

Workforce Development News

Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute

Tucson November 10, 2016



Certified Peer Support Specialist Graduates

Top row left to right: Joshua Hutchison, Maureen Shaughnessy, Jennifer Shelton, David Francis, Anna Alcaraz, Tonkins Anderson, Cori Meyer, David McNulty, Douglas Rucker

Bottom row left to right: Raquel Ugalde, Kristin Dolgaard, Eileen Hernandez, Jamie Ugalde, Annette Black, Hope Mariscal



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Hope for Everyone

By Eileen Hernandez



There is Hope for everyone and everyone can find Hope...I found mine just 4 years ago. But let me take you down my journey of life. I had a life filled with drinking alcohol, my drug of choice. In the beginning partying and bars seemed to be the life for me. Coming from a small town like Flagstaff to Tucson, I thought, "Wow, they really have fun bars and happy people that like to party". This was back in 1985, when I moved here and had an awesome job.

I transferred from Flagstaff to Tucson and got married; I started drinking, trying to "keep up with the Jones" in a high life style, and be the hostess with the mostess. I think it was then that it took control over me - or I let it. Every day I was going out, or having people over to the house, and I my drinking increased. But as I did this more and more I started to become angry, jealous, and depressed.

That's when the trouble started. My marriage started to fall apart. We had a beautiful daughter, her name is Amanda. She was three by the time he couldn't take it anymore. I started abusing him, hitting and yelling ugly until he left. There I was, raising a daughter by myself. That didn't help my drinking any - I just had more time to drink. I was angry with the world. I had been in and out of relationships and failed marriages.

Then I was in a world of DUIs and domestic violence. Since then I can't even tell you how many times I have been in and out of jail. In 2010 I went to prison for 8 months and came home to start over, thinking I could start anew. But I started drinking again and landed myself back in jail; this time I was looking at 7 years for what I had done. Thanks to a very dear friend I was able to obtain a private attorney, land in the Mental Health Court System, and was given 3 years of probation. I did all they asked of me for 1 ½ years, and I graduated. That is when I realized that I could do this.

With the help of Cope, I found a medication that worked for me, which was one of the best things that I could ever have done. Also thanks to Cope I obtained housing, and this made me want more. Being diagnosed with a serious mental illness, I never felt like I could be someone, much less help people. Being given the opportunity to do this class has helped me to understand more about myself so that I can help others. Thank you Integrated Healthcare RSS Institute and to Beverly, John, Dave, Tim, Rita and to all the people that have helped me along the way. There is Hope for everyone ...Because I was once hopeless...

God's grace and Mercy Equals Hope

By Annette Black

I'm a retired school bus driver. While working with the school systems I took a lot of classes like RDD, CPR, and children with different disabilities. After I moved back to Cleveland, Ohio from upState NY, I was Home Care provider where I had my own daycare in my home. Then I was able to work at a daycare and took class which received an associate in child care development before then I was able to get licensed by NY State.

I was diagnosed with depression, anxiety and with some paranoid disorder. "I was told I had a mental illness," it didn't have me". I was hospitalized different times. At the beginning the pills they had me on had made me feel like a Zombie. Transportation department had me taking drug test they thought I was on drugs. They finally got my meds right I started feeling a lot better. I ended up going on retirement Disability. By me getting on disability I was trying to figure out to do with myself. I ended up taking home health class so I can work with seniors. I met someone in my home health care class she needed someone to help move to LA? I told her I would help her. By me helping her it gave me the idea that I needed a change in my life.

I called my Brother who lived in Tucson Az. He always wanted me to come check out AZ. Before I moved up there, I told him I needed to stay at a shelter where they can help me get a good start. The shelter taught me how to get in the system and get my son into a school. It was a hard transition but we were able to make it. The shelter taught me a lot about what we learned in RSS, HHC and CCD, not knowing I would end up using these things in my future.

