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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Jan. 11, 2013

**2013 Veterans Creative Arts Program Kicks Off in Loma Linda**

LOMA LINDA, Calif. – The VA Loma Linda Healthcare System is calling on Veterans to participate in the local Creative Arts competition for a chance to participate in the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

The local competition includes 50 art categories that range from oil painting to leatherwork to paint-by-number kits. There are also 120 categories pertaining to all aspects of music, dance, drama and creative writing. The creative writing division includes original works in poetry, essay, short story and personal experience writing.

The competition recognizes the progress and recovery made through arts therapy, and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our nation's Veterans. The VA Art Competition and Show provides our Veterans with an opportunity to be acknowledged for their artistic talents and skills. Winners will have their names submitted to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Committee for consideration to attend the 2013 Festival in Reno, Nev.

VA Loma Linda's local Visual Arts Competition information is as follows:

- Applications must be submitted by Feb. 15 at 1 p.m.
- The Visual Art Show, which is open to the public, will be held Feb. 21 from noon to 3 p.m. at the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial VA Medical Center's Community Living Center (CLC) Dining Room from noon to 3 p.m.

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## **CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL 2/2/2**

The Creative Writing, Dance, Drama and Music Competition information is as follows:

- Applications must be submitted by Feb. 22.
- A Performer's Show, also open to the public, will be held March 1 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Jerry L. Pettis Memorial VA Medical Center's Auditorium.

For more information and to receive an application contact Richard Burke at (909) 825-7084 ext. 1311 or 2255. Additional information, contest rules and applications are available at <http://www.lomalinda.va.gov/patients/creativearts.asp>

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The Jerry L. Pettis Memorial VA Medical Center is the centerpiece of the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System. Opened in 1977, it is located 1/2 mile from its major affiliate, Loma Linda University.

The VA Loma Linda Healthcare System is one of the top 25 employers in the Inland Empire. With approximately 2,300 employees and more than 1,000 volunteers, it serves more than 65,000 Veterans who entrust their health care needs to VA for a wide variety of services through inpatient and outpatient care.

In partnership with Loma Linda University Medical Center and Loma Linda University Healthcare, VA provides primary care and mental health at outpatient clinics located in Blythe, Corona, Palm Desert, Murrieta, Rancho Cucamonga and Victorville.