

**CITY OF SAN MARCOS HUMAN SERVICES GRANT
FY 2026-2027 APPLICATION**

I. SUMMARY INFORMATION

Please spell out organization name and program name completely, without acronyms.

Applicant Organization: Rough Draft

Contact Name, Title: Brooke Pillifant, Executive Director

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Contact E-Mail Address: dswordofmouth@gmail.com Website: www.roughdraftTX.org

Mailing Address: 798 Sampson, Kyle TX 78640

Do you have a location in San Marcos where people can walk in and ask questions about the program? If so, what is the address? 111 E. San Antonio Street San Marcos, TX 78666

Who is authorized to execute program documents? (Name, Title) Brooke Pillifant, Executive Director; Helen Pillifant, Financial Officer

Amount of Funds Requested: \$5000

What percentage of the cost of this program is requested as funding through this application? 45%

II. SHORT ESSAY QUESTIONS

All questions must be answered. Please type your answers. Application evaluations will be based on, but not necessarily limited to the criteria stated in each section.

OVERVIEW

1. Summarize the program for which funding is being requested, the services it provides, and the clients it serves.

Program Overview

The Art of Being is a community-based mental wellness initiative designed to increase access to therapeutic art resources for residents of all ages. Funding is being requested to support the distribution of curated art supply bags and the facilitation of interactive public art activities at the monthly *Art Squared Market* in the city.

Services Provided

The program will provide free art supply bags to children, teens, and adults attending the market. Each bag includes age-appropriate art materials and a custom-designed therapeutic art workbook. These workbooks promote self-reflection and emotional well-being through guided art activities, stress reduction techniques, and wellness strategies.

Additionally, they include curated city-specific resource lists for connecting individuals to local mental health services, community art programs, and accessible art classes.

A staffed tent will be set up at the market to:

- Distribute the art bags.

- Share information about the organization and its mission.
- Accept donations of art supplies from community members.
- Facilitate a monthly community art project at the tent, designed to mirror themes and activities from the workbook, encouraging walk-up participation and dialogue around art as a mental health resource.

In addition to the market presence, *The Art of Being* will actively reach out to local mental health service organizations, community health centers, and individual mental health providers. These partnerships will expand the program’s reach by offering art bags directly to their clients as a complementary therapeutic tool, with the goal of integrating creative wellness resources into more formal mental health care settings.

Target Clients Served

The program serves a broad and inclusive demographic: children, adolescents, and adults—especially individuals and families who may lack access to formal mental health or creative resources. By leveraging the open and accessible space of the Art Squared Market and partnering with mental health professionals across the city, *The Art of Being* reaches clients in both casual and clinical environments, promoting emotional well-being, creative expression, and stronger connections to community support.

COMMUNITY NEED AND JUSTIFICATION –20 POINTS

Evaluation: documentation and justification of the need for the program in the City of San Marcos.

1. Describe in detail the need for this program in San Marcos.

San Marcos, Texas is experiencing a growing and urgent need for accessible, preventive mental health resources across all age groups. Hays County, where San Marcos is located, suffers from a significant shortage of mental health professionals. As of 2015, there were only 86 mental health providers per 100,000 residents—well below the Texas average of 96.7 and less than half the U.S. average of 189. This shortage places a heavy burden on residents seeking care, resulting in long waitlists, limited availability, and often, a lack of follow-up or ongoing services. This strain has only increased in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. From July 2021 to July 2022, the San Marcos Mental Health Clinic saw its client base grow from 1,080 to 1,695 individuals—a nearly 60% increase in demand in just one year. The number of outpatient visits related to depression, anxiety, and substance use has surged, and providers across the region are struggling to keep pace.

Youth mental health needs are particularly alarming. According to a recent community assessment by the Core Four Partnership (a collaboration between local school districts, the city, and Texas State University), 30.2% of youth ages 11–24 in the region reported experiencing poor mental health “most of the time or always” over the previous month. Among students at Texas State University, that number rose to 35.1%. The report linked these high rates to unmet basic needs and a lack of emotional support, indicating a pressing need for low-barrier mental health interventions. Despite growing awareness, the city continues to lack sufficient early-intervention programs. A 2016 community health assessment highlighted the absence of child-centered mental and behavioral health services, noting that many children do not receive support until they reach crisis points that require emergency or inpatient care. While the City of San Marcos and Hays County have taken steps to improve access—such as forming a Mental Health Task Force and launching a crisis response unit in the police department—the demand continues to exceed capacity.