About 7 years and different jobs later, my case manager kept telling about taking RSS classes. We started the referral and were trying to get me in. They said they were full, then they said it was a long waiting list. One day out of the blue, I received a call that they had an opening on Oct. 18, which that would have been fine, because I had to go out of town to do an evaluation with the school retirement system of Ohio They said no matter where you move, you have to come back for your evaluation. I was kind of mad because I used to go every other year. They called me to do the next year. See God had a plan? I always say.

My father would say I had another sister. He gave me the information to find her, I looked it up but that's all I did. About a year later, he received a call from my sister and she gave him her info. We talked. I had a brother who lived in North Carolina, which I haven't seen in about 12 or 13 years. We made an arrangement to meet Columbus Ohio, which was perfect, and my sister lived in Columbus Ohio, so we

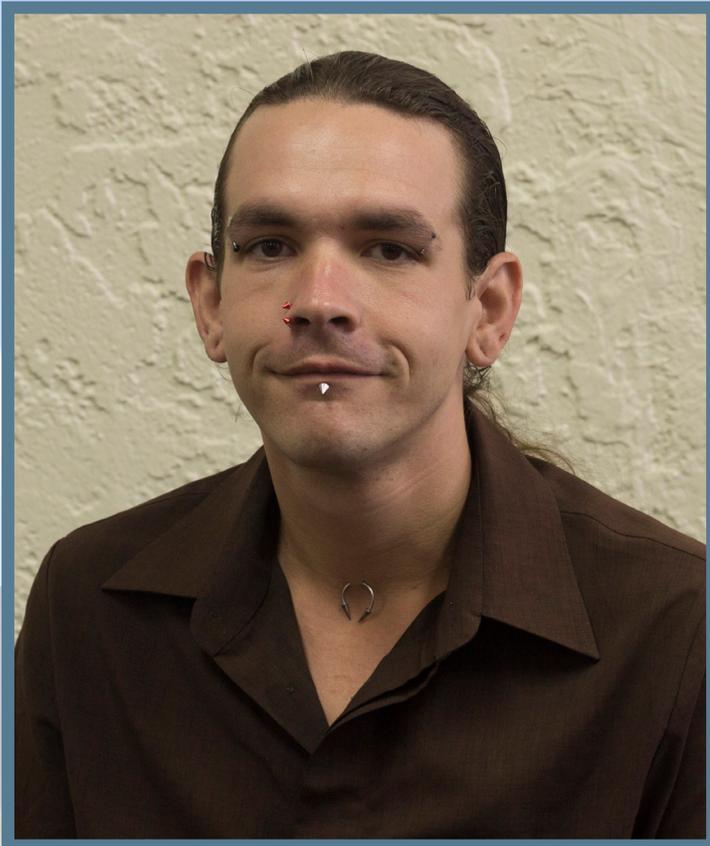


ended up having a reunion which was so awesome. God had a plan and I thank God for it.

I started my classes in RSS. I didn't know what to expect at first? But It added to what I had learned in my home health class. I ended up learning more about mental illness and how it works in the system. It gave me an Ah ha moment. It gave me a new perspective in life and gave me a reason to get out the bed, to meet new wonderful friends that we can continue after class. Our instructors are the best. I want to give a big shout out to my case manager from Cope for believing and having faith I didn't know I had. Cenpatico for paying for classes. I used to go to a lot of meetings not knowing I would end up here, which is so awesome! I thank God for Bev, she is a bright beautiful person. She knows how to keep a smile on your face and keep you on your toes by doing the Hokey Pokey. People might think that is for kids but it woke us up and had us laughing and it took us back to childhood. The most important thing is to have fun!!!!!! Life is too short and so fast Let's stop and smell the roses. God is good all the time. God is good. Another saying is I'm blessed by the best, I'm not going to settle for less.

My Future is More Hopeful than Ever

By Douglas Rucker



I don't believe there was ever a time where I didn't have hope. It wasn't that I didn't have hope for the best, it was more that I had expected the worst. That expectation came from my experiences. My father was a member of a motorcycle club that celebrated the outlaw lifestyle. I appreciate that because he lived by his own individual beliefs and ethics, rather than popular beliefs, which I equate to law, and stigma. My mother was an exotic dancer and that's how they met. They were party to a lifestyle that promotes criminal behavior, like drugs, infidelity, and violence. Due to things like this they eventually separated.

