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## California Arts Council awards grant to Veterans In Art program of the Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles

Veterans reacclimating to civilian life transfer their military skills to backstage theatre work

**LOS ANGELES (June 5, 2016)** – The **California Arts Council** has awarded a \$16,200 grant to the **Veterans In Art** program at the **Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles**.

The Veterans In Art program is a veteran-centric arts-based transitional employment initiative targeting cadres of chronically unemployed veterans (out of workforce on average for 4 years) enrolled in VA rehabilitative programs. They are hired in all areas of theatrical production to support and develop workforce skills, and inspire transition to mainstream civilian employment. In 2018, 40 veterans worked on the company's production of *Henry IV* starring Tom Hanks (Forest Gump) and Joe Morton (Scandal) at the VA West Los Angeles Healthcare Campus Japanese Garden. The crew built a stage and set from scratch, installed seating, operated lights and sound, worked with audience in front of house positions, made costumes, provided security, and landscaped the area.

"If you ever need to get something done, employee veterans," said Ben Donenberg, executive artistic director of the Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles. "The Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles is grateful for the support of the California Arts Council this year."

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### **About the Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles**

The Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles has over 30 years of award-winning history in Los Angeles. In June 2018, the Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles produced *Henry IV* directed by Daniel Sullivan with Harry Groener, Tom Hanks, Hamish Linklater, Joe Morton and Rondi Reed at the Japanese Garden on the West Los Angeles VA Campus. The theatre set and other production elements were built by a veteran workforce. SCLA offers outreach programs such as Will Power to Youth, an employment and enrichment program that combines hands-on artistic experience with paid job training, specifically created to provide an arts immersion for at-risk youth; Will Power to Schools, a program providing free tickets to students to see Shakespeare as well as professional teacher training; and Veterans In Art, which provides employment, training and educational opportunities for underemployed military veterans. For more information on Veterans In Art, view a video at <https://bit.ly/2WMJx7N> or visit [www.shakespearecenter.org](http://www.shakespearecenter.org).