In response to this critical gap, *The Art of Being* proposes a community-centered, therapeutic arts program designed to reach children, teens, and adults through creative, wellness-focused tools. This program will distribute art supply bags each bag including a therapeutic workbook tailored to either youth or adult users at the monthly Art Squared Market and through direct partnerships with local mental health organizations and individual providers. The Art of Being station at Art Squared will be a place for open dialogue about proactively supporting one’s mental health, thus reducing stigma and isolation for this struggling with poor mental health symptoms. The Art of Being workbooks will feature guided self-reflective art activities, creative stress-reduction techniques, wellness strategies, and resource listings for mental health services and community art spaces. By offering low-cost, preventive tools in both public

and clinical settings, *The Art of Being* supports emotional well-being in a non-stigmatizing and accessible way, helping to fill a well-documented gap in the region’s mental health infrastructure.

2. Has the need for this program been increasing in recent years?

Throughout Central Texas, including Hays County, mental health crisis calls and service demands have surged, placing immense pressure on already limited systems of care. In 2023, the San Marcos Police Department responded to 2,290 calls involving mental health concerns, prompting the expansion of crisis intervention and mobile crisis teams within law enforcement. Texas remains one of the lowest-ranked states for access to mental health services, and 97% of counties statewide are designated as mental health professional shortage areas. Youth are especially impacted. A joint assessment by the Core Four Partnership found that 30.2% of youth ages 11–24 in Hays County reported experiencing poor mental health “most of the time or always,” with even higher rates—35.1%—among students at Texas State University. Statewide, 17% of Texas teens (over 429,000 individuals) live with a mental health condition, and nearly two-thirds of those with major depression receive no treatment. Additionally, nearly a third of Texas youth reported feeling sad or hopeless for at least two weeks in 2021. These trends point to a growing crisis in which clinical systems are stretched thin and preventive, community-based responses are urgently needed.

This is where *The Art of Being* offers a vital intervention. Extensive research supports the role of the arts in promoting mental wellness, particularly in populations facing stress, trauma, or emotional challenges. According to the World Health Organization’s 2019 report on the evidence base for the arts in health and well-being, engaging in creative arts activities has been shown to reduce anxiety, improve emotional regulation, and build psychological resilience. Art-making can also support cognitive processing of trauma and provide a non-verbal pathway to self-expression, especially valuable for children and teens. Evidence shows community-based art programs further contribute to a sense of belonging, social connection, and collective healing, all of which are critical protective factors for mental health.

In addition to the personal benefits of creative expression, reducing stigma and isolation plays a crucial role in improving mental health outcomes. Studies show that stigma is one of the primary barriers preventing individuals—particularly youth and marginalized groups—from seeking help. Programs that normalize mental health conversations in safe, accessible public spaces can increase the likelihood of individuals accessing support, forming peer connections, and viewing their emotional needs as valid and addressable. By offering low-barrier, affirming, and culturally responsive activities at a public market, *The Art of Being* not only delivers direct wellness tools but also fosters a more open and supportive mental health culture in San Marcos.

Taken together, these data reflect a deeply felt, urgent need and a clear opportunity. As local systems respond to rising crises, *The Art of Being* offers a preventive, scalable, and community-rooted solution. It alleviates burden, fosters resilience, reduces stigma, and builds bridges between art, wellness, and care—making it not only timely but essential to the mental well-being of San Marcos residents.

IMPLEMENTATION –15 POINTS

Evaluation:

- *The application demonstrates that resources needed to manage the proposed program are available and ready.*
- *Applicant has clearly defined objectives focusing on results and measurable outcomes vs. only program activities descriptions and numbers served.*
- *Past performance of programs funded by Human Services Grants has met expectations.*

1. Are all resources in place to be able to implement this program? If not, what is missing?

Yes, *The Art of Being* program is largely ready for implementation, with key foundational elements already in place. We have established strong community partnerships and organizational support to ensure the successful launch and sustainability of the program. The director of the *Art Squared Market* has formally expressed support for the

program, allowing us to host a regular presence at this well-attended monthly community event. By the time the grant begins, we will have already established space at the Market and started to provide community art activities for local residents and visitors. Additionally, local residents and volunteers have committed to assisting with outreach, engagement, and on-site activities. This grassroots support ensures that the program is well-integrated into the fabric of the San Marcos community and that there is both interest and capacity to meet the program's goals.