My father ended up spending some time in prison, and my mother was left with me and my two older brothers.

Around the time I was seven my father came back into our lives. My mother was struggling raising three boys. They both had issues with mental health and substance use. My father's substance use was mostly behind him, but my mother was still having issues with it. My father decided to assume custody of my middle brother and me legally; my eldest brother was not his biological son. I was devastated. Being taken away from my mother, and forced to live with my father was the last thing I wanted. While brilliant, he was very stern, and emotionally distant. This is really where hope came into play.

I remember praying to God, that He allow me to live with my mother. I feared the worst for her, and spent many nights crying into my pillow, worried that she would die, and that I would never see her again. All I hoped for was to get back to her. As if my being there bettered her circumstances, and would keep her safe. My prayers went unanswered. This is where my expectation of the worst came from, and would affect my life for many years. I couldn't communicate this to my father because I felt I would be viewed as weak. I continued to see my mother on weekends, holidays, and summer vacations. All the while I watched her struggle, and suffer from her issues with mental health and substance use. She had very little support when it came to overcoming these issues.

It is my perception that no one cared to advocate for her, and instead people focused more on punishing her for her actions. It seemed as though I was the only one who understood that she did what she did to survive

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My Future is More Hopeful than Ever: By Douglas Rucker, continued...

her circumstances. Around the time I turned 16 my father allowed me to go and live with her. My mother continued to battle substance use issues and relied heavily on selling them to provide income. This environment was very stressful and I started using substances for relief. Getting assistance for mental health issues was taboo in my family. It was thought that not only would it make us look weak, but it would also give our family a bad name. At the end of my active abuse of substances, I was disgusted with who I'd become.

I wanted to change, but didn't know how. Not only that, but I feared going through with it. It meant that I would finally have to look at everything I had gone through, and take responsibility for my actions. Eventually law enforcement caught up with us, and my freedom was threatened, which is funny because my life was in constant danger, but it was losing my freedom that really scared me. Despite my fear of change, I finally took my first step into treatment. I started my treatment October 17th 2011, and 3 days later I took my substance of choice for the last time, and ended my dependency on it. This is where things really started to change for the better.

After a while of abstinence, the numbness left me. The cobwebs

cleared, and I was faced with the pain and chaos that was my life. It was a patchwork of drugs, abuse, neglect, ignorance, and suicidal ideation. It was ugly and horrifying. As the substance use issues left, the depression became very evident. Most of what I remember from that time is expressing to my favorite counselor, how much I felt the pain, and that it made me very sad and angry. He continued to tell me "Douglas, I understand, and you have good reason to be sad and angry, but if you continue to work at this like you are, things will get better." The more I listened, the more I spoke. The more I listened and spoke, the more I learned. The more I employed that knowledge along with my own wisdom, the better my circumstances became. It was a long difficult process, but it was working.

I still had problems, but I started incorporating the tools I had been given in all aspects of my life. And in turn, I started lending the same tools to others. My mother started using them, and by doing so she ended decades of substance abuse. I've been sober now for just over five years, and my mother has been for about four and a half years. I'm so full of hope that it radiates. My presence, and example alone has a positive effect on others. It gives me so much strength that even devastating loss has little effect on my stability. I have so much practice with using the tools I've been given, that I employ them instinctively, and with incredible precision. I've learned not to expect the worst, but to prepare for it, and hope that the effort I put forth will bring positive results. It continues to do so, and my future is more hopeful than ever.

I Keep Going Strong

By Anna Alcaraz



My personal experience of “Hope” happened 10 years ago, when one of my favorite cousins that I had not seen in many years came to talk to me. Let me throw this in, so you have a better understanding of the situation. She and I used to run wild. She came from the world I now call the “darkside.” Everything I know and learned about buying drugs, was from her. So the day she came to me she was clean, and had been for ten years. She had even married her pimp, who is also clean to this day.

