

# Art is Medicine



The arts have long provided emotional context for the human experience. Now, a growing body of research demonstrates that engagement in creative expression can also contribute to better health and wellbeing. Individuals, regardless of background, are expressing themselves through the arts—musical, performance, visual, writing, culinary—to reduce the physical and emotional burden associated with various types of health conditions and life circumstances.

The Foundation works to broaden society's awareness that creative expression and engagement can be profoundly health enhancing, offering a path to physical, mental, and social healing. Moreover, we seek to promote and build a body of scientific research that can provide a basis for a better understanding of this important resource and its opportunities.

Many of us understand, intuitively, that art heals. It is time to find out how, why, and in what circumstances this important transformation occurs to most effectively help all who might benefit.

With growing support from the broad communities in both healthcare and the arts, there is enormous potential for creative expression to promote general wellbeing and to improve health outcomes. Together, we can make art powerful medicine, indeed, to heal individuals and communities.

## MISSION

The Foundation exists to explore and promote the fundamental connection between creative expression, the healing

process, and health and wellbeing. Founded in 2004 by Jeremy Nobel, MD, MPH, we are a dedicated team of healthcare leaders, community health advocates, and arts professionals at the science-based core of a growing cultural movement.

Our mission is to create and expand awareness of the relationship between art and healing, to bring forward through research and related explorations critical knowledge about this vital relationship, and to help make this knowledge available at the individual and community level through accessible and effective programs.

## APPROACH

Our approach is multi-pronged and focuses on the most critical intersections of art and healing to affect short and long term change. We accomplish this through:

- **Awareness.** We shine a spotlight on the myriad ways creative engagement can improve health, at all ages, and for all people.
- **Innovative Programming.** We create new ways of using expressive modalities that can heal individuals and communities, and can be adopted and implemented by others.
- **Research.** We produce, encourage and catalyze leading edge scientific research into the underlying mechanisms of creative expression and health, and how best to design and deliver expression-based interventions with demonstrated impact.

## ONGOING INITIATIVES

The Foundation for Art & Healing builds initiatives across three areas: awareness, discovery and sharing. We are centered on the belief that in order to move the conversation forward regarding the connection between art and healing and impact positive change in the broader community, the Foundation must bring greater awareness to the connection, provide leadership in discovering new knowledge in the field through scientific research, and create model community outreach programs that can bring the healing power of creative expression to broader populations.

*The Foundation of Art & Healing is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization.*



The Foundation for  
**Art & Healing**

[www.artandhealing.org](http://www.artandhealing.org)

For more information and to stay updated about the Foundation's work, please visit our website to join our mail list. Also follow us on Twitter and like us Facebook.

You can also contact us at [info@artandhealing.org](mailto:info@artandhealing.org)

© 2018 The Foundation for Art & Healing

# Jeremy Nobel, MD, MPH



As a practicing general internist for many years, Dr. Nobel experienced “the front lines” of health care and its delivery. Currently, through his faculty appointments at the Harvard School of Public Health and the Harvard Medical School, Dr. Nobel’s teaching, research, and community based projects address the design of healthcare delivery systems that improve quality, cost-effectiveness and access.

His work has been the basis of significant improvements in preventative, acute, chronic, rehabilitative, and end of life medical care that focus on understanding what quality healthcare means from a patient perspective, and how best to deliver it.

Dr. Nobel is also a recognized leader in the field of medical humanities, an interdisciplinary endeavor that draws on a diverse range of fields, including the

creative arts, to inform medical education and practice. He is the founder and president of the Foundation for Art & Healing, an organization dedicated to exploring the important relationship between creative expression and health and well-being, and bringing those benefits to individuals and communities.

The Foundation is actively involved in creating a broader societal awareness that arts-based activities can improve health, while simultaneously developing and distributing innovative programs to the field, and promoting an active research agenda.

Also a published poet, Dr. Nobel has received several awards for his poetry including the Bain-Swiggett Prize from Princeton University, and the American Academy of Poets Prize from the University of Pennsylvania.

## Medical doctor, poet, photographer, teacher, and designer of healthcare improvement programs

A poem Jeremy wrote as a young medical resident and subsequently published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* is called “Pain Workup.” It includes the usual questions a doctor asks, and then reaches beyond to a healing offered by the imagination, by the gift of creative expression:

*Tell me about the pain.*

*Is it sharp or dull?*

*What brings it on?*

*What makes it go away?*

...

*Do you remember a time before birth when the*

*Rhythm of the universe was your second heartbeat?*

*Do you remember how green the grass used to be?*

*Do you remember a time when you remembered no pain?*



The Foundation for  
**Art & Healing**

[www.artandhealing.org](http://www.artandhealing.org)  
[info@artandhealing.org](mailto:info@artandhealing.org)

For more information and to stay updated about the Foundation’s work, please visit our website to join our mail list. Also follow us on Twitter and like us Facebook.

© 2017 The Foundation for Art & Healing