However, there are a few remaining resources needed before implementation can begin. Specifically, we are seeking funding to acquire the core materials for distribution—namely, the art supply bags themselves. These will include age-appropriate art tools, therapeutic workbooks, and printed mental health resource guides for both children and teens/adults. Funding will also go towards creating the therapeutic workbooks, with activities and resources specifically tailored to the San Marcos community.

With these final material resources in place, *The Art of Being* will be fully prepared to launch, leveraging existing partnerships and volunteer energy to make a meaningful and immediate impact on community mental health in San Marcos. The program is designed to be scalable, sustainable, and deeply responsive to the needs of the community, requiring only modest financial support to activate a fully formed and community-backed initiative.

2. What specific, measurable outcomes or results do you hope to achieve with this program?

The Art of Being will track a variety of specific, measurable outcomes to evaluate the program's reach, engagement, and community impact. Over the course of eight monthly Art Squared Market events, the program aims to distribute at least 400 art bags to children, teens, and adults. A key goal is to collect contact information—email addresses or phone numbers—from at least 70% of recipients through a simple sign-in sheet or QR code system, allowing for ongoing communication and outreach. These efforts are expected to help grow an email list of at least 100 individuals who can be contacted about future art-making opportunities, wellness events, and local mental health resources.

To foster ongoing participation and connection, the program will host monthly on-site art activities at the market, designed to reflect the therapeutic exercises found in the workbooks. Each session will aim to engage at least 25 participants, and returning visitors will be informally tracked to identify repeat participation and strengthen community ties over time.

Rather than relying solely on traditional surveys, the program will utilize low-barrier, creative methods for participant feedback and wellness indicators. The program will collect qualitative data through a "moment-of-use" feedback wall, which will be set up in the tent where participants can respond to prompts like "How did today's activity make you feel?" using sticky notes, colored stickers, or small drawings. Participants will also be invited to anonymously share completed workbook pages or reflections—either in person or by photo submission—to highlight how the activities influenced their thoughts or emotional state. Additionally, for quantitative data, a short, mobile-friendly follow-up form will be made available via QR code one to two weeks after distribution, offering 3–5 simple questions to assess usage of the bags, emotional impact, and whether the participant accessed any local wellness resources mentioned in the workbook.

Finally, the program will collaborate with local mental health providers and community organizations to extend its reach beyond the market. The goal is to establish at least three partnerships with organizations or practitioners who will distribute art bags directly to clients, expanding access to creative mental health support for underserved individuals. Together, these outcomes will ensure that *The Art of Being* not only distributes resources, but also cultivates connection, creativity, and emotional well-being in a way that is measurable and meaningful.

3. If funding is not available at the requested amount, what is the minimum Human Services Grant funding needed to be able to run this program?

\$3800

IMPACT AND COST EFFECTIVENESS –20 POINTS

Evaluation:

- *impact on the identified need*
- *implementation costs compared to impact*
- *use of available resources (financial, staff, volunteer)*
- *impact compared to other applicants*

1. Programs can provide value by deeply impacting the lives of a few, with effects that may ripple through generations, or by providing smaller but meaningful impact to a larger group. Describe in detail the impact this program will have on the identified need and on San Marcos residents.

The Art of Being is designed to provide both immediate and lasting impact by addressing the growing mental health needs of San Marcos residents through accessible, creative, and community-centered interventions. This program offers a dual value: it creates opportunities for profound, personal transformation in individuals who engage deeply with its reflective and therapeutic components, while also delivering broad-based wellness support to a larger population that may not otherwise have access to mental health resources.

