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Songwriting With:Soldiers makes its Tidewater debut with 7th Annual Sea Level Singer Songwriter Festival

April 11 Workshop and Concert to celebrate the stories of service members

NORFOLK, Va. – (March 3, 2014) – Tidewater Arts Outreach (TAO) and its Sea Level Singer Songwriter Festival present an afternoon Songwriting With: Soldiers workshop free and open to the community at School of Rock, 430 Boush St. and an 8 p.m. concert free for all military with valid ID and suggested donation of \$10 for the general public with Songwriting With: Soldiers, Friday, April 11 at Nauticus, 1 Waterside Dr., Norfolk,. Festival presenting sponsors are Liberty Tax Service and Riverside at Patriots Colony.

The free afternoon songwriting workshop at School of Rock which takes place from 1 – 4 p.m., is open to the community, but encourages active duty service members and veterans to work on their story-telling through song craft. This opportunity will be spearheaded by nationally-recognized singer-songwriter and recording artist, Darden Smith. The 8 p.m. evening concert highlights this organization’s goal of helping veterans and active-duty service members tell their stories through song.

“This partnership is perfection for Tidewater Arts Outreach and the Festival”, says TAO executive director, MaryAnn Toboz, as her organization’s mission is one of healing through the performing and visual arts. “We’re looking forward to giving back to our military community by bringing this restorative and soulful project, recognized by news outlets like CNN, NPR and the New York Times and beneficiaries of charitable support from the Bob Woodruff Foundation, to our shores.”

“We want to honor our local military with a concert at Nauticus that allows active and veteran service members, from all branches of the military and armed forces, the opportunity to hear great music and learn about an inspirational program that uses the arts --specifically songwriting -- to heal.

For more information or how to secure tickets about Sea Level Singer Songwriter Festival events and Songwriting With: Soldiers workshop and concert, please visit TidewaterArtsOutreach.org, connect with us on Facebook or call 757-965-5155.

About the Sea Level Singer/Songwriter Festival

The Sea Level Singer/Songwriter Festival, now in its 7th year, is a three-day celebration of live, original music and art to benefit Tidewater Arts Outreach. The festival includes a headline kick-off concert featuring Grammy award-winning artist Shawn Colvin at the Naro Expanded Cinema on Thursday, April 10, an Emerging Artist Contest for singer/songwriters within 100 miles of Norfolk, the Instruments of Art auction Gala and Auction at the Selden Arcade, March 15, indoor and outdoor live performance showcases by local musicians, and a custom Merrill Guitar raffle. The festival is the largest annual fundraiser for Tidewater Arts Outreach. Find out more at <http://www.tidewaterartsoutreach.org/sea-level-singer-songwriter-festival/>

About Riverside at Patriots Colony

Riverside offers vibrant retirement living at Patriots Colony in Williamsburg, a community exclusively for former and retired military officers and federal civil servants, and at Warwick Forest in Newport News, an active lifestyle community with small town charm .

About Liberty Tax Service

As a presenting sponsor, Liberty Tax Service offers fast, accurate and friendly tax preparation services while supporting local communities with fundraising endeavors and contributes as a national sponsor for many charitable causes. For a more in-depth look, visit [Liberty Tax Service](#) and interact with Liberty Tax on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About Songwriting With: Soldiers

Songwriting With: Soldiers was created with the goal of helping veterans and active-duty service members tell their stories through song. In single-day workshops and multi-day retreats, soldiers (including service men and women from all branches of the military) are paired with professional songwriters. Together, they transform stories about combat and the return home into lyrics and melodies, a collaborative process that fosters trust, healing, and creativity. The resulting songs—losing a friend in battle, struggling with substance abuse, reconnecting with a spouse—are as diverse as the participants themselves. As founder Darden Smith says, “It’s all about listening.” After each event, participants receive CDs of the songs, a lasting artifact that can be shared with families, friends, communities, and beyond.

The SW:S program helps bridge the divide between military and civilian communities. As these songs circulate through CDs, performances, videos, lyric books, and website downloads, they inspire connection, compassion, and understanding of the challenges faced by the brave men and women who serve their country. <https://www.songwritingwithsoldiers.org/>

About Tidewater Arts Outreach

Tidewater Arts Outreach (TAO) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2003 to share the joy and healing power of the arts with people who have special needs and who are isolated from society. TAO provides workshops to bring state-of-the-art arts and health programs to Hampton Roads. TAO also presents dozens of programs each month in hospitals, retirement homes, rehabilitation centers, homeless shelters and other facilities throughout Hampton Roads. These performances and programs promote human interaction, intellectual stimulation, happiness and healing for people who have limited access to the arts due to health, economic or social circumstances. Last year, nearly 8,000 people were reached through 306 Tidewater Arts Outreach programs and workshops at 67 locations. Tidewater Arts Outreach supports the spirit of empathy and caring in the music and arts community, and hundreds of artists participate in its programs. For more information, connect with us on Facebook or visit www.TidewaterArtsOutreach.org.