



VETERAN ART: A 3-D representation of the environment of detention camps on the U.S. border shows a recreation of a drawing made by a 9-year-old girl, silver blankets given out to detainees, who then use them to make shoelaces, as their shoelaces are confiscated. This piece by Capt. Kimberly Elenberg is one of several in the Military Vets Art Exhibit, opening Friday, as part of the Healing Vets Weekend. (Capt. Kimberly Elenberg)

Veterans and families invited for art exhibit, cycling event, benefit concert



By [Vail Stewart Rumley](#)
[Email the author](#)

Published 7:59 pm Wednesday, May 1, 2019

From 2008 to 2016, there were more than 6,000 veteran suicides reported each year, according to a 2018 study by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The same study calls for concerted effort, a collaboration of public and private partners, at every level — national, state and community — to better understand and support veterans in crisis.

This weekend, the second-annual Healing Vets Weekend will take place in Washington, a two-day event to promote awareness of veterans' issues and offer access to the agencies providing

support services to veterans and their families. It's also an invitation to the public to take part in activities supporting veterans and their causes.

"The weekend is designed to draw awareness to veterans' issues and to veterans of the importance of healing in their lives," said Rob Greene Sands, CEO of Pamlico Rose Institute for Sustainable Communities, the event's organizer. "It's not so much of a celebration of veterans and what they have done for our country — though it is in some ways — but it's as much designed to bring awareness of the impact of that service to our country on veterans today. And we just want to draw that to people's attention."

The weekend starts Friday at 5:30 p.m. with an opening reception of the Military Veteran Art Exhibit at Arts of the Pamlico's Turnage Theatre, followed by VET Talks — IBX, a take on the popular TED Talks series, featuring two people who have worked on active-duty and veterans affairs at the highest levels of federal government. Capt. Kimberly Elenberg, RN, DNP, has worked across the Department of Defense, the White House, and Health and Human Services to advance health policy across the federal government, and Rachel Breslin, PhD, is an adjunct professor at George Washington University, a fellow with The Lab @ DC, and a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves, according to their bios. Elenberg and Breslin will talk about the importance of resilience in helping veterans transition from the military to civilian life and reintegrating into their communities, drawing on their own military service, deployments and academic experience, according to a press release. These events are free to the public.

Saturday starts early with sunrise yoga in Festival Park at 7 a.m., followed by the Ride for Rose Haven — 30-, 60- and 100-mile bicycle rides that start and end at Festival Park. At 10 a.m., the park will host the Veteran Outreach Fair for all veterans, friends and families, with vendors, Veteran Service Organizations and agencies that offer help with veterans' career, education and healthcare/wellness options, counseling, housing and more. Local organizations play a large role in the Healing Vets Weekend, according to Sands.

"One of our partners is the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 48, so we've been working closely with them; NC Works, Arts of the Pamlico and a number of other nonprofits that have veterans' interests at heart," Sand said. "For us, understanding the different veteran populations that are in this area, and also from here to the coast, is important because we're trying to draw the attention of rural veterans, and let them know there are groups and activities available."

A Festival Park lunch cookout is free to all veterans; donations from non-veterans are suggested.

The Healing Vets Weekend wraps up with a benefit concert from noon to 2 p.m.

For more information about the event, visit www.pamlicorose.org/healing-vets-weekend-2. To register for the Ride for Rose Haven, visit event.racereach.com/ride-rose-haven.