

February 7, 2020

## Testimonial to State for Micro Business Program of CVOEO

My name is Robert Gold and I am a 74 year old accomplished Burlington artist with traumatic brain injury. About eight years ago while living in Middlebury, Vocational Rehabilitation recommended CVOEO to me when I wanted to start an art business. I met my business coach Simeon Giegel through CVOEO. Without Simeon and CVOEO's Micro Business Program, I wouldn't be where I am today.

I used to drive to Burlington to meet with Simeon but when it became too much because of mobility issues, Simeon and I would talk over the phone once a month. He has given me guidance in each of my steps to create an art business and has given me ideas that I didn't think of before talking with him. With his guidance I have been able to do things such as create a website of my artwork, run a successful kickstarter for an extreme printmaking project with master printmaker Jon Cone, attend residencies at Vermont Studio Center as well as become a known and established artist in the art community. Some of the many honors I have received in recent years include being selected as Artist of Distinction by the Chaffee Arts Center in Rutland in 2012, being named as one of the Artists to Watch 2018 by Vermont Artist Guide in 2017, and having several images chosen to be in the Digital Display in The 34th Annual Chelsea International Fine Art Competition at The Agora Gallery in New York City in 2019. When I ran into hard times, Simeon guided me to people or organizations that could help me through it. He has a wealth of knowledge of resources.

Without the help of Simeon and CVOEO's Micro Business Program, I don't know if I would even be an artist today, yet alone so prolific and established. The program is so important to help people with low income have a chance to make something productive of their life. Please continue to fund this essential program.

Thank you,  
Robert Gold