



THE
MILITARY
Family WINTER 2021

Military Arts Connection offers free arts classes

By Griffin Swartzell

Life moves fast; finding time to step away from the “how” of living and reconnecting with the things that provide the “why” takes deliberate effort. A healthy human needs a certain amount of art in their diet, whether for self-expression, for reflection or simply for pleasure. Fortunately, Colorado Springs has galleries, concert halls, clubs, theaters, statue gardens, libraries and more in ample supply — availability pending pandemic restrictions, naturally. And thanks to a partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts and the Department of Defense, local service members, veterans and their families can be referred for art experiences at zero out-of-pocket cost.

The Military Arts Connection, administered by the Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region, offers arts experiences and classes for service members, veterans and family members, all taught by local artists. It's a part of the NEA/DoD/Department of Veterans Affairs-run Creative Forces initiative, which has pioneered programs for arts and healing in the military sector for the last decade. Here's how MAC works: Local military and veterans service organizations, such as the USAFA Airman & Family Readiness Center or El Paso County Veterans Services, can refer people for one of many arts experiences through the program,



Shutterstock

which range from private music lessons to cooking classes to photography workshops. Participants must be referred — they can't just sign up on their own. Those referred for

such an experience pay nothing — COPPeR manages funds from a variety of supporting partners and pays artist facilitators directly, and participants need only finish an evalu-

ation survey after the fact.

“The point of the program [is] really to allow military and veterans and their families to have this opportunity to try something

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Your Alternative to Dealership Maintenance!

In addition to our 16-point inspection, we perform other preventative maintenance services recommended in your vehicle owner's manual:

- Air Conditioner Service
- Air Filter Replacement
- Automatic Transmission Flush
- Brake Fluid Flush
- Cabin Air Filter Replacement
- Differential Service
- Exterior Light Replacement
- Fuel & Emissions System Cleaning Service
- Fuel Filter Replacement
- Power Steering Fluid Flush
- Radiator Flush & Fill
- Serpentine Drive Belt Replacement
- Tire Rotation
- Transfer Case Service
- Wiper Blade Replacement

**\$10.00 OFF
A FULL SERVICE
OIL CHANGE!**

**GREASE
MONKEY**
Oil Changes & More

Valid only at the two Colorado Springs locations listed. Not valid with any other offers. Offer expires 05/31/21. MFFS10

350 South 8th St.

Ph: 719-520-0064

Mon.-Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-5 • Sun. 9-5

No Appointment Necessary

3795 Airport Rd.

Ph: 719-570-6112

Mon.-Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-5 • Sun. 9-5

**GREASE
MONKEY**
Oil Changes & More

Grease Monkey™ Provides More Than Oil Changes

Grease Monkey™ automotive service centers provide a fast and friendly maintenance service for your car or truck. Grease Monkey's certified technicians are hometown automotive service professionals who provide the services you need to keep your car or truck running smoothly. Our service teams know how busy your hectic schedule can get, so we make sure to provide the quickest, most convenient quality maintenance services for your vehicle.

Two area Colorado Springs locations offer air/cabin filters, tire rotation, radiator/coolant flushes, transmission flushes, belts, oil changes and more. Services are ‘by the book’ — the owner's manual book, that is! You can depend on Grease Monkey™ for quick, convenient maintenance for your car or truck with no appointment needed.

If you are responsible for maintaining a fleet of cars or trucks, you know the value of quick, affordable service to get your vehicles back on the road. The Grease Monkey™ auto maintenance centers in Colorado Springs will service your fleet vehicles and will help you keep a history of all of your maintenance records for each vehicle.

Grease Monkey™ cares about your family's safety on the road. Grease Monkey™ service teams pride themselves on a ‘less hassle, more hustle’ service experience to get you quickly and safely back on the road. For more information about Grease Monkey, go to www.greasemonkeyintl.com.

Visit one of our Grease Monkey locations today. We are located at:

350 South 8th St. • 719-520-0064

3795 Airport Rd. • 719-570-6112

LESS HASSLE, MORE HUSTLE!

new, connect with their family and community in a new and unique way, and learn alternative ways of expression — poetry, photography, whatever it is — that was not therapy,” said Erin Fowler, UCCS Veterans Health and Trauma Clinic clinical therapist.

While learning art may have therapeutic value, MAC isn’t art therapy the same way an exercise class isn’t physical therapy. It’s not about treating a specific need or difficulty. It’s about art as enrichment, as recreation and as a means of self-expression. Fowler says it’s also about the human-to-human connection, which gives MAC participants another familiar face in the community through an experience totally outside of military life.

