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Wheeling and Healing: Painted Brain's Art Cart Brings Hope

LOS ANGELES, Calif.- Every Friday, Painted Brain, a Los Angeles based nonprofit that concentrates on changing the stigma of mental illness, brings out a cart filled with art supplies, free snacks, hygiene kits and empathetic ears to MacArthur Park; this cart is known as the Art Cart. The Art Cart started as a trial in August 2017 and is aimed at helping people experiencing homelessness. Its goal is to use art as an outlet for those individuals in the hopes of creating a sense of community and understanding.

Art is one of the key factors that the organization has upheld for the past 10 years. Painted Brain believes that through the use of art as a form of expression, it can drive a lasting change to mental health. Art therapy is one of the most prominent ways to construct mental health rehabilitation; it provides the individual with a space to think creatively, reduce stress, help with brain connectivity and plasticity and boost self-esteem. The homeless population in Los Angeles has surged over the past few years which can be caused by mental illness. Therefore, mobilizing art through the homeless centers of the downtown district is a way for Painted Brain to connect with individuals, learn their stories, provide a safe space and let them heal.

“I feel like what we do with Art Cart is so unique. It gives individuals the power to ask for what they need and build relationships.” Allison Peters, a Painted Brain member, exclaims her passion for the project. She continues by stating, “Since starting, Art Cart has served 207 individuals and 191 hygiene kits have been distributed. It has not only given people in the moment support but connected individuals to long-term housing- a choice that each individual who approaches our staff, independently makes.”

Painted Brain is a nonprofit organization that strives to generate a revolutionary change about the stigma of mental health. Its mission is to create lasting community-based solutions to mental health challenges and the impact of social injustice through arts, advocacy, and enterprise. The Art Cart occurs at MacArthur Park on 2230 W 6th St, Los Angeles, CA 90057. The project takes place from 10-12 a.m. on Fridays. All items on from the cart are provided free of charge for the community. For more information, visit paintedbrain.org/artcart or contact Kevin Naruse at paintedbrainmedia@gmail.com.

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