For residents facing significant emotional stress, isolation, or limited access to care, the therapeutic art workbooks included in each bag can offer a vital entry point into self-exploration and healing. These guided exercises invite participants to reflect, express, and regulate their emotions through creative means—often a more approachable alternative to clinical interventions, especially for youth and communities with cultural or financial barriers to mental health care. In these cases, the impact may be deep and lasting: a child discovering art as a coping tool, a teen feeling validated in their emotions for the first time, or an adult reconnecting with creativity as a form of resilience. These individual transformations can echo outward—strengthening families, building emotional vocabulary in children, and encouraging openness to further support or care.

At the same time, the program also offers a lighter but still meaningful touch to a wider audience. By distributing art bags at public markets and through trusted local providers, and by facilitating open, drop-in art activities, *The Art of Being* normalizes conversations about mental health and wellness in everyday spaces. These low-stakes conversations, facilitated over therapeutic art, can reduce stigma and isolation, while multiplying and opening up a broader dialogue in the community about mental health and wellness. For hundreds of residents, the simple act of receiving a thoughtful, well-curated art kit—one that includes tools for expression, tips for wellness, and pathways to local resources—may plant the seed for future reflection or healing. Even brief encounters at the art tent, such as participating in a calming drawing exercise or seeing others engage in creative expression, can help reduce stigma, foster connection, and create a more supportive and emotionally literate community.

By embedding mental wellness into a familiar and joyful setting like the Art Squared Market and by bridging community arts with public health, *The Art of Being* brings tangible support to both individuals and the collective. Its impact will be measured not just in numbers, but in the emotional moments it sparks—in the child who proudly shows their artwork, in the adult who pauses to breathe and reflect, and in the shared sense that mental health matters and belongs to everyone. Over time, these moments become cultural shifts, making San Marcos a more compassionate, creative, and mentally resilient community.

2. Briefly describe other funding sources, volunteers, or in-kind donations that will be used with this program.

In addition to the funding requested through this grant, *The Art of Being* will be supported through a combination of in-kind contributions, volunteer efforts, and additional funding sources such as a grant from Texas Commission on the Arts. Community members will be invited to donate art supplies, either through drop-off at the monthly market tent or coordinated collection drives. Volunteers will contribute in-kind time by assisting with packing the art bags, setting up and staffing the tent at the Art Squared Market, and facilitating the monthly on-site art activities. The program will also actively pursue additional funding through local and regional grant opportunities, including community art grants in Hays County and private foundations such as the Burdine Johnson Foundation. These combined efforts will help ensure the sustainability and scalability of the program beyond its initial launch.

3. How many total annual unduplicated direct clients is this program expected to serve? What percentage will be San Marcos residents?

400 direct clients with over 80% being within San Marcos.

4. Please list the agencies with which you partner to provide this program's services.

Texas State University

Other agencies TBD once funding is secured including private practices and mental health clinics

COMMUNITY SUPPORT – 15 POINTS

Evaluation:

- *A minimum of three letters of reference that indicate strong local support for the program and the agency's ability to implement it as described in the application. Letters must be in support of the specific program requesting funding, not the agency as a whole. Letters will preferably be from San Marcos residents as well as direct clients of the program.*
- *Evidence that volunteers play a vital role in the program or agency's operation.*
- *Evidence that board members are actively involved in and supportive of the agency*

1. What actions do Board members take to support the programs of the agency?

Board members play an active and essential role in supporting the programs of the agency by contributing their time, expertise, and advocacy to ensure the program's success and sustainability. They assist with strategic planning and oversight, helping to shape the vision and direction of initiatives like *The Art of Being*. Board members also engage in fundraising efforts by identifying potential funding opportunities, connecting the agency with donors, and supporting grant applications. Many contribute in-kind support, such as helping pack art bags, volunteering at market events, and leveraging their professional networks to bring in new partnerships or community collaborators. Additionally, Board members serve as ambassadors for the organization, promoting its mission and programs within the community, and helping to raise awareness about the importance of accessible mental health and arts-based wellness resources. Through these combined efforts, the Board ensures the program is not only well-resourced but also aligned with the agency's broader goals and values.

