



THE HEALING POWERS OF THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

Photo Credits: Art & Creativity for Healing Inc. Volunteers, Laurie Zagon and Joe Sorrentino

# ART FOR HEALING

By Kelsi Maree Borland

**M**ore than 10 years ago, Laurie Zagon founded Art for Healing, a non-profit organization in Laguna Niguel, California with a mission to provide inner healing through art and creativity. The organization conducts art workshops for anyone in need – traveling to various hospitals, schools and shelters to provide healing through art. “We have a methodology designed for anyone to come and express themselves in a non-threatening way,” says Laurie.

Art has the power to heal our souls and lighten our burden, and gives us the opportunity to express ourselves in a way words do not allow. Laurie, originally an artist and fine arts professor from New York, came to this realization several years ago while teaching an art class to a group of Wall Street businessmen and women in New York City. “That night, I saw transcendence in action. I saw people becoming creative,” explains Laurie. The class was the first of its kind — an opportunity for those who knew nothing about art to begin exploring with paint and a canvas.

The success of that class led to many more, with untrained artists — regular people — visiting Laurie’s New York City studio to explore their artistic talents. “These types of classes bypass skill and let students express themselves from a subconscious point of view and tap in to their creative center,” says Laurie. Word of these classes spread to Orange County, California, where therapist and teacher Claudia Black was working with children and adults from alcoholic homes. Using Laurie’s art and color therapy techniques and Claudia’s work with abused children, the two collaborated on an art healing book, *It’s Never Too Late to have a Childhood: Inspirations for Inner Healing*.

The project profoundly impacted Laurie, who comes from an alcoholic family. “I know, as a troubled child myself, art is what saved me. I had my own world of art that was better than coping with what was going on,” says Laurie. She came to Orange County to work on the book and never left, feeling this was the best place for her to pursue her art as a mode for healing.

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After many years conducting her art healing workshops, Laurie began Art for Healing. The organization has a specific mission: “Supporting emotional healing through art and creative expression for those living with pain, grief, fear, or stress.” The first year the organization opened its doors, they helped 1,000 people. Today, the organization has helped over

27,000 — everyone from troubled children to adults suffering from illness to those seeking relief from stress.

Everyone can benefit from such a program—like the wounded soldiers or military families living at Camp Pendleton, the children in treatment at Chalk Hospital, or those attending a weekend workshop at the Laguna Niguel studio. To help run such an expansive program, the organization relies on a small team of certified art instructors and more than 100 volunteers.

The program has provided remarkable results, allowing students to move into a deeper level of themselves. “Abstract art is a language; only the artist knows what it says,” explains Laurie, and Art for Healing is an opportunity for people to express themselves in their own, abstract language.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### DONATE

Donate art supplies to Art For Healing. For a detailed list of items that will help support Art4Healing® workshops visit their website and click on the “Donate” tab. You can also make cash donations to help fund Art4Healing® programs.

### VOLUNTEER

Art For Healing relies on their fantastic group of volunteers to help provide workshops in our community. Please check out the following volunteer opportunities to get more information: Workshop Assistant, Office Help, and Fundraising.

### CONTACT

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