

The Shelter for Abused Women and Children's "Healing Arts" is one way it helps to address trauma

BY CARLIE ADMIRE

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The Shelter for Abused Women and Children of Naples is working toward helping local survivors of exploitation with creative therapy through its Healing Arts Program.

October marks the official month of Domestic Violence Awareness, symbolized by purple in partnership with "Go Purple Day" on Thursday, Oct. 19. There have been more than 1,600 cases reported through 911 calls alone within just Naples, Marco Island, and Immokalee during 2022. The Shelter for Abused Women and Children in Naples focuses on protection, prevention, and prevail when it comes to domestic violence and human trafficking.

Many survivors of abuse can suffer from long-term traumas — mentally, emotionally and physically. These effects can be triggered by sounds, sights, and smells associated with past events. The Healing Arts Program offers a non-verbal approach of therapy, providing the mind a sense of calmness by incorporating artistic methods of expression.

The Healing Arts Program includes aromatherapy, writing and art, meditation, yoga and stretching, metal Tibetan bowls, drum circles, and classes on food and nutrient to reduce stress and provide healthy lifestyles and selfcare.

Women of the shelter participate in the "Clothesline Project," where they design and decorate a shirt that embodies their triumphs and empowerment. Many shirts read, "I am enough" and "love is kind."

The shelter's Domestic Violence Awareness Month Clothesline Project is a visual display of violence statistics that often go ignored. Each shirt is made by a survivor of domestic violence (adults and children) in its emergency shelters and outreach programs. As part of this month's special DVAM events, these shirts were displayed at the shelter's candlelight vigils at both emergency shelters and at the Immokalee Peace Fair. The purpose of the shelter's DVAM Clothesline Project is to increase awareness of the impact of violence and abuse, to honor a survivor's strength to continue, and to provide another avenue for them to break the silence that often surrounds their experience.

"Art is an excellent way of self-expression and way of coping with mix feelings a lot of survivors go through," said Lissette McCabe, the shelter's healing arts advocate. "It is all about self-discovery. I do both group classes and individual within the Naples and Immokalee location, in English and Spanish."

McCabe has 20 years of experience and teaching within the education of arts, and is certified in many fields, including the United States Art Counsel in high-risk



COURTESY THE SHELTER FOR ABUSED WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF NAPLES

Artwork created within the Healings Art Program.

communities. "I previously was working in the emergency shelter, answering phones and working night shifts. I then took over the Healing Arts Program about two months ago. I love to start every session by offering a relaxing cup of tea," said McCabe.

"It is the art process. You think about what you want to create, you sketch your ideas and gather your materials, and you put it into the project. If you do not have the correct shade of green, you mix the darker color with white and change it. If you mess up, you correct it or try it again. These are steps that can be applied to other situations in life," said McCabe.

"We do many different forms of art. One I enjoy is breathing and meditation. You can calm the mind with breathing exercises, it really centers the body. These methods can be used in high-stress situations, such as, court appearances, job interviews, or even having to schedule appointments over the phone," said McCabe. "Breathwork paired with a scent of peppermint, that energizes the body, can help those set an intention for the day. Having a single goal per day can add up, by the end of the month, 30 to 31 goals can be met, even simple ones."

The Healing Arts Program also focuses on self-care, by creating routines and healthy habits. From as simple as skincare, organizing a calendar with time management, to celebrating every accomplishment during the process of healing. "I had a member tell me how the knitting classes really have helped with giving her mind time to think and process things. It is all about the repetitive motions and patterns that are used while knitting create that calming routine," said McCabe.

The Healing Arts Program also has classes on guided reflection and stretching, which is led differently than a traditional yoga class. "I do not re-position anyone in the class. I simply invite them to follow my motion and to move their bodies in their own, comfortable ways," said McCabe. "I hosted a class where we did the hand sign and body pose for different words, and one participant usually passes on their turn. One day she proudly did the sign and shouted the word 'empowerment,' and we all did it with her and cheered."

The Healing Arts Program additionally offers journaling and sketching. These prompts assist with survivors getting to know themselves again, from simply asking what their favorite color is to something they may not have enjoyed in a while, like seeing the sunrise on the beach. The program often creates the "imperfect circles" with paints, creating and labeling circles to give a visual of feelings and situations.

