






A groundbreaking model of public art developed at California's Department of State Hospitals-Napa





**Unbound offers a vision of collective liberation—freedom from the cages of trauma that hold us back:**

-  From the giving and receiving of love
-  From living our best lives
-  From full engagement in our communities

# OVERVIEW

Starting in the middle of the COVID pandemic, 1500 people came together in Northern California to make and paint hundreds of winged hearts for a striking 80-foot public artwork, *Unbound*.

This work of wonder was built in a highly unlikely place: within a locked psychiatric facility and was co-created by the patients, staff, and outside community members around the Bay Area.

Transforming a large hall into an evocative healing space, *Unbound* is an awe-inspiring, 80-foot sculpture made by 500 psychiatric patients, 200 hospital staff and 800 community volunteers. Imagine hundreds of winged hearts bursting from a cage dripping with darkness. *Unbound* gives hope that we can fly free from the traumas that bind us: personal, intergenerational, societal. The community artmaking process by which *Unbound* was made embodies its message that we are all one and that our liberations are interwoven and dependent on our commitment to love and compassion.

Together, arts non-profit Life On Earth Art and the California Department of State Hospitals-Napa (DSH-Napa) forged an innovative model of public art, combining behavioral health services, creative art therapies, community artmaking with high-level artistic design and craftsmanship.

Incorporating innovative therapies like music and dance, therapists used a semi translucent screen to film the shadows of their patients dancing and drumming, exploring what it means to be 'unbound and free.'. For many patients, seeing themselves perform on video offered a positive affirmation they hadn't been given before.

California is suffering an epidemic in loneliness and social isolation, a mental health crisis that is inordinately impacting youth and those facing economic, social, and medical barriers. Collectively made public art offers an innovative and powerful response to the growing forces of fracture and division in our society.

In a survey conducted by Napa Therapists, patients generally agreed that participating in *Unbound* helped them feel more comfortable around, accepted by, and more connected to others. Patients also reported an increased sense of belonging, pride, and accomplishment, as well as being part of the greater community.



**WATCH THIS VIDEO ON THE CREATION OF UNBOUND**  
**PRINTED VERSION: SCAN THE QR CODE**  
**DIGITAL VERSION: [CLICK HERE](#)**

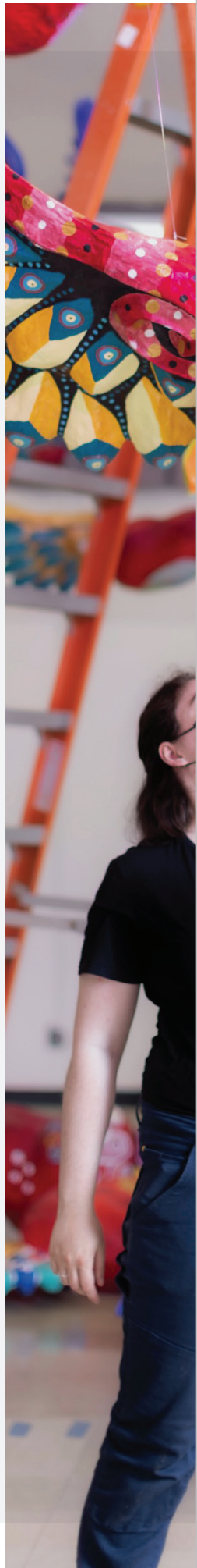
# THE MAKING OF UNBOUND



Artist Tracy Ferron's conceived the *Unbound* project inspired by her childhood experiences with her brother, Bob, who suffered with paranoid schizophrenia and spent much of his life in California state psychiatric facilities. Knowing the hopelessness and isolation often faced by those with severe mental illness and their families, Ferron envisioned this epic community art collaboration as a way to uplift and include those who feel most unseen and forgotten and to advocate for mental health awareness. The sculpture features 7 sizes of paper maché winged hearts which range from 9 inches to 9 feet wide – the hearts appear to expand as they fly free from the cage. Her intention was to build this artwork of hope and liberation through an inclusive, accessible and empowering community process.

Camille Gentry, Chief of Rehabilitation Therapy Services and the Executive Team at DSH-Napa embraced the *Unbound* project in February 2021 as a bridge to foster connection and collaboration between the patients, staff and the outside community. Ferron began designing the complex project and

hosted the hospital therapists in her gallery to learn heartmaking in Petaluma in Sept 2021. Over the next 9 months, Life On Earth Art galvanized 800 volunteers to make hearts, prioritizing underserved populations including shelterless communities, dually diagnosed individuals, and at-risk youth and Gentry's team worked with over 500 patients, exploring what it means to be 'unbound and free' in myriad therapeutic modalities. A major goal was to build bridges between the patients and the outside community but because they are physically separated and patients cannot be photographed-the teams had to innovate. They did so by photographing just the hands of both populations holding their winged hearts, recording collective collaborated original music tracks and by video recording the shadows of patients dancing so that their expression could be seen. Gentry credits *Unbound* with forging a sense of belonging for patients and staff and 'providing patients with a unique kind of purpose.' *Unbound* features 800 winged hearts which required 8 installations over 13 days.