“The variety of creative experiences that are available to the community is really rich and diverse and growing all the time,” said Andy Vick, COPPER executive director. “We’ve taken a little bit of a beating from COVID, in that some of the experiences really don’t lend themselves to a virtual environment... Notwithstanding that bump in the road that COVID has [caused] us, it’s really been a wonderful way to engage and connect the arts and military communities.”

While the MAC program is only two years old, its roots go further back. As noted above, it is a part of the Creative Forces initiative, which was started in 2011.

“The NEA has been piloting this notion of creative arts therapies as a way to help active duty and veteran populations...” Vick says. “About 2015, they came out and held a meeting... at the Fine Arts Center, where they pulled together a variety of [local and regional] art entities — the State Arts Council was there — and the NEA basically said [they had] identified 11 communities around the country that have active military presence and a strong arts community [and were] interested in standing a program up here in Colorado Springs in conjunction with Fort Carson.”

As part of that, there is a clinical component to the NEA’s goals in each of the 11 communities — Fort Carson’s Warrior Recovery Center has a music therapist, for example. However, the NEA also wanted programs to connect arts and military communities in these 11 locations. In February 2018, COPPER convened around 200 interested parties for a meeting of the minds, which defined local priorities and produced the earliest structure for MAC.

“Other sites around the country have their own community connections program that look nothing like Military Arts Connection,” Vick said.

“There [is] so much richness here in Colorado Springs, and diversity of... services that, for some of us, the military, we realized we were missing out on but didn’t have a clear pathway to connect,” said Damian McCabe, a retired army lieutenant colonel and the former chief of the Child and Family Behavioral Health System for the region. “And I think, conversely, there were lots of folks in this in the community wishing they had a more direct pathway to provide services to military families and veterans. [They] just weren’t sure how to negotiate this monolith sometimes that the military appears to be in terms of bureaucracy and red tape and processes and security and access and all that kind of stuff.”

In addition to making it easier for artist facilitators to connect to the military community, MAC gives them training for cultural competency. McCabe says that folks outside of the military often have a limited idea of what military life is like. It’s not a monolith — the backgrounds and experiences of active duty service members, combat and non-combat veterans, and their families all vary widely. When the MAC trains artist facilitators, the goal is to give them the tools to make clients feel connected and integrated with the community.

“I can’t think of a better community than our local artist community, which is also hugely diverse, to plug in and provide opportunities,” McCabe said.

What MAC offers, Vick clarifies, is not a lifelong pass to free arts classes in a chosen discipline. The experiences tend to be short-term, enough to let participants try something new without some of the logistical and financial obstacles.

“We want to spread the resources we have available around to as many people as possible,” Vick said. “You sign up for a block of four guitar lessons, great. And if you love it, and if your referring entity thinks you could benefit from another four, that’s fine.”

For someone like that, for whom a few MAC-backed guitar lessons have sparked a big interest, Vick says they’ll have the interest, the basic knowledge and the connections to keep going — in that example, to buy a guitar, book lessons outside of MAC and so on. If MAC leads a participant to a lifelong hobby, that’s a wonderful outcome — but the main goal of the program is to give service members, veterans and their families the chance to have an enriching art experience.

For more information or to find a list of service organizations providing referrals for arts experiences, go to militaryartsconnection.org.

“The variety of creative experiences that are available to the community is really rich and diverse...”

— Andy Vick



Spacious Skies for Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Tuition-Free Public Charter School

Opening Fall 2021

Learning Opportunities for Students at Spacious Skies

PBL - Students learn through projects as they develop deep content knowledge; critical thinking; collaboration, creativity, and communication skills.

Thinkering Lab - The Thinkering Lab is an environment for students to ‘learn by doing’ in the areas of science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM).

Literacy and Math blocks - Math and English Language Arts (ELA) are taught in designated 90-minute blocks of time to ensure that students learn each subject’s specific concepts and skills.



Active Education - Students are involved in wide range of movement and kinesthetic lessons that support healthy living and making positive choices.

Spacious Skies is a school where students develop a sense of curiosity, wonderment, and awe; where they create, imagine and innovate.

- Now enrolling K-4 for the 2021-2022 school year
- Play-based Kindergarten
- Small class sizes
- On-site before and after school care
- Whole child approach
- Two 20-minute recesses
- Caring, qualified teachers
- Endless possibilities

**Tuition-Free
Enroll Now!**

Peterson and Palmer Park Colorado Springs, CO 80915

spaciousskies.org | 719-331-6148 |  