2. Briefly describe the number and role of volunteers in the program or agency's operation.

The organization is supported by a dedicated team of six volunteers along with several local high school students and Texas State students who play a vital role in its operations and programming. These volunteers assist in facilitating visual art and creative writing programs, bringing their unique skills and passion to each session. Their contributions span a wide range of activities, from photographing events and projects for the organization's website to directly leading or supporting art classes and workshops. Additionally, two licensed therapists generously

volunteer their time to review therapeutic art workbooks and ensure that the mental health content is appropriate, supportive, and effective. Volunteers also assist with identifying funding opportunities and writing grant proposals, contributing to the sustainability of the organization. Their diverse talents and unwavering commitment form the heart of the agency, making it possible to deliver meaningful, community-centered programs with care and creativity.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES - 20 POINTS

1. How long has this program served San Marcos residents? (10 points if at least 2 years)

While *The Art of Being* is a new program within the organization, it builds on a strong foundation of community engagement and service. The parent organization, Rough Draft, has been offering creative writing and visual art classes to San Marcos residents for over eight years. Additionally, our partner on this project, Expressive Arts Facilitator, Ellen Geis, has been teaching therapeutic art classes at the San Marcos Public Library for two years and led an interactive family art booth at Art Squared in 2024, establishing a strong foundation of community members who have benefitted from similar therapeutic arts offerings in the community. Through this longstanding presence, Rough Draft has developed trusted relationships within the community, a deep understanding of local needs, and a proven track record of delivering accessible, arts-based programming. *The Art of Being* represents a natural and timely expansion of Rough Draft's and Geis's work, integrating mental health support into the organization's well-established creative mission.

2. In what ways does your agency actively conduct outreach to engage San Marcos residents in its programs and services? How will San Marcos residents access those services? (up to 10 points)

Rough Draft has been providing art, poetry, writing, and movement classes for over 10 years with weekly classes at the Hays County Jail serving over 300 inmates each year. In addition, Rough Draft has offered classes through the San Marcos Library and the San Marcos Activity Center for many years. The organization also hosts an intern from Texas State, partnering with the sociology, criminology, and social work department. In past years, Rough Draft has held several storytelling and music evenings for the community to foster connection. They also host a pop up art show each year at the Price Center for International Women's Month and read poetry at local gatherings from incarcerated individuals.

RISK - 10 POINTS

1. How many years' experience does the agency have in implementing a program of this size and complexity? (5 points if more than 5 years)

The agency has over 10 years of experience implementing programs of this size and complexity. Throughout the past decade, Rough Draft has successfully organized and executed a variety of large-scale community events, including storytelling showcases that integrate live musical performances and collaborative arts programming. The organization also coordinates annual performances and workshops at the Travis County Jail, demonstrating its ability to manage logistically complex programs involving diverse participants, sensitive settings, and multiple stakeholders. This depth of experience ensures that Rough Draft is well-equipped to launch and sustain *The Art of Being*, with the organizational capacity, community trust, and creative expertise needed to deliver high-quality, impactful programming.

2. What percentage of the program's funding is non-City? (5 points if at least 50%)

65% of our funding comes from resources outside of the city of San Marcos

III. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

By signing this application I certify the following to be true:

1. All Human Services Grant funding will be spent on San Marcos residents, except for school-based programs, in which case it may be spent within the San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District boundary.
2. Funding requested is not more than 50% of the total funding for the agency.
3. Funding will not be used to fund more than 20% of a full time position.
4. Agency has been in existence for at least 2 years. (This can include serving communities other than San Marcos.)

SUBMITTAL APPROVED BY:



Signature

February 20, 2026 _____
Date

Brooke Pillifant

Printed Name

Executive Director

Title

Program Budget: The Art of Being

Fiscal Year: 2026 (January – December)

Total Program Cost: \$12,965

Fiscal Year: 2027 (January – December)

Total Program Cost: \$7,265

There is no previous or current budget for *The Art of Being* program, as this will be its first year of implementation. While the parent organization, Rough Draft, has a long history of offering creative programs in San Marcos, this specific initiative represents a new and timely expansion of our services. The proposed budget reflects the costs required to launch the program, including materials, setup, and operational support. This inaugural year will establish the structure and impact of the program, laying the groundwork for sustainability through future funding, partnerships, and in-kind community support.

A grant from TCA was awarded to Rough Draft with funds allocated to start the art tent at the art market from April to August 2026.

