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Recovering Addicts Find Success With Creative Work

Employees at Creative Matters Agency promote Venice Art Walk as part of their path towards redemption



Los Angeles, CA - In its simplicity, the art speaks volumes. You can now see the featured artwork of Alison Saar, a sculpture that is part woman part tree, branched out across the streets of Venice, CA. The website for Venice Family Clinic is highlighted in a pop of maroon, immediately signaling the reason Sunday's Art Walk is so important to the local community.

This is creative messaging at its best. Clear and deliberate. An impressive campaign, thought out by a team of artists who put their souls into the Art Walk messaging because its success is part of their own redemption. They are the members of Creative Matters Agency, a marketing group formed by and employing recovering addicts.

From alcohol, to prescription drugs, heroin, and depression each member of the team had run out of hope and landed in the welcoming arms of Beit T'Shuvah, a nonprofit residential treatment center in West Los Angeles. There, they learned to battle their addictions and develop life skills. Upon graduating the program, one by one they were extended an olive branch from the agency created by Russell Kern, CEO of Kern Agency.

Kern became an ardent supporter of Beit T'Shuvah after his step-daughter received treatment there. He started the marketing program six years ago to try to help promote the recovery program, but it soon turned into a much more meaningful project that helped residents rebuild their lives. "We wanted to provide an educational program, like a teaching hospital, where residents who had an interest in creative arts could be mentored and taught by other industry professionals," explains Kern. "It wasn't long before they acquired the skills they needed to run an agency and service various needs of clients in the Los Angeles area."

This was their chance to prove themselves again and compete in the workplace. No judgements, just faith that they can "recover their passion and discover their purpose." That is the mantra at Beit T'Shuvah which over to their workplace at Creative Matters Agency. They also continue to address their recovery with group meetings in the office that include sharing deeply personal experiences unrelated to work. "It's been incredible to watch the personal growth of each employee along with the business growth," says Beit T'Shuvah founder Harriet Rossetto. "The fact that they're determined to not only succeed but to also give back to help others with the company's profits, is truly inspiring."

Wendy North, the Business Development Manager with more than 30 years in advertising at large agencies is recovering from alcohol addiction. Project Manager Richard Kulchar is focusing on new accomplishments as he continues his sobriety from prescription drugs and alcohol. Account Manager Martin Chavez is motivated to prove to his daughter that he can succeed without succumbing to alcoholism. Art Director Kendal Ullman lost her family when she turned to heroin, now she's rebuilt her life and earned respect as one of the best artists in the industry

Alison Lowenberg is the graphic designer leading the Art Walk campaign. She was suicidal and battling

depression just one year ago. After completing the program at Beit T'Shuvah, she was hired as an intern at Creative Matters. "I spent six months teaching myself everything graphic design," said Lowenberg. Now as staff at Creative Matters, she has found her own path in work and life. "Art helps me escape the darkness, and I never thought I'd say this... but I found a way to be happy again."

While the team at Creative Matters Agency has worked on major campaigns over the past several years, the work with Venice Family Clinic hits close to home because it parallels their story. Venice Family Clinic provides healthcare to those who would not otherwise get it. Low-income, uninsured and homeless patients are welcomed. Beit T'Shuvah also does not turn anyone away regardless of ability to pay, and because of that philosophy, many of the employees at Creative Matters Agency were able to get treatment.

"It's easy to see why Creative Matters and Venice Family Clinic make a great pair," says Liz Benson Forer, Venice Family Clinic's CEO and Executive Director. "As an agency, their team offers more than just compelling design; they bring an elevated level of empathy, experience, and passion to each Venice Family Clinic project they take on. That type of connection can only come from a deep, heartfelt understanding of the work we do. Their talent and insight has taken our signature Venice Art Walk design to an exciting new level."

It's the vision that everyone deserves to get help that inspires this weekend's ART WALK, and inspires those behind the messaging to keep finding campaigns to believe in. All of the profit Creative Matters generates goes directly back to Beit T'Shuvah so they can continue providing no and low cost treatment to struggling addicts.

Creative Matters Agency

Brought together by rebellion and imagination, Creative Matters isn't your typical design and branding outfit. We're creative renegades, cutting through the noise to carve out and protect your brand, your cause. Creative Matters Agency benefits the nonprofit residential treatment center Beit T'Shuvah.

www.CreativeMattersAgency.com www.Beittshuvah.org

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