We talked and the most hopeful words she could have ever said to me was, “Babywhale (that’s my nickname), if I can do it then I know you can do it!” And those words gave me the hope and strength to get sober. It was a battle, and still is today, but I hear her voice and I keep going **STRONG!**

Now I’m living life as I should be, with the grace of God by my side and the great gift of all the love from my family! I think that without them by my side, my recovery would be a lot harder. But knowing that they also have hope in me makes it easier to move on.

I am so thankful for where I am at and as weird as it may sound, for the things I went through in life. Without that I wouldn’t be the beautiful person I am today, nor would I be graduating from my Recovery Support Specialist class! “Thank you JESUS!”

The Sky is the Limit

By Hope Mariscal

For a long time, the word “hope” to me was honestly nothing but a name given to me at birth. It meant nothing to me until a series of bad choices in my life, which I had made due to non-acceptance of myself and internalized stigma, and after losing not one, but two immediate family members that also had struggled with serious mental illness.

The premature deaths of both my father and little sister had a huge impact on me. Something inside my soul clicked. I knew that if I didn’t do all that I could to change the ending to my story, I would probably end up losing my battle with this, and losing my life as well.

That is when I went from hopeless to having hope for myself. A hope that gave me the desire to live up to my full potential. I knew deep down I wanted that. I have had to make major lifestyle changes since then. And in doing so, despite how difficult and uncomfortable it is, I stay committed and continue my recovery journey.

With that said, I truly believe that with hope in one’s heart, the sky is the limit for anyone.



Conquering My Challenges

By Cori Meyer

As a young girl, I grew up with parents that were addicted to crack cocaine and a Grandma that always kept me from seeing what was really going on. I thought this lifestyle was normal, even at a young age. But I still didn’t agree with it; something about what was going on made me angry.

Soon after, I grew up doing the same thing my parents did but found myself even worse off. This went on for many years, and I felt stuck. I wanted a way out but didn’t know how. I was so naive about what kind of programs and supports were out there to help those like me who suffered with addiction.

I always thought the programs and supports were only available to those with money (GOOD jobs, GREAT insurance), which I did not have. So the day I found hope would have to be when I started working a CPS case. I found out that there are so many resources out there for me to fight and conquer my challenges with substance abuse. Even though I might have fallen off a few times, I still knew in my heart there was HOPE for me to recover.

Hope- a feeling of expecting and desire for a certain thing to happen.



The Battle for Hope

By Jamie Ugalde



As a person suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), I used any substance to deal with the emotional pain of loss and abuse. I was diagnosed with substance induced psychosis.

Living in this world of my fears was absolutely one of the hardest times of my life. I was struck by mental illness, living with severe depression for six years. All and everything around me seemed blank.

I was first diagnosed with postpartum depression three months after my last son was born, and eleven months later, my son's father died in front of me. I had given him the last of my crack cocaine, which caused an aneurism and killed him instantly. I had blamed myself for his death. That is when I became trapped in a nightmare that kept repeating itself.

Without understanding what I was grieving about, I ended up getting into another unhealthy relationship that just

involved drug use. It became an obsession to getting him to stop using. I knew I had stopped using when I witness someone that died from drugs. To end my life seemed the only way.

My addiction to drugs had caused my life to spiral out of control! I ended up losing my three children to The Department of Child Safety after they were removed from my home. I went further into a depression along with psychosis. In my mind, my children were dead and I would never see them again. I was scared, sad, and unaware that what my mind was thinking was not reality.

I was tired of searching for something I was not able to grasp. I did not want to live anymore, and all of my thoughts were saying "This only happens in movies". I felt no hope. I could no longer trust anyone, and I was even unsure of my family. But the familiar face of my mother was the only comfort I had. She took me to detox. Although I was still in a frame of mind where I could not understand what was going on or where I was, I was able to look at her familiar face and find comfort. I trusted her and stayed in detox, trying to figure out if the things I was seeing and hearing were real or not.

Within 24 hours everything started slowly making sense. I then called my mom, and when I ask her about my babies, and learned they were ok and alive. Hope had started like a wild fire within me! Now I found the true meaning of hope! Keep living and never give up, because one day you may be able to help others.

