

## **Personal Statement / Biography Kim Crum**

### **Where I Come From:**

I'm an Appalachian artist, educator, and impassioned community arts and mental health advocate. I have served my community for nearly a decade in Southeastern Ohio. In my opinion, the Appalachian identity is, in its essence, a label that carries many stereotypes and preconceived notions of who is, or what it is like to be, Appalachian. When I think of what it means to be Appalachian, I don't have words to express that meaning. Being hardworking self-reliant and self-sustainable are the biggest lessons I take from my culture. I am proud of where I come from and I am proud of my complex, and often misunderstood, Appalachian identity. This has led me in 2018 to the decision to extend my community service through attending Ohio University CACREP accredited program to pursue a second master's degree studying Clinical Mental Health Counseling. I will graduate from OU in 2020 as a LPC, CRC, REAT.

### **What I've Done:**

I am a graduate from Ohio University earning an M.F.A. in photography in 2011. I have worked full-time for the last seven years with The Athens Photographic Project (A.P.P) and Hopewell Health Centers as a coordinator, classroom instructor, community psychiatric supportive treatment provider, and an arts and health specialist. The Athens Photographic Project (<http://www.athensphotoproject.org>) is a grass roots non-profit organization, located in Appalachian Ohio. APP's objective is to strengthen mental health recovery by providing individuals with the opportunity to engage in self-discovery, creative expression, and community contribution through the arts. Throughout my employment with APP I worked with individuals living with severe and persistent mental illness. I taught photography and creative self-expression as a component of life skill building and mental health recovery. To recognize and highlight my continued efforts as a Community Psychiatric Supportive Treatment provider at APP, I was awarded the Athens County Mental Health Advocate of the year award in 2015.

### **My Practice:**

As an artist I deeply understand the importance of self-reflection, meditation and awareness practices. I have engaged in an evolving weekly Buddhist, meditation and most recently JediYana group since 2008. Through this group and many other experiences related to my health, I have grown to understand how linked mind and body truly are. I know from personal experience how detrimental stress and anxiety can become to one's health and quality of life. I further understand how difficult finding work/life balance can be in our culture. It's unfortunate and even harmful that our society undervalues recreation time. I have found it useful when explaining the importance of recreation to others, to instead refer to it as a 're-creation' time, this term in my opinion reframes our cultural notions of recreation providing space for shifts in perspective, aiming to give permission to try a new and valuable de-stressing technique 're-creation'.

If you have questions or would like to discuss further the details of my practice please contact me at the link provided.