“The intention of the project is for *compassion* and a *sense of connection*, of our *common humanity*, to ripple out as an antidote to the fear and division plaguing our society. It is my belief that personal healing, the forging of a robust social fabric and creating a just world are all intimately interwoven.”

Tracy Ferron,  
Founder of Life On Earth Art

Camille Gentry and her innovative team of 70 multidisciplinary therapists each approached the Unbound project through the lens of their chosen therapeutic modality:



Art Therapy



Music Therapy



Recreation Therapy



Dance & Movement Therapy



Occupational Therapy

*“The Unbound art installation at DSH-Napa, our oldest operating state hospital, is truly one of the most inspiring and uplifting things to happen at our state hospitals...”*

Stephanie Clendenin,  
Director Of California's  
Department Of State Hospitals

*“There is a transformative place here, a place that is a holy integration between light and darkness...”*

Ofir Uziel, Rehab Therapist,  
Department Of State  
Hospitals, Napa

*“...it just made it seem that the community had a sense of connection to the patients that don't usually feel that connection on a regular daily basis.”*

Alicia Brewster, Rehabilitation  
Therapist, Department Of State  
Hospitals, Napa



# HELP BRING THE MAGIC OF

# UNBOUND TO THE PUBLIC

After uplifting patients and staff for two years, *Unbound* is ready to move to a new location in 2024. Patients painted their hearts, wrote songs and poetry, and created shadow dances specifically for the outside world to see and enjoy.

Life On Earth Art is actively **seeking private, non-profit, museum, and government partnerships** to make the public installation of *Unbound* a reality.

This multimedia interactive installation will showcase the power of the creative arts for rehabilitation and inspire audiences to engage in self-expression and consider how we can each take steps to tell our stories, express our truths through art and build a world of greater care and compassion.

## **WHERE DO YOU FEEL THE HOPE OF UNBOUND IS MOST NEEDED?**

We want to bring *Unbound* to your publicly accessible location - hospital, court house or museum. For more details contact Executive Director, Tracy Ferron at [tracy@lifeonearthart.org](mailto:tracy@lifeonearthart.org)

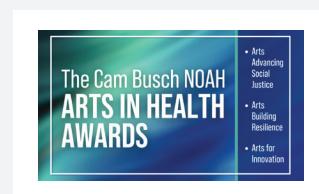


Unbound.

# AWARDS

The groundbreaking innovations of *Unbound* have been recognized by state, national and international organizations.

- **California Department of State Hospitals:**  
Director's Top Award 2023: Camille Gentry and Alicia Brewster, Department Of State Hospitals, Napa
- **The National Organization of Arts in Health:**  
First Place Award for Arts for Innovation 2022
- **CODAWorx Top 100 Global Large-Scale Artworks 2023**





## COLLABORATING PARTNERS

This cross-sector collaboration united non-profits, community members, schools, creative arts therapists, educators, philanthropists, HHS/DSH, to innovate a program uniquely addressing the common challenges of social isolation, fracture, disconnection, loneliness and to destigmatize mental illness, liberate and give hope to participants.



California Department of  
**State Hospitals**



**LIFE ON EARTH ART**



**CARONDELET  
HIGH SCHOOL**



**chops  
Teen Club**



**COTS**  
Est. 1988



**CREDO**  
SCHOOL OF ARTS, LETTERS & SCIENCES  
A member of the Alliance for Public Workforce Education



**Mentor Me**  
CHANGING LIVES®  
A Program of Petaluma People Services Center



**MUSEUM**  
of SONOMA COUNTY



**TURNING POINT**  
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS  
A Path to Mental Health



# ABOUT LOEA

## Life On Earth Art unites people to create art for global healing.

Life On Earth Art unites people to create art for global healing. Through artistic and collaborative engagements, LOEA empowers personal and collective healing through participatory public and community artworks, programming, and social action. We believe in the power of art to transcend boundaries and unite diverse communities for the greater good. Using the symbolism of winged hearts and cages, we examine imprisonment and liberation in society, facilitating experiences at the intersection of health equity and art equity.

LOEA was founded to utilize the transformative power of art to heal trauma, raise awareness about injustices, and amplify compassion. We combine curricula informed by art therapy practices and social engagement tools to create inspiring large-scale multimedia installations—all of which illustrate the power of collectively-made art to promote world-wide healing.

We specialize in engagements with communities who face social, emotional, physical, and/or mental health challenges, and our customized curricula offers opportunities for expression and storytelling. To date, we have served people undergoing mental health treatment, at-risk youth, teachers, seniors, first responders and social workers, veterans, and incarcerated persons.

Our 12,000 square foot headquarters is housed within an historic brick warehouse in the heart of downtown Petaluma and offers art classes, gallery and maker spaces, private offices, a stage, and special event rentals. LOEA's center, artistic programs and classes offer a community platform for underrepresented voices, ensuring everyone feels welcomed and safe, fostering trust and empathy through a profound sense of belonging.



“... It’s deceptively simple.

You create paper mâché hearts by pressing paper into molds, but the ripples of healing and connection are profound.”





# LIFE ON EARTH ART UNITE. CREATE. HEAL.



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