Dedicated to Daniel Hernandez! I'm doing it, and will do my best to raise our two sons and daughter! I love you.

“Only Took Six Months”

By Kristin Dolgaard

On April 14, 2016, my brother and I had gotten so frustrated that we ended up at Pasadera on a Saturday. We sat down with Amy. We explained that I was not there to receive mental health help. I needed help updating my software skills. She did an intake and that is the day that I met Matt, Supervisor of the RSS program. I specifically stated I did not want to use words like clinician - I wanted a “coach”. On April 16, 2016, Matt Woods called me and said, I am now your coach.

He and I met, and as soon as he saw my resume and learned that I had been homeless, he stated, “we need you to enroll in the RSS program”. My first packet was sent on 05.10.2016. We completed it and sent it to the Workforce Program while in his office. For the next sixty (60) days, we spoke at least 3-5 times a week. He kept me updated on all the changes happening. Our conversations (Matt and I) got personal and uplifting, to the point that he said to me, “Kristin, I could learn from you”. Our conversation was about how an individual should have a “say” in what happens “next” when the crisis teams arrives, etc.

Another packet was sent from Rachael the day before she left Pasadera in June. When Matt was transferred to another area, a new coach named Melissa was assigned. During this time, I worked directly with CODAC, TFD, TPD, the Crisis team from CHA, Banner, Psych team where a certain peer I assisted was treated. This experience fell into my lap. To this day, I speak and do peer support with this person. She is doing so well.

My Coach and I met a few times, and we spoke several times. She made sure my packet was sent again. She also wrote me a wonderful letter of reference as did Matt. Vanessa from the IHRSSI spoke to my Coach and I, and she was so awesome in making

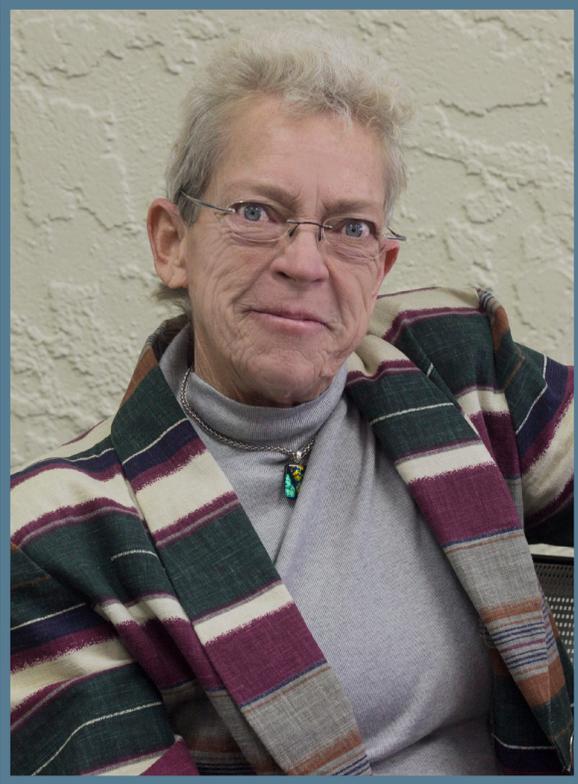


sure that I was in the class starting last month. When my Coach left, Vanessa and I continuously spoke. She gave me updates. When I needed to enter in the SNAP ETA Program via DES, she and I made sure the folks who needed to be contacted about it understood that this class would be taking my time for four weeks. I had a call from DES last week, and I then spoke to Dave from the IHRSSI. Dave stated, “this is your plan”.

All of these people were and are my HOPE. I pursued hope as well. I believe they saw an individual who truly wants to excel in life. This class has been an “eye-opener”. I will be pursuing my education further including the WHAM Training. Thank you.

Where I am Today, Loving the New Me

By Maureen Shaughnessy



My name is Maureen, and I am a person in recovery. I have been involved in the behavioral health system since 2002. At one point in my life, I was a person who struggled with alcoholism. I first got sober in 1999. I had 13 years of sobriety when I began to spiral downward. I was bored and couldn't get work, so I just gave up on myself. I went on a three year drinking binge.

