

# Workforce Development News

Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute

Casa Grande Arizona, February 26, 2015



## Certified Peer Support Specialist Graduating Class

*Back Row (L to R)*

Doreen Daily, Dolly Chavez, Cynthia Webb, Annie Ysaguirre, Jennifer Hernandez

*Front Row (L to R)*

Sharry Brauer, Teresa Marin, Peggy White, Rosie Valdenegro, Amy Lujan



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# Today

By Cynthia Webb



My Hope began the day I had to leave the hospital without my daughter Journee. On this day my life became something that didn't just involve myself. Everything I did after that day was in hope that I would get my daughter back. Nothing, and no one was going to stop me from achieving my goals. During this period of my recovery I became aware of the program where I could possibly help other people in my similar situation. During this program it gave me hope that one day I could be a person who someone else can come to for guidance. I have been down a rough path and I know how challenging it can be. With that being said, I know that I could be a good support for others. My life has taken a complete turn, and I look back at my past and see that my life was going nowhere. ***Today I am a Strong Minded, Independent Woman.***

# Hope for Me

By Dolly Chavez

My personal experiences of hope was when I realized that with the help of God and with Him in control of my life, I could do anything. In the first year, my illnesses were gone without me even knowing it. I walked in to see Dr. Irvine and explained how much my desire was for people like me to know that there was hope for them. If I could do it and be an example then they could see me as a poster of hope.



**Dolly Chavez** has been invited by the Superior Town Council to attend the Hispanic Leadership Institute in Casa Grande on March 18th for 10 weeks.



# Voila!

By Sharry Brauer



My personal experience of hope started when I learned of a 12 step program call ACA (adult children of alcoholics, and, or, dysfunctional families). Even though I had experimented with alcohol and some drugs, ACA just fit. Later I learned, my use was a way of self medicating. Back then, AA was pretty much against meds that controlled mood and behavior, ACA wasn't. In ACA there were people like me. I also had to have surgery. Pain meds didn't help my pain and I hated being all doped up and not able to function and still be in pain. I complained to my doctor. My doctor said to me his psychiatrist owed him a favor. I asked,"your psychiatrist? You see a psychiatrist for yourself?" He said yes. I met his psychiatrist. We had a long conversation. We added some psych meds with the pain meds and voila! With the help of meds; ACA; a group called 'Finding Tomorrow'; and a very special therapist, I was on my way. I'm not just a mentally ill person, I'm a person with mental illness who has something to say. With help, support, and education, there is hope. Hope of recovery.

# A New Way of Life

By Amy Lujan

I found hope in November of 2014. I had several people who were there for me on this journey of recovery. They are my spiritual brothers and sisters, members of the community, who have been active themselves in recovery.

I have hope for the first time in many years. I have been clean for 19 months. I am attending spiritual meetings twice weekly. I have become an unbaptized publisher and plan to be baptized soon. I am about to become a certified Recovery Support Specialist. The dedication I made to GOD was the turning point in my life and has led me this far on my journey. I have discovered a gold mine of information and a new way of life for me, and I hope to assist many more living with a mental disorder and/or substance use. I am in **Recovery** and I am **Hopeful!**





# A Spark of Hope

Jennifer Hernandez



I can tell you the moment when my personal experience of hope began. It was 2:17 p.m. on February 3, 2015. Seems exact, doesn't it? I know that moment because I looked at the clock on the wall, and thought to myself that I hadn't even realized I had been hopeless until that very moment. I was in the Recovery Support Specialist Institute class, surrounded by people who were vastly different than myself, yet very much the same. For the first time in what felt like years, I realized that I wasn't completely lost – there were others who were searching as well. In that moment, the realization struck me that I had been living as a shell of the person that I am meant to be, and with that knowledge came a spark of hope that my life will once again become my own, that I will not only survive, but flourish in this life. The lives of the people that I love will be enriched, and I will be able to fully accept their love in return. There is still a journey of recovery ahead of me, probably a long, bump filled journey, but that spark of hope has turned into a burning ember, and I know it will become a blazing torch lighting the road ahead. I can honestly say I know life will be brighter and my journey more meaningful if I can help just one other person feel that little spark. I am filled with gratitude and joy that my path in life led me right here, right now – what more could one ask for?



# The Story of My Success

By Rosemary Valdenegro

My experience has been a very long Journey for me. It was very hard throughout my years of growing up. I can say it all begin at an early age becoming a teenage mother at the age of 12 years old. I knew at that point that my life was going to be a tough one. It has been so hard over the years going to school and raising a baby. I had a great mother that helped me take care of my baby and supported me by helping me finishing my education. It was rough for the both us but we had each other. My mother has been there for everything I went through.

