



Veterans Coming Home

**WFYI Public Media, Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library & Herron School of Art and Design
Launch Multi-media, Art-focused Campaign to Support Indiana's Veterans**

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Did you know: **Marion County, Indiana ranks in the top 2% of counties in the nation with the largest population of veterans?** In fact, according to a 2013 report by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, **Marion County is home to 65,183 veterans, while more than 490,000 veterans reside in Indiana.** These are striking statistics, especially given that **14% of Indiana's veteran population is currently under the age of 25.** Moreover, **20% of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom veterans** meet diagnostic criteria for **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or depression,** according to research by the RAND Corporation.

Collectively, these statistics underscore a critical need in our community; the need to reach Indiana's extensive and diverse population of veterans through highly-accessible, effective and creative solutions that will help them transition to civilian life. With this goal in mind, **WFYI Public Media** — in partnership with the **Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library (KVML)** and **Herron School of Art and Design's Art Therapy Program** — is launching a multi-media, arts-focused awareness campaign designed to support Indiana's veterans and their families. This community-based initiative entitled, ***Veterans Coming Home***, is being made possible through a **\$25,000 grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).**

"Veterans Coming Home will promote community-wide dialogue around the significant challenges our veterans face — health care, housing, education and employment— while transitioning to civilian life," said **Lloyd Wright, president and CEO, WFYI Public Media.** "The campaign will also help connect returning veterans with existing community resources, as well as explore new and innovative approaches to healing and coping, such as therapeutic arts programs."

"Because **Herron School of Art and Design is on the campus of IUPUI** — one of the leading urban universities in the nation and **an institution with the largest enrollment of veterans (more than 1,200) of any college in Indiana** — we are steadfast in our commitment to support veterans' successful transition to civilian life, whether that is in collaboration with the IUPUI Office for Veteran's and Military Personnel, the Roudebush VA Medical Center, the Vet Center, or other community partners," said **Juliet King, director of art therapy and assistant professor at the Herron School of Art and Design.**

According to King, veterans say it best. “An Army sergeant, who was the sole survivor in 2007 when the Humvee he was driving hit a roadside bomb in Iraq, eloquently summed up his feelings about the value of his participation in an art therapy group, when he noted: *‘I understand the importance of therapy for veterans and the uniqueness of using art to negate a reluctance to talk about trauma. There seems to be a language barrier we veterans create when confronting these issues. I think, through art, we basically are constructing a bridge to better understand our psychological wounds. I believe [art therapy] to be an excellent medium to reach intangible emotions.’* Because Art Therapy is brain based, and can unlock expression in non-verbal ways,” King continued, “it offers a powerful tool to help people move forward.”

The multi-year initiative will tell veterans’ courageous stories in their own voices and profile local organizations supporting Indiana veterans’ transition and recovery. Highlights include:

- WFYI Public Television, in collaboration with Herron’s Art Therapy Program and KVML, will produce **video profiles of local veterans** who have relied on the healing benefits of art to address such mental health issues as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injuries. The videos will appear on air, online and will be shared through social media.
- WFYI Public Media, in collaboration with Wisconsin Public Television, will develop a **Veterans Coming Home website portal** that will feature program streams, local veteran profiles, links to community services, educational resources, and much more.
- A rich collection of **PBS documentaries and public radio specials** that tell the compelling stories of those that have served and provide a deeper understanding of our nation’s military history will be broadcast by **WFYI Public Television and Radio** in the coming year.
- KVML, in partnership with WFYI, will present its third annual **Veterans Reclaiming Armistice Day 2014** on November 8. The event will feature a panel discussion with veterans who have benefitted from art therapy as part of their recovery. **NPR’s Steve Inskeep** will serve as moderator for the discussion.

"The **Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library** features a number of programs for veterans but our most cherished program is the **Veterans Reclaim Armistice Day** that always falls the weekend before Kurt Vonnegut's birthday," said **Julia Whitehead, executive director of the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library**. "Veterans Day was called Armistice Day when Vonnegut was growing up, and the term "armistice" was especially meaningful to Vonnegut as he hoped all veterans would find peace following war. Vonnegut saw individual suffering at the hands of both the Nazis and the Allies during World War II, and our event and the literary magazine we release each year on this day are important outlets for veterans to find their voices through creativity," Whitehead added.

Veterans Coming Home will complement WFYI's on-going efforts to amplify the diverse voices of the Central Indiana community with its multi-media and educational services. **WFYI is one of only 13 public television stations nationwide to be awarded a CPB grant for the *Veterans Coming Home* initiative.**

About WFYI Public Media:

For more than four decades, WFYI Public Media has served as a center of discovery for all ages. WFYI's diverse public radio and television programs and services provide a foundation for early learning, inspire curiosity and serve as a catalyst for lifelong learning. To learn more about WFYI Public Media's programs and educational services, visit the station's website — www.wfyi.org, "like" us on Facebook, or follow along on Twitter (@wfyi and @wfyinews).

About Herron School of Art and Design's Art Therapy Program:

Herron School of Art and Design's Art Therapy Program responds to Indiana's need to educate master's-level art therapists, positioning them to obtain nationally-recognized professional credentials. The program's director, Juliet King, MA, ATR-BC, LPC, is conducting groundbreaking work with returning veterans through the Roudebush VA Medical Center. The collaboration is providing an opportunity for the veterans to benefit from art therapy for the first time in Indiana. For more information about the Art Therapy Program at Herron School of Art and Design, please visit <http://www.herron.iupui.edu/art-therapy>.

About the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library:

In honor of his timeless wit and wisdom, the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library champions the literary, artistic and cultural contributions of the late writer, artist, teacher and Indianapolis native Kurt Vonnegut. The library/museum serves as a cultural and educational resource unique to the nation. Visit www.vonnegutlibrary.org to learn more.

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