My last drink was on February 19, 2016. That was when my life changed. I had been drinking for about a month straight. On this date, I went into a coma which lasted for almost a month. On March 4th, I remember waking up and I couldn't remember what happened, or who

I was. From that day forward, I began speech and physical therapy treatment, which has been extremely successful.

Though that time is not very clear to me, it was what has brought me to where I am today. My new road to recovery includes not just liking, but actually loving the new me. I thank a power greater than me that has gotten me this far in life. I also have my partner of 16 years who supports me. She never gave up on me, and believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. Through this supportive relationship with her and others, I began not only to believe in myself, but began to see hope in my future. This is where I began my road to recovery.

I have been able to stay on the road to recovery by going to La Frontera's Thornydale Ranch, where I resided for 4 ½ months. While there, I took part in groups which included: seeking safety, community group, barn duties (where I was promoted to Barn Captain within a month of being there), and other programmed activities. The Ranch gave me the hope and guidance I so desperately needed in order to better myself. On July 4th, I began residing independently in my own apartment with staff support on-site, where I am skill building and shadowing staff on a daily basis. On August 25th, 2016, I graduated from the La Frontera Peer to Pathways to Behavioral Health program. Shortly after, on August 29th, 2016, I started the HWC Camp Wellness program. It has taught me how to live a healthy and productive lifestyle, along with coping skills, to maintain my new lifestyle.

As odd as this sounds, I realized that the coma saved my life. It has given me back my sobriety, given me gratitude, and the ability to embrace my new life, goals, hopes and self-worth.

In this, I will be better prepared to help others achieve their goals, and will provide support to others in taking the steps necessary into the world of recovery and discovery.

Thank you.

Hopeless to Hopeful

By David McNulty

I went from hopeless to hopeful the day I started this course. Since my return from the Gulf War in 1991, I battled substance abuse on and off. I had one failed marriage and several bad relationships due to drugs and mental health issues, which had yet been diagnosed. I had been homeless and hopeless for years since. The day an illegal sting operation happened, I thought "This is it".

I had lost my children, through no fault of my own, and my relationship at the time was diminishing. I thought I was on my way to prison for the next 5 years, so I attempted suicide. However, I survived the attempt. For a couple of years following my conviction, I completely isolated myself. I only came out to drop for probation or see my probation officer. I rarely showered or shopped for food; needless to say, I rarely took care of myself.

I went to La Frontera one day, needing someone to talk to and looking for help, answers, something. I was soon diagnosed with PTSD and other mental health issues. It wasn't until an opportunity to do this course presented itself that a ray of hope shone through. I saw that maybe I could not only help myself, but that I may be able to help others as well, and now here I am, HOPEFUL.



Hope - My Resilience Against Life's Evils

By Joshua Hutchison

Elpis, translated from Greek as meaning Hope or Expectation, was the last "evil" left at the bottom of Pandora's box. While the ancient Greeks saw Hope as evil, and many still wield it like a weapon, Hope is truly one of the most powerful tools a person can have. Though Hope is not a tangible thing, it magically exists inside of me.

As a small child growing up, I never knew what the word Hope was, but I did know I would always bounce back from whatever abuse or problem life presented. I have this constant yearning for a better way of life. Maybe that is what hope is, the resilience for a better today and tomorrow no matter what happened yesterday. Hope is the idea or possibly even the dream that has manifested itself in my everyday fight for resiliency.

I know in my life I have faced storms and very deep seas. Hope has kept me floating above the waves of life. The word Hope is tossed around on a daily basis such as, "I hope tomorrow is a better day," or "I hope I win the lottery!". Hope is the elasticity and resilience that drives me to continue when all else seems lost or evil. Like Pandora's Box, Hope is sometimes all I have left, but it reminds me that I always have something.



The Resilience of Hope in My Life

By Jennifer Shelton



The way I found hope was simply by giving up my past experiences with a drug addiction that nearly ruined my life with my family. I also had to give up my past experience and forgive myself not taking responsibility as a mother, and ruining my relationship with my sister and my daughter.

