Dr. Marian Liebowitz, Professor of Music in the School of Music and Dance at San Diego State University, has been awarded a $15,000 grant from the Disabled American Veterans for Heartpower Performances at Veterans Village San Diego. Heartpower Performances is an outreach project for at-risk audiences and is an outgrowth of the SDSU Adams’ Project Performers Network which provides career training and opportunities for music majors. Specifically, the DAV grant will fund 12 concerts and 37 music classes to enhance the treatment of traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addictions in the homeless veteran population in recovery at VVSD.

“There is a determination to explore additional methods of treatment, particularly with post-9/11 veterans. These warriors are demonstrating significantly different physical and mental symptoms than those who served in previous conflicts,” explained Liebowitz. “Concussive blasts from IEDs and other explosions cause TBI, and it has been called the signature injury of the Iraq war. It requires a more diverse spectrum of treatments. Performing music, which involves so many aspects of brain function, is believed to recruit uninjured parts of the brain to compensate for parts that have been injured, and to help those parts that are injured to recover.”

Since 1992, the Adams’ Project has been at the cutting edge of student performer community outreach. The project features a roster of emerging classical and jazz musicians enrolled in professional development curriculum at SDSU, including arts administration for performers.

Heartpower serves any segment of the population other music organizations can’t reach including foster youth, the mentally ill, abused children, and the juvenile justice system. Performances showcase SDSU students who role-model to at-risk populations that music is a vehicle for redirecting energy toward positive change. This new grant will continue support from the SDSU President’s Leadership Fund, Sigma Alpha Iota, and Kiwanis International.