The Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services Community Work Service Organization will serve as unofficial “roadies” for this year’s Gallup Native Arts Market event. The group of ten hospital volunteers will be assisting the 150 artists expected to participate with table set-ups, building displays, minding booths, carting artwork, serving snacks to artists, unloading vehicles and other tasks, so the artists can focus on their works. The market will feature 108, 10x10 booths and 5, 100-foot-long tents for artists to display their works.

The event, renowned for its Navajo and Zuni jewelry, pottery, paintings and other artworks will be held Saturday, Aug. 10, 8 am-6 pm and Sunday, Aug. 11, 10 am-6 pm at the Courthouse Square in Gallup, 215 W. Aztec Ave. and offers free admission. The event’s normal crowd of 2,000-3,000 is expected to double since this year’s market is along the 98th Annual Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Parade route, offering a rich culture of dancing during the parade.

“We look forward to working with the artists and assisting them in bringing their skills and talents to the community,” RMCHCS Behavioral Special Projects Director William Camorata, who oversees the Community Work Service organization, said. “Our crew of roadies and many of the artists share a special bond as many have been people in recovery and have a mutual respect for each other’s sobriety.”

The City of Gallup worked with a group of regional artists to develop the market three years ago to bring back customers seeking the area’s rich heritage of American Indian art.

“We want to enable artists to sell from close to home,” Jennifer Lazarz, tourism and marketing manager for the City of Gallup, said.

“We could not have easily developed the market we have today with[out] the assistance of RMCHCS,” she added as she thanked the efforts of William Camorata and hospital CEO David Conejo. “The real synergy here is the symbiotic relationship between the roadies and artists, many of whom share the bonds of former addicts and can relish the role of artist as entrepreneur as a path forward.”

RMCHCS Artists Participate

In addition to helping set up artists’ displays, RMCHCS will also participate in the market event through its *Healing Hands* program, which enables those graduates of the inpatient treatment center to explore becoming artists and entrepreneurs.

“Our Healing Hands program members will be out there selling pottery our artists make. Artists are paid hourly and all sales support our program,” Katie Schultz, ceramic enterprise director, RMCHCS, said. “This enterprise is much more than sales, however. It is vocational, learning art techniques, marketing, and entrepreneurial skills including training, to those who want to pursue art on their own. That’s important especially to supplement income for those with situations who cannot work regular jobs in town.”

RMCHCS’ displays will be in the fair’s non-profit tent and will have three artists exhibiting; Lawrence Besselente, Kristy Lunasee and Jessica Sandoval. All three are artists in recovery who teach and mentor newer recruits. Seven to ten artists participate in the program at a time.

Recently Healing Hands received a $4,000 grant from New Mexico Arts, which is part of the National Endowment for the Arts. The vision for Healing Hands in the future will be a co-op program to support artists in the Gallup area. Customers can also learn more by visiting Healing Hand’s Ceramic Shop at 194 E. Hwy. 66, behind the State Farm in downtown Gallup.