What changed my outlook in life was finally seeking help to overcome an addiction of low self-worth and shame from years of abuse to myself, which ruined my life. I was told to go to a halfway house after relapsing due to family issues, not knowing this was going to be a life changing experience for me. I never would have imagined this would happen to me.

I met the man to whom I am happily married, and we have a relationship that is surreal and genuine, and completely real. My family is very supportive of me; I would not be where I am today if it wasn't for my Aunt Sandra and Uncle Don, who believed in me and never turned their backs on me. They gave me the guidance and words of wisdom to not give up, and we have been on a journey from God and a path of love and support. We help one another to be there for each other, to lift each other up when one is down and to lend a helping hand when needed.

What I have learned is my spiritual growth today has been essential to my recovery and it helped me to search for the meaning and purpose of my life. It has helped me experience hope, love, inner peace, comfort, and support # 1.

A Mother's Worst Nightmare

By Raquel Ugalde



I am here today to tell the world: if I can do it, there is hope for anyone! My life has not been easy. I grew up with two hard working parents and my sister (me being the eldest). My parents were young teenagers when they had me, and back then when you started a family, you got married. They struggled with having to grow up and find out who they were. There were drugs, parties, and at the end, domestic violence.

There were police, having to stay at grandma's house for the week, and feeling like I had to take care of my family. I spent much of my childhood worrying if everything would ever get back to normal. I started to date in my teenage years and fell into a possessive, unhealthy relationship. My parents tried to steer me in the right direction. I soon graduated with my first born son in my arms.

Being a young woman, I had to grow up, start college, and go into the work force. I didn't realize that I had issues of my

own. I was using pharmaceutical narcotics like candy, thinking that everything was great. Meanwhile, I was killing my family. I can't tell you how many times they had to call the paramedics, and I even ended up in the hospital a few times, telling the doctors that I was fine that I had no problems. That went on throughout my twenties.

Living with my pill addiction, I still struggled to be what they called "normal." I had two handsome boys and they were my world. I had them in sports, took them to all the events that I could, and I even had them in Boy Scouts (I was their Bear leader). I was having a home built on an acre of land, perfect for me and my boys. I was a very hard working mother with the world in my arms.

My addiction got worse when I became involved a man, not knowing about his past. My addiction got worse, to the point of losing my boys, my home, my job, and my self-respect. It was at this time, one of the lowest points of my life, that I began prayer, hope, and wanting to be with my boys. Nothing was going to stop me. I wanted to live.

A couple of years went by, and I used that time to get my act together. I was given the opportunity to have a healthy daughter, and my second son came to live with me. I got to see my children grow, and I gave a promise to myself and to them that I was going to live life to the fullest. My second boy soon started High School and fell in love. He ran away with this girlfriend to protect her from her father, and was gone for a good year. I can't tell you where my heart was at, knowing what was out there in the world. I was inconsolable.

Soon CPS took my son's girlfriend into custody; my boy was traumatized from losing his love and having to hustle on the street to stay alive. It led him to running away on his own. He began to hang out with "the guys". Getting into parties, drugs, you name it, he was doing it. My main focus was to get him the help he needed, and I was not going down without a fight. We had to face the juvenile system, a probation officer, psychiatrist, male role models, rehab (twice), the struggles of choices I had made, as well as his own. It went on until my worst nightmare came true on the 28th day of 2015. I lost my son to an overdose. I dedicate this journey I am about to take to help other families in need, to know that people struggle every day from the choices they make. It's about coping, forgiving yourself, keeping your faith and most importantly, listening.

“Where there is ruin, there is HOPE for a treasure.” Rumi

By Tonkins Anderson

First the sadness and despair; then the endless river of tears that eventually flow into numbness, succeeded by a state of complete emptiness that never seems to pass, but quiets itself through social withdrawal and isolation. The darkness of this journey – My Ruin – had revealed to me that the only possibility of piercing through the pain, was first my realization that the pain and suffering was not only exhausting as hell, but it was becoming unbearable. I also realized that the beginning of every journey is willingness – my desire or readiness to move out of this darkness and hopefully onto something better than what I was experiencing in that present moment.