I was an only child and being an only child, let's just say it was very lonely growing up. I had no one. I was a loner. It was very depressing. I didn't have a teenage life or going out with friends. I was very much at home taking care of my baby, while everyone was having fun in their teenage lives. I completed 12 grade and had total of 3 kids. The father of my children and I were living together, I guess there was still one thing missing because I still felt alone. I still depressed. I have gone through domestics violence, mental abuse, physical and verbal abuse. I lived with this for over 20 years or more. Drugs played a huge part in my life. I didn't even know about drugs. I was at home where I needed to be. The first time I saw someone do drugs I wanted to do it. I wanted to fit in with the crowd, to be cool. I wasn't peer pressured into anything, but wanted to try it. I was tired of feeling and being a loner.

The first time I used drugs I wanted to fit in. Well, at first it took me to another level. I never meant for it to be forever and become an addiction. Drugs played a huge role my life, even though someone warned me not to do it, they told me that I was not going to be able to control or handle it. If I could go back in time I would have listened. This drug took me for a long ride. It took me into a huge dark place I never thought I would be. It took me to a place that I dug myself into, a place and I couldn't find my way back. I was in



complete darkness. I found using drugs was my cure to dealing with problems. I didn't have to feel the pain anymore. I had found my fix to deal with everything. I felt complete numbness and I thought I could control it. Wow, was I wrong. I never thought that I had a drug addiction or I was addict.

At that point, I stop loving myself, caring, providing, wanting to go to work and taking care of my responsibilities as a mother. I lost homes, cars, jobs, respect, friends, and the trust. I must say my drug addiction was like a cycle repeating over and over and over again. I would be clean and sober for 6 months and then the moment I would be stressed out and ran into problems, I would stop and find my fix. I would run from everything, I would leave for days, then it became weeks until I finally didn't have any more money, and I hit reality and said "What am I doing out here?" I felt guilty. I came crashing down and hit rock bottom. I cried wolf too many times. My addiction journey started at the age of 23 years and it has taken from me 13 more years. There were so many times I wanted to stay sober, but each time I didn't know how

*continued on next page*



# Faith, Hope, & Charity

By Annie Ysaguirre



The story of my pain was long and deep. It spans over 40 years and took many casualties. My family, my relationships, and my hope. Struggling with mental illness and substance abuse was my way of life. Then one day I got on my knees and asked God to heal me and make me whole. It was amazing. I am not the person I used to be. My hope for a brighter future gives me the strength I need when I am afraid. I am living proof God answers prayer. My Recovery Support Specialist class has given me hope that there is something I can contribute to the world, and that my voice might help others who feel they are alone in their pain.

**Annie Ysaguirre and Rosemary Valdengro** have been offered an interview for a position with the Pinal Hispanic Counsel after graduation.

## *The Story of My Success* By Rosemary Valdengro, continued

tempting it was. I loved it. The drug was so much more powerful than I was.

The TURNING POINT for me I would say was WHEN I LOST EVERYTHING ONCE MORE. I was at the end of a blocked road. I COULD NO LONGER RUN OR HIDE FROM THIS ANYMORE. There was no way out. My life was in the hands of my adult children. My children came to a point where enough was enough and had to take control of our home and their lives knowing that their mother was drug addict. My point is this: I WAS KICKED OUT OF MY OWN HOME BY MY OWN CHILDREN

I went into a rehab center in Bisbee, Arizona and was there for over 4 months. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. It changed me, it made to be a better person, mother, friend, daughter, and the most important thing was I found my way back into a new beginning to life. I learned I wanted to become a Peer Support Specialist to share my story, my past experiences, and so much more. Today I am a person recovering from an addiction. I have been in recovery for 2 1/2 years. I maintain a living environment for me and my kids; I have gained back my self-respect and also the love and trust of friends and family. I've made new friends, and have great mentors. I am a member of the Pinal Hispanic Counsel and will continue my treatment and goals in recovery.

I will end this by saying: I completed my goal. I have graduated and I am now a Certified Peer Support Specialist!

*This is My Story Of Success*



# Returning Hope to Others

By Doreen Daily

I have struggled with alcohol and drugs since I was 12 years old, it left me sad and empty. I had my first hopeful moment was when I met my husband and started my family. I was able to stay sober through my first pregnancy until my daughter was 1 year old. Then I started to use cocaine and alcohol to lose the pregnancy weight. I continued using it until I got pregnant again. I stopped using until my son was about 10 months old. Again picked up my old habits to lose the pregnancy weight. This time it was methamphetamine. It made me feel like super women. I had several jobs and always seemed to work my way up the ladder quickly. I was always responsible, just reckless. My using became greater and I began a downward spiral. I was hospitalized for my first drug induced psychotic episode when I was 32 years old. Still undiagnosed, I was treated with medication and then released back into my world.

