9. You will be expected to participate in all of the activities and to be on time. There will be ample downtime built into the retreat.**
- 10. Respecting the centers schedule, meals are served only at specific times. These times will be listed in your welcome folder.**
- 11. We are here to help. If you have a problem please bring it to our attention and we will fix it!**