Proposed Program Budget: The Art of Being

Fiscal Year: 2026-2027

Total Program Cost: \$10,965

HSAB Funding Request: \$5,000

Expense Category	Cost
Art Supplies	
– Sketchbooks	\$500
– Crayons and Colored Pencils	\$750
– Clay/Play-Doh	\$430
– Watercolors	\$600
– Origami Paper	\$100
– Tote Bags	\$700
– Fabric Markers/Paint	\$100
Printed Materials	
– Printing Workbooks	\$1,500
– Design of four Workbooks	\$2,000
– Fliers and Copies	\$265
Market Tent Setup	
– Banner	\$200
Operations	
– Delivery of Art Kits to clinics and facilities	\$100
– Staff for 8 Markets (2 People)	\$1600
– Program Management (part time)	\$2,000
– Gas	\$120

Expense Category	Cost
Total Expenses	\$10,965

Use of HSAB Funding (\$5,000)

The requested \$5,000 in HSAB funding will be used to cover the following program components:

- Art Supplies: \$3,180
- Designing and Printing Workbooks (partial): \$1,620
- Banner: \$200

Current IRS Form 990

Rough Draft files an IRS Form 990-N e-Postcard because we are a small tax-exempt entity with annual gross receipts that are less than \$50,000.

Diversity, Inclusion & Nondiscrimination Policy for Rough Draft

(Included in Board Operating Policies & Procedures)

Rough Draft shall actively recruit, engage and serve members from every race, culture, ethnicity, age, religion, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and disability, and shall not discriminate in the requirements for membership, provision of service, or support in its policies or actions.

The Rough Draft Board of Directors will periodically review their own composition and membership demographics compared to those of their region, using census data, in order to aspire towards reflecting that composition. In keeping with Rough Draft's values regarding nondiscrimination and with applicable federal law, Rough Draft shall include in bylaws, operating policies and procedures, and other relevant policy documents, explicit statements that require the organization to embrace the broadest possible definition of inclusion and nondiscrimination.

Rough Draft shall collect a baseline of members' voluntarily-supplied demographic information. Systems shall be put in place to protect the confidentiality of this information; demographic information will only be reported in the aggregate.

Rough Draft will reach out to and welcome the community at large through our recruitment, marketing, public education, and awareness activities. Rough Draft will strive to support recruitment and retention of a diverse and inclusive membership and leadership. Whenever there is a demand and the interests of members can best be served by support through groups sharing some affinity, including but not limited to lived experience and primary language, Rough Draft shall work toward offering multiple support groups beyond its baseline family and/or consumer groups.

The Board is selected based on 5 key criteria: diversity, passion for the arts, reputation, expertise, and time.

Diversity

Because Rough Draft serves a diverse population, we look to create a diverse Board. We specifically look for diversity in age, educational background, expertise, gender, and place of origin. Broadening our Board composition helps expand perspectives.

Passionate About Your Cause

The most important characteristics for Rough Draft Board members is being passionate about the issues surrounding incarceration for both adults and youth. A desire to make a difference in one life, to create a program that helps people recognize a new skill, and allows people to see their inherent worth and dignity is paramount. Rough Draft feels passion keeps board members committed long after the excitement of becoming a new board member dies down. Our Board is more willing to go the extra mile when they truly believe in our mission.

Reputation

Our Board members help to expand Rough Draft in new directions and as such must have a connection within the community and in their field. Board members help to maintain the support needed to achieve our goals and objectives of the organization.

Expertise

Board members should have the skills and functional expertise needed for leadership through a well-rounded knowledge base for making decisions. Board members are expected to know the various programs and which facilities are served.

Time

Board members also need to have enough time to dedicate to Rough Draft to build the organization. Board members are required to make themselves available for meetings, programs, and events as the need arises. Time and effort strengthen an organization. Board members will also be asked to participate in the annual fundraising concert and locating possible grant opportunities.

Rough Draft also qualifies as a culturally specific organization because many of our staff members and board have been formerly incarcerated as youth or adults. Understanding the justice system from the inside out allows the staff of Rough Draft to incorporate their intimate lived experience into the development of programming. This helps to provide for best practices when approaching a historically underserved population. With members of the Board having previously been incarcerated, they are able to determine which programs and projects will best suit the needs of the community. Developing programs always takes into consideration the master status of incarceration in society, the dynamics surrounding reentry, and cultural practices and norms within the population being served.

