



Sharing cultures. Enriching communities.

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ARIZONA HUMANITIES COUNCIL AND PHOENIX VA MEDICAL CENTER PARTNER TO HOST LITERATURE & MEDICINE PROGRAM

(Phoenix, AZ) - The ARIZONA HUMANITIES COUNCIL is pleased to announce that the VA Medical Center in Phoenix has been selected to be the first VA Hospital in the state to become involved in Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care®, an award-winning reading and discussion program for health care professionals that, as one participant writes, "renews the heart and soul of health care." The Arizona Humanities Council is one of 13 across the country to benefit from a major grant awarded to the Maine Humanities Council by the National Endowment for the Humanities for this innovative program designed to support health care professionals in Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Centers across the country.

As a physician at the first VA hospital to participate in the program stated, Literature & Medicine "has improved my enjoyment in the practice of medicine, lengthened the number of years of my practice and has placed bridges over many of the chasms between myself and my patients." An RN wrote that, "the readings and discussions gave those of us who have not experienced combat a better understanding of the relationship between combat veterans and the VA as an institution, as well as some of the extreme situations combat vets experience."

"This is a very timely and important project," noted Victoria Bonebakker, Associate Director of the Maine Humanities Council and Program Director of Literature & Medicine. "As health care professionals encounter increasing numbers of severely wounded Iraq veterans, many of them very young, while they continue to deal with the older and aging veterans of Vietnam and Korea, all amidst decreased resources and support, the opportunity to gain new perspectives on their work and their patients in community with their colleagues is vital."

Since 1997, Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care®, a program created by the Maine Humanities Council and offered in partnership with other state humanities councils, has reached hospital personnel in 28 states, providing them with facilitated reading and discussion groups that allow them to recognize and address the challenges they routinely face. Arizona Humanities Council is one of 13 partnering in this effort to work with groups of health care professionals in VA hospitals. A national training institute in June laid the groundwork for effective programs in the participating VA hospitals. For more information, visit <http://www.azhumanities.org>

About the Arizona Humanities Council

Stories convey our histories, traditions, social mores, beliefs and insights about what it means to be human. The Arizona Humanities Council creates opportunities for sharing these diverse stories through critical thinking and public discussion, to better understand and appreciate one another, so that we can make informed decisions about our collective future.

Founded in 1973, AHC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and the Arizona affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. AHC is not a state agency.

AHC supports public programming in the humanities that promotes understanding of human thoughts, actions, creations, and values. AHC works with museums, libraries, and other cultural and educational organizations to bring humanities programs to residents throughout Arizona. All AHC-supported activities must involve the humanities disciplines-history, literature, philosophy, and other studies that examine the human condition.

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