

# Sanctuary gathering space coming to Joshua Tree

By Leah Sanson

Hi-Desert Star

**JOSHUA TREE** — Mil-Tree is building a gathering space, and inviting people with military experience and their families to join in the public art project that will get Sanctuary off the ground.

The project is funded in part by the California Arts Council's Veterans Initiative in the Arts Grant.

The structure will be built using "the tools of war" — barbed wire and sandbags — in a process referred to as earthbag construction.

The project includes a number of art workshops open to veterans, active military and their families and the community at large to participate in building a new gathering space at the Joshua Tree Lake RV and Campground.

This community gathering space will be available for all kinds of events, including speak-outs, meetings, celebrations, readings, marriages, meditation and lectures.

Mil-Tree is a Southern

California-based charity dedicated to connecting the veteran, active military and civilian communities through arts and dialogue.

Founder and Executive Director Cheryl Montelle describes the work of Mil-Tree as an effort to, "bridge the gap, and open the lines of communication in order to heal the wounds of war."

Mil-Tree's Sanctuary partners include San Bernardino Arts Connection, the Joshua Tree Music Festival, Joshua Tree Lake RV and Campground and Copper Mountain College.

The Sanctuary project has three major components: ceramic workshops with artist Brian Bosworth at Copper Mountain College, mixed-media metal workshops with artist Bobby Furst in his Joshua Tree studio, and earthbag construction workshops building with James Golub and Fox McBride on-site at Joshua Tree Lake.

Project programming will begin with artist Brian Bosworth's ceramic workshop on Feb. 4, followed by ongoing

earthbag construction starting Feb. 17, led by James Golub and Fox McBride.

A metal sculpture will be constructed off-site during metal workshops with Furst, scheduled to begin March 11 and continue through final installation late March. The completion of the structure is scheduled for April 8, with a public reception on May 17.

All of the workshops are free and open to the public, and no previous experience is necessary to participate.

The art created during the ceramic and mixed-media workshops, along with personal artifacts participants wish to include, will be inlaid in the Sanctuary walls. A metalwork sculpture will serve as a podium area for speakers and leaders when needed. In the end, our labor will come together as a beautiful meeting ground and the art creation process will be rich with personal stories.

For information, visit Mil-Tree's website at [mil-tree.org](http://mil-tree.org) or e-mail [info@mil-tree.org](mailto:info@mil-tree.org).