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ART OF THE STATE

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Visitors and co-op members browse the art for sale during the veterans benefit show.  
PHOTO/JERI CHADWELL

## Art of giving

Artists Co-Op Gallery

### The far back room inside the Artists

Co-Op Gallery of Reno, located inside a historical French laundry originally constructed in 1906, at 627 Mill St., is reserved for the gallery's featured art exhibitions—which at least two to three times a year are also benefit shows. Until May 31, the featured exhibition is a benefit for the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System's Voluntary Service Office.

Al Ferrand, who's been a member of the co-op for 14 years, organized the show.

"This is the second one," he said. "We had one last year. Last year, we donated, I think, 2,200 dollars to them. ... We do a lot for the community. We have fundraisers."

All 19 of the co-op's current members contributed art to the show, Ferrand said.

"And we invited about 60 local artists that are not members of the co-op, and they put work in—and, also, we got about 40 to 50 paintings donated by local artists in the community towards the fundraiser," he said. "And we had a raffle, and we made 800 and, I think, 40 dollars on the raffle. And that all goes to the veterans."

The Voluntary Service Office will also receive 20 percent of the co-op's gross sales from the entire month of May.

"It should work out pretty well," said Ferrand, who said his inspiration to start the fundraiser came from a woman named Charley Smith—an Army veteran and dance instructor known locally for her veterans advocacy. She moved out of state early this month.

"She goes to Washington, politically, trying to get funds for the local veterans' hospital," Ferrand said. "I took dancing lessons from her over a few years, and

I decided that since she's so enthused in helping the veterans, maybe I could get a fundraiser going."

Ferrand plans to continue the annual fundraiser. He's not sure how this year's fundraising totals compare to last but is hopeful that with a week left in the show they'll be at least as high.

"Yeah, they need it, you know," he said. "There are homeless veterans here in the city. There are a lot of female veterans, too, that need help. So the money will be used wherever it's needed."

In August, the co-op will be having another benefit—this one for itself.

"We're buying the building," explained Cheryln Bennett, the gallery's director.

The co-op has been at its location on Mill Street for 54 years. The building needs several thousand dollars worth of upgrades to bring it up to code, but it's nonetheless a home with which the members are pleased.

"A lot of galleries open and close, but our work is great," Ferrand said. "We have all the different artists, different mediums. And they're all reasonably priced."

"This is truly a Nevada gallery," added Bennett.

The gallery will do much the same for the August fundraiser as it does for others by creating a show comprised of art by members and non-members from the broader community.

"We always invite local artists to show their work whenever we have a fundraiser or a space on the wall," Ferrand said. "And they'll be guest artists for a month, etcetera. So that's why we have so much help from the local artists—because we help them show their work."

Learn more about the co-op here:  
[www.artistsco-opgalleryreno.com](http://www.artistsco-opgalleryreno.com).