

October 26, 2022

David Schmit

504-913-3453

david@dmscommunications.net



Bastion Community of Resilience's Veterans Experience Project:
Day-long event on Nov. 11 explores military experiences through artistic expression

NEW ORLEANS-- Veterans Day events are normally presented to honor veterans and their service to our nation. But what's often lost in this are the veterans' experiences as service members and their lives following that service. Bastion Community of Resilience's Veterans Experience Project (VEP) sponsored by Got Your Six, a [Bob Woodruff Foundation](#) Initiative, which takes place **10 am-6 pm November 11 at Gallier Hall**, will change that by providing a hands-on event with several stages, interactive exhibits and a veterans hospitality zone, exploring military experiences that feature diverse and multicultural perspectives.

The event also marks [Bastion's](#) 10th anniversary. Bastion is America's first intentional community for returning warriors and families with life-altering injuries, filling the gap in long-term care for those injured veterans transitioning from military service to civilian life. Bastion's mission is to provide a supportive living environment for injured veterans and families within its intentionally-designed neighborhood by augmenting their care with specialists, neighbors, and volunteers for a holistic approach to community integration. Founder and Executive Director Dylan Tête says that VEP is about connecting the public to veterans and building a broader sense of community that bridges the military-civilian divide.

"This event will showcase veterans who are uniting communities across the nation through their leadership and continued service to the country," says Tête. "After 20 years of war, social revolution, and a pandemic, we are in this together! In recognition of his continued service, we are honoring John Boerstler, VA Secretary McDonough's Chief Veteran Experience Officer, who is transforming the VA for the 21st century."

There will be a full day of programming available, giving attendees the opportunity to "slip into the boots" of a service member or veteran, delving into their reality through various artistic mediums including visual art, the written and spoken word, performances and curated discussion panels.

Each program segment will be followed by a dialogue with the audience to provide further understanding into the servicemember experiences that aren't always expressed in popular culture. A number of nationally renowned veterans will be presenting at VEP:

- Veteran organization, Community Building Art Works ([CBAW](#)), will present a poetry reading, *We Are Not Alone*, from a number of veterans;
- Investigative journalist [Thomas Brennan](#), an award-winning (three Edward R. Murrow awards) writer who founded [War Horse](#), nonprofit newsroom reporting on the human impact of military service;
- Photojournalist [JT Blatty](#), whose work has been featured in many publications including *Bloomberg*, *Oxford American*, and *The Daily Beast*. Blatty has spent the past four years in Ukraine, covering volunteer soldiers fighting to preserve their country's democracy;
- Documentary filmmaker/photojournalist [Russel Midori](#);
- Author [Kayla Williams](#), who wrote *Love My Rifle More Than You* and *Plenty of Time When We Get Home*;
- Novelist [Michael Pitre](#), who is a Louisiana native who wrote *Fives and Twenty-Fives*, which follows an American road repair crew and bomb disposal team in Iraq;
- Interdisciplinary artist and holistic healer [Kiam Marcelo Junio](#);
- Playwright and LGBTQ activist [Jeff Key](#), who will perform selections from his solo performance piece [The Eyes of Babylon](#);
- and many others (artist bios and the VEP Run of Show are included in the press kit).

There will also be a screening of the HBO award-winning documentary, [We Are Not Done Yet](#), which follows 10 veterans from varied backgrounds who come together through a USO-sponsored arts workshop held at Walter Reed National Military Hospital to combat their traumatic histories through the written word. [Bo Dollis Jr. and the Wild Magnolias](#) will close out VEP, leading the audience to Gallier Hall's Party Room for beverages, hors d'oeuvres and conversation.

The interactive space will offer the public a chance to learn about papermaking from military uniforms, and then crafting a journal to take home. For visiting veterans and their families, there will be a veteran hospitality zone for food, beverages and an opportunity for vets and family members to connect with veterans service providers: the Veterans Administration, [Combined Arms](#), Veterans of Foreign Wars ([VFW](#)), [NextOP](#), [Tulane Center for Brain Health](#), [VISION](#), and others.

Got Your Six, a Bob Woodruff Foundation (BWF) initiative, is sponsoring VEP, and BWF CEO Anne Marie Dougherty says that VEP provides space for bolstering the understanding of the military experience through art and culture.

"We are thrilled to support Bastion Community's Veterans Experience Project on Veterans Day this year," says Dougherty. "As a military spouse who lived in New Orleans, I experienced not only the energy of the arts community, but the veterans community. This event is a wonderful opportunity to blend New Orleans and military cultures and to hear through veterans' voices the true sense of what

it means to have served.”

###

Bastion Community of Resilience is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides a supportive living environment for injured veterans and families within an intentionally designed neighborhood by augmenting their care with neighbors, volunteers and specialists for a holistic approach to community integration.

Bob Woodruff Foundation invites you to stand up for heroes so that we can find, fund, shape, and accelerate equitable solutions that help our impacted veterans, service members, and their families thrive. Our vision is to be the global leader in high impact philanthropic investment in the veteran community.