In this willingness, the questions were found in the answer itself. I felt progress in the revelation that if I can now tunnel through hope, faith, and belief that eventually - soon, I hoped - I would see the light. To feel better, I would have to climb back through all those previous stages: the despair, the numbness, the grief, and the sadness, with a different awareness and acceptance. This had to happen before there could be any happiness or pleasure for life.

My case manager at El Rio recommended Camp Wellness. This program was particularly interesting for me due to the components of mind and body wellness. The thought of being physically active in my therapy seemed like a dream come true! Gratefully, I was accepted into the course. Although the first week was a



bit unsettling, as time progressed I blended in with great comfort. The next thing I knew, motivation had meaning. I was waking up every morning with purpose, taking classes, learning new things, and meeting new people (friends) who are on the same path. For the first time in a long time I began to feel hope again... Hope had never left my side. What I had to do was unlearn hopelessness by putting myself into a situation that was nourishing and supportive – Camp Wellness was that situation!!

When you have a game plan, you can develop a sense of HOPE.

When you have HOPE, you can win at anything!!

D.Ramsey

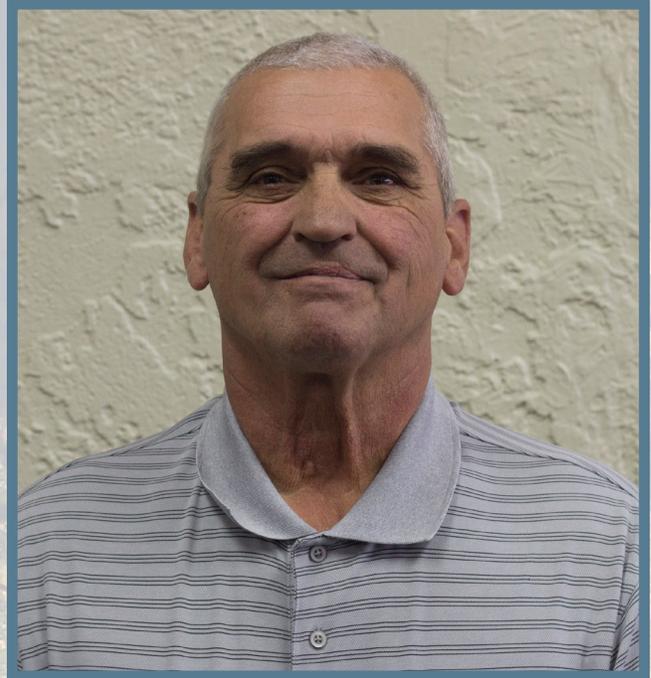
Worst Best Day of My Life

By David Francis

On September 16, 2009, I was sitting down to breakfast at the usual café where I dined, when - as I saw it - I was rudely interrupted by two county Sheriffs. This was probably the worst best day of my life. I was arrested and later found to have 11 grams of heroin in my possession. I was charged with possession for sales of a controlled substance. I subsequently received 7 and a half years in prison.

At that time it really didn't really change anything for me. After I was in the system for just over a year, seeing the way that the inmates operated with a two faced attitude of "I can do it but you can't" with the youngsters, I became determined not to have anything to do with them or drugs any longer. This was in April of 2010.

I just realized this was only 6 months after I was locked up. Anyway, I have not used since and I am determined to use my experiential knowledge to help others overcome this serious problem. I spent most of my last couple of years incarcerated learning and teaching



Yoga to other prisoners. I believe I have a good head on my shoulders and could be a great benefit to other people with substance use problems.

What a great crew of Recovery Support Specialist Graduates



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Workforce
Development News

Beverly McGuffin,
EDITOR

Patricia Philbin,
DESIGN

UA Workforce Development Program promotes recovery and expanded opportunities for people with mental illness, substance use, and dual diagnosis by employing a collaborative approach to advocacy, service, education, and research.

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