

The Buzz

Bradley Hospital

Craft Community Crusaders

"It takes a village..."

African proverb

by Kristen Farrell

For any cause to gain momentum, it takes a group of dedicated individuals who put that cause above everything else. While many of us go home to have dinner and then decompress, activists of many causes are ordering takeout, or skipping the meal and spending every waking moment to further their mission – an all-consuming passion they possess to make a difference.

This issue of *Craft Industry Today* features several organizations that advocate arts and crafts as a means of wellness. This article has no less to offer. Read about these small businesses that are healing lives in their local communities.

Bradley Hospital – East Providence, Rhode Island

Emma Pendleton Bradley Hospital was the nation's first psychiatric hospital dedicated exclusively to children and adolescents. It's a private, not-for-profit hospital licensed as an acute care psychiatric hospital, residential treatment facility and certified special education school. Today, it remains the only facility of its kind in Rhode Island. Its mission is to provide a wide range of family focused, high-quality mental health care to infants, children, adolescents and young adults with emotional disorders and/or developmental disabilities.

Committed to improving the health status of its community, Bradley Hospital inaugurated the Healing Arts Program in 2012. Developed and directed by art therapist Maegan Gubata, LMHC, ATR, the program provides creative and therapeutic activities that improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children and adolescents who are enrolled in the hospital's wellness programs, including individuals who are psychiatric inpatients or have autism or developmental disabilities. Maegan partners with other staff members, and artists and musicians from the community who share their time and talents to use the arts as a means to heal patients.

The Healing Arts Program offers a variety of visual art projects, performance arts and musical programs to help children and adolescents express thoughts and feelings, cope with traumatic experiences, become more self aware, improve social skills, increase self esteem, decrease feelings of

frustration, and increase concentration and focus. For more information, visit www.bradleyhospital.org.

Charity Wings Art & Craft Center – San Marcos, California

Recently, medical facilities have begun to incorporate art programs as a means of patient wellbeing. What does this say about art? Well, clearly and simply stated – art heals. Charity Wings Art & Craft Center opens its doors to organizations who wish to incorporate art into their programs. Individuals dealing with issues ranging from autism to post-traumatic stress disorder partake in free creativity sessions.

"Art can speak volumes for those who find it hard to express themselves. It transcends all boundaries and gives everyone a voice," says Elena Lai Etcheverry, founder. However, one does not have to be diagnosed with a particular disorder or suffer trauma to experience the healing properties of art. People are burdened by work, family and school, but have no idea how to deal with the feelings that bottle up. A holistic approach is art. Art will help reduce the level of stress and increase one's sense of purpose. Since art prompts positive psychological changes, it is recommended that people incorporate art into their lives to achieve a fuller development and healthy lifestyle.

Charity Wings strongly believes in the power of art and thus offers a space in which anyone is welcome to create. This year, the organization celebrates 10 years of using art as a tool for people to feel happy, feel a sense of hope, and healing. For more information, visit www.charitywings.org.

Project Knitwell – Washington, D.C.

Project Knitwell brings the joy of knitting and its therapeutic benefits to people facing stressful situations. It is a 501(c)(3) with ongoing programs for patients, family members and staff at Washington, D.C. area hospitals, including Medstar Georgetown University Hospital (MGUH), Children's National Medical Center, and Virginia Hospital Center. The organization also conducts programs for adults and children at community and school sites.

Many who have participated in Project Knitwell's programs



have found that knitting can provide a respite from one's immediate situation, serve as a way to productively pass the time, and have a positive effect on reducing stress symptoms. It is relatively easy to learn, requires no artistic talent or prior experience, it is portable, and results in a useful product. Program participants report, "Knitting gives me peace of mind," "It is very soothing," "Knit purl knit purl. It's like a heartbeat," "Even though I could not hold [my baby in the neonatal intensive care unit], I poured my love into a sweater for her."

The results of a study conducted by two nurses at MGUH who learned to knit with Project Knitwell was published in the Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing in February 2016. It revealed that knitting is a beneficial way to combat compassion fatigue (burnout) among oncology nurses.

Project Knitwell was founded by a mom in 2010. She had successfully used knitting as a tool to cope with stress when her daughter was a pediatric patient at MGUH many years before. For more information, visit www.projectknitwell.org.

PeaceLove Studios – Pawtucket, Rhode Island and Las Vegas, Nevada

PeaceLove is changing how people think about mental health. The organization provides expressive arts programming to help individuals and communities create peace of mind. PeaceLove uses creative expression to inspire, heal and

Through the CREATORS program, PeaceLove in Rhode Island helps frontline professionals deliver an expressive arts curriculum to communities in need.



communicate emotions that are often difficult to convey in words.

PeaceLove programs strive to inspire, educate and build self-confidence through creative expression, inclusion and a message of hope. Through the CREATORS Program, PeaceLove equips frontline professionals to deliver an expressive arts curriculum to communities in need. Facilitators work directly with individuals, families and groups throughout the country to help them achieve improved mental health and better quality of life. After receiving training, CREATORS deliver a workshop series consisting of visual arts, storytelling, sounds and movement with the purposes of providing new resources and skills to achieve mental health.

Since 2009, PeaceLove has helped improve the lives of 19,431 individuals throughout the United States. That number is forecasted to increase to 25,000 individuals this year.

For more information, visit www.peacelovestudios.com. **CT**



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