It also uses sounds of Tibetan bowl. "I had a few mothers and daughters relax on yoga mats together with pillows and blankets and I chimed the bowls in different areas of the room. It was a calm way to bond, and the vibrations created by the crystal bowls helps reset the body," said McCabe. "These singing bowls also help support sleeping patterns, since a lot of survivors have a hard time both sleeping and relaxing. I have them focus on 61 points of their body, which releases the built-up tension, the pain and stress we hold onto physically."

The Healing Arts Program isn't always quiet — drum circles are also part of the schedule. Partakers beat to the rhythm

to different songs together, creating unity. These songs include popular music and request from the participants. Drum circles create high frequency energy and allow them to feel the sensation of their hands on the instrument and the power it gives off.

The Healing Arts Program follows "The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom" (a Toltec wisdom book) written by Don Miguel Ruiz. They are listed as: be impeccable with your words, don't take anything personally, don't make assumptions, and always do your best.

The Shelter for Abused Women and Children of Naples currently houses over 80 individuals, providing homes, children care and afterschool help, along with areas of shelter for both men and pets. This local shelter supplies clothing for jobs and interviews, fully stocked pantries, playground, and more beyond the necessities, including the Healing Arts Program.

Domestic violence and human trafficking are not just behind closed doors at home, it occurs within workplaces, schools, places of worship, and other social settings. The Shelter for Abused Women and Children of Naples has programs within all Collier County schools from kindergarten to high school, to help educate and spread awareness of violence and warning signs. The shelter also offers other programs, which include "Gentle Man's Program." Shop or donate to the shelter's boutique, "The Shelter Options Shoppe," located at 968 Second Avenue North in Naples, supporting the cause directly.

To be a part of the fight to end domestic violence and human trafficking, donate supplies or financial endowments, visit the shelters at <https://naplesshelter.org>. If you or someone you know needs help, call or text the Crisis Line at 239-775-1101, which is available 24 hours a day and seven days a week. ■

In the KNOW

Healing Arts Program

The Shelter for Abused Women and Children of Naples

• **Domestic Violence Helpline:** 239-775-1101, call or text for immediate help

• **Website:** <https://naplesshelter.org>
Contact for information: 239-775-3862

The Shelters Options Shoppe

968 Second Avenue North in Naples
Donations are used to assist the shelter, including clothing and home furnishings

• **Contact:** 239-434-7115

• **Hours:** 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday – Saturday; 12 – 4 p.m. on Sunday

Naples Pickleball Center to host Fifth Annual Veteran's Day Tournament

The largest Veteran's Day Pickleball tournament is back for its fifth year and will be held November 10-11 at Naples Pickleball Center, in East Naples Community Park. Home to 64 courts, "The Pickleball Capital of the World" is supporting local veterans — this year's tournament proceeds will benefit two local organizations: Collier County Wounded Warriors and HomeBase of SW Florida.

"This event is not just another event, it's a pickleball experience for the community and a chance for players and spectators to recognize the needs for our local veterans and local nonprofits that

support those needs," says Bob Strommen, managing partner of NPC.

Team categories include women's doubles, men's doubles and mixed doubles, ages 18 and older. Registration closes Oct. 31. Registration fee is \$99 per person and includes entrance fee and a logo towel. Visit <https://youtu.be/RYYGD-Q6WMO0> to register online or stop by the Naples Pickleball Center Pro Shop at 3500 Thomasson Dr #202, Naples.

Pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports in the country. According to a par-

ticipation study from the Association of Pickleball Professionals released earlier this year, more than 36.5 million people played the sport from August 2021-22.

Previous data estimated the participation rate of the sports at five million players in 2021.

The Veteran's Day event is organized by Naples Pickleball Center, the operating company for Collier County who runs more than 40 events throughout the year in the East Naples Community Park. NPC provides a full range of private and semi-private lessons, skill and drill

sessions, open play, and has a state of the art 2,000 square foot pro shop with pickleball equipment and apparel located in East Naples, which is also home of the Minto US Open Pickleball Championships held annually in the spring attracting an additional 30,000 visitors.

For more information about Naples Pickleball Center, visit www.naplespickleballcenter.com, or call 239-319-8640. For details about the National Pickleball League, visit www.nplpickleball.com.

Sponsorships for the tournament is available — contact Nannette@content-clix.com for more information. ■