Always hopeful but lost. I went to AA and stayed off meth and alcohol. I continued in my recovery and was off substances for years. I had another child and began a career teaching school age children. I functioned well until stress got the best of me. It happened again and I had another psychotic episode, only this time it was not drug induced. I was hospitalized, medicated and then released back into my world still undiagnosed. I continued on the path of recovery from substance use. I knew something more was happening to me, but I was not educated about it. I went back to



teaching and functioned the best I could, yet still not knowing why I felt so different.

In 2012 I had another psychotic episode, and this time I was in a mental health hospital. There they diagnosed me with Bi-Polar II. They educated me about my disorder. I was able to complete a 12 day treatment plan that gave me the tools to relieve my stress. I continue on the path of recovery. I take medication that is specifically used for my disorder and use exercise to relieve my stress. I talk to others about this and it always gives me HOPE. With HOPE I can return HOPE to others.

*Doreen has a job at Mountain Health & Wellness starting March 30th*



# Hello Hope

By Teresa Marin



Having worked so hard for many years to attain a high paying position in a very well known company, and on my way to receiving my B.A. in counseling, I started on a downward spiral which happened so gradually that at first I was not even aware of what was happening. I knew that the feelings of hopelessness, sadness and despair, were progressively getting out of control. One day, without telling anyone what I was about to do, I quit my job, quit school and isolated myself from relatives, friends and almost all outside contact for about a year. I can't really say when I felt that I could not live that way any longer. I know that one day after many doctor visits, about twenty different types of medications, and the fact that I couldn't finish a sentence without crying, I was driving past the Pinal Hispanic Counsel. I stopped, went inside, and asked for help. Wheels started turning immediately. I was quickly scheduled for services. I was given an appointment to meet with a counselor, a man who re-introduced me to Hope, something that I had forgotten existed. After two years of counseling, learning coping skills, and yes, set backs, I have reached a point in my recovery where I am only on four medications and I am confident enough in myself to take the RSS training, where I learned that some day I may be able to help other Teresa's. I see that regardless what others may say and think about us, as long as there is hope within us, we will recover.

**Teresa Marin**, has been offered an interview for a position with the Pinal Hispanic Counsel after graduation.



# With Hope There is Recovery

By Peggy White

From an early age, I knew I was helpless and hopeless. This was taught to me through mental and physical abuse. Later it was reinforced with poor school grades, where I was humiliated in front of my peers. I was told I would never make it through high school.

During college, I had my first real battle with depression. I was talked out of my suicidal ideas by friends and my soon to be husband, and I came through it. Whenever depression reared it's head, my husband knew how to send it back from where it came.

The 1980's would bring only heartbreak with the loss of my brother, father, mother, grandmother, and a major depression followed with my husband's death. This was my first introduction to professional therapy. It worked. I was well, and all was good. No such luck. As we all know there is no magic wand. I was lucky to find a professional who cared enough and was able to diagnose me with PTSD and to help me work through this stage of my life.

Next time would find me in a hospital with a dual diagnose PTSD with chronic depression. Again, I found professional people who were willing to work with me. For the first time, I started to make real progress, with my support group. (I thought you only found them in hospitals.) What a revelation to know I was not alone.

I was not ready for the next major depression and this time it came with anxiety. This time family supported me. They found me counseling, without it, I



would be back in the hospital. I knew I would make it because I had support. I was learning I am not helpless, I can make it with the support and the tools I found here at the RSS Institute. I have found hope that comes from others who have shared their story. I know that whatever may come, there will be hope for my recovery. With recovery there is hope and with hope, there is recovery.



# Congratulations Graduates!



**Amy Lujan**



**Annie Ysaguirre**



**Peggy White**



**Sharry Brauer**



**Jennifer Hernandez**



**Cynthia Webb**



**Rosemary Valdenagro**



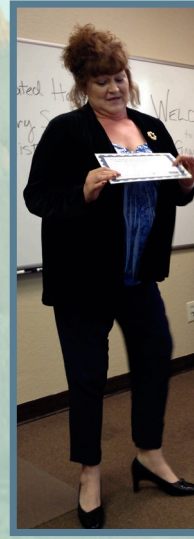
# Congratulations Graduates!



**Doreen Daily**



**Teresa Marin**



**Dolly Chavez**

## A Big Thank You!



**Breanna Boland of the Casa Grande Alliance**

**Thank you to the Casa Grande Alliance who graciously provided the training space for the Institute.**



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Workforce Development News

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**Beverly McGuffin,**  
EDITOR

**Patricia Philbin,**  
DESIGN

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*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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## Workforce Development Program

1450 North Cherry Avenue #203, Tucson AZ 85719

(520) 626-7473

Fax (520) 626-7833

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## Trainers

**Beverly McGuffin,** RN, MSN, CPRP

**John Anglin,** LSAT, CRSS

**Gina Chesler,** BA, BHT, CRSS

**Tim Connolly,** RN, MN

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