To Whom It May Concern,

As Market Director of Art Squared, I'm writing to express strong support for Rough Draft's proposal to bring a therapeutic art station and distribute therapeutic art kits at our 2026 events. Ellen Geis's interactive art table at Art Squared in 2024 proved to be a meaningful point of connection for families and community members, offering space for creativity, play, and discovery.

The addition of an art experience dedicated specifically to supporting mental health through accessible, take-home, hands-on activities would be a powerful and welcome evolution of this work.

Rough Draft's thoughtful, community-rooted approach aligns perfectly with Art Squared's mission to encourage, foster, promote, and nurture the arts in San Marcos, creating an inclusive, enriching, and joyful arts experience for all. I fully support this initiative and hope to see it funded and realized in 2026.

Sincerely,

Karly Josette Schlievert

Market Director, Art Squared

July 20, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter from the heart in favor of Rough Draft's Therapeutic Art Station and Therapeutic Art Kits at Art Squared.

As a local business owner and proud member of the San Marcos community, I'm always seeking ways to uplift and support the mental well-being of our neighbors. I've seen firsthand how much of an impact community-driven, accessible resources can make, especially when they're built with the heart and intention that Ellen Geis brings to everything she does.

Ellen's interactive art sessions are more than creative spaces. They're warm, safe havens that invite people of all ages to take a deep breath, to express, and feel themselves belong. That kind of environment that supports positive mental health is not common, and in today's times, very much needed. It was because of these sessions I was able to identify and make significant progress on balancing the perfectionist tendencies inside of myself.

I'm especially passionate about mental health awareness and the role expressive arts can play in prevention and healing. Ellen's work, partnering with Rough Draft, offers just that: creative tools that support healthy emotional processing, stress relief, and community bonding in a non-clinical setting. This kind of offering helps reduce stigma and provides a gentle doorway into mental health support for people who may not otherwise seek it out.

I wholeheartedly support Rough Draft's proposal to add a Therapeutic Art Station and distribute therapeutic art kits to Art Squared, and believe it will be a gift to the mental health of our community. Please assist in making this a part of our community by supporting this effort.

With enthusiasm and gratitude,

Eddie Rowe

Founder of GOOD GOOD greens

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

July 20, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Rough Draft's proposal to offer a Therapeutic Art Station and distribute therapeutic art kits at Art Squared. As both a parent and a therapist in the community, I've had the pleasure of attending one of Ellen Geis's previous interactive art tables at Art Squared with my son. The experience provided us with a meaningful, screen-free opportunity to connect, create, and engage in a positive community activity together. It was a beautiful reminder of how shared creative experiences can foster joy, presence, and connection—especially across generations.

Ellen's offerings are always intentionally designed with mental health at the core. Whether through simple yet engaging prompts, reflective creative exercises, or the open invitation for authentic expression, her approach gently supports emotional regulation, stress relief, and a sense of belonging. These kinds of community-based wellness experiences are not only healing—they are necessary.

As a mental health therapist, I would love to see this project funded and sustained as a free offering to the public. It would provide invaluable opportunities for individuals to access creative resources that support stress relief, healthy emotional processing, and reduce isolation, while connecting with others in an inclusive, welcoming space. For many who may not yet feel ready for formal therapy or who face barriers to mental health care, this kind of gentle, art-based community engagement can be a powerful first step toward improving their mental health.

Rough Draft's vision aligns beautifully with the needs of our community, and I wholeheartedly support the establishment of their Therapeutic Art Station and distribution of Therapeutic Art Kits at Art Squared.

Warmly,

Jani Clark, LMSW

Rough Draft

Board Meeting Attendance Record

01 June 2025 – 01 February 2026

Board Member	June (2025)	January (2026)	Total Meetings Attended
Brooke Pillifant (resident in Kyle for 10 years, has worked in SM for over 10 years at Texas State and through Rough Draft)	✓	✓	2
Rebecca Grimaldi (Austin, Texas)	-	✓	1
Brittany Muoneke (Texas State Graduate, lived in SM for 4 years)	✓	✓	2
Sarah Linz (Dallas, Texas)	✓	✓	2
Dillon Gunter (SM resident for 3 years)	✓	-	1
Overall Attendance Rate	80%	80%	