

Workforce Development News

Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute

Sierra Vista, Arizona February 11, 2016



Certified Peer Support Specialist Graduates

Back Row left to right:

Albert Regain, Maureen Nadeau, Bettina Allen, James Murray, Joe Bailey Jr., Shawn Palmer

Third Row left to right:

Brenda Yazzie, Luci Sodari, Toya Littlebear, Jessie Libfeld, Kenneth Nichols

Second Row left to right:

Lorraine Chapman, Nathan Bernier, Sandra Carrasco, Diane Miller

Front Row left to right: Marie Martinez, Maryann Schrader, Kim Magallanez

Hope is Dope

Albert Regain

I talk about a time in my life when I didn't care if I lived or died, in fact the preference would've been for me to die. I felt like I was a burden, I had no future, no one trusted me or could depend on me and I had absolutely no self-esteem. I relate the time to being buried alive and not sure that I wanted to be rescued.

For me the hope came as a tiny light as I submitted to the idea of getting treatment. Hope evolved into desire, belief and determination as the light of "Hope" continued to grow. Today hope is abundant in all aspects of my life as I celebrate my family, friends, work and my savior Jesus. I see hope every day in the light of mine and my children's eyes and thank my mother whom held the hope for me until I found my own. Hope is the dope that I am addicted to today, what a blessing!



I Have Hope

Joe Bailey



My personal experience of hope accrued like a flash of light. I was getting high with some friends. One of them looked at me and said

"Why are you doing this?" I had no answer. But the question made me think. While I was thinking about this, my sister got a hold of me to tell me our mother had died.

At this point I told myself that I could not keep doing this. I had to make a change and stop getting high. My sister asked me to come here (to town) and help her if I could. I said okay. If I didn't stop I would have killed myself. So my hope comes from my sister. Without her I would be still getting high, or dead somewhere. She gave me hope and away out of the hole I was in.

So in conclusion my hope comes from the hope that she has for me and the future. With her support, strength, and perseverance. I have hope and will continue to have it.

My Life Had Begun With Lots of Hope

Lorraine Chapman

After 23 long miserable years of drug use, being homeless & no family support, what I thought was punishment; I realized I was being saved from something worse. I went to prison for a year & it's there that I had to get my life together, not just for myself but a for a future with my grandson.

Like most teen users I started with marijuana, on to coke, which led to crack. I didn't stop there, I eventually moved on to crystal meth, my lowest time in my life. Thru all my struggles no matter how much I used or what I did, my family couldn't understand why I was an addict. I myself denied I was sick and didn't think it mattered. I was told if I didn't stop or go back to prison I'd never see my most precious grandson. LeAndro is everything to me and it was get clean and get a life or I'd lose him. I didn't want that, so I left home and started over in Tucson. Slowly I became strong enough to not wanna use and I as a person became positive. I attended many classes, from IOP, Women's Wellness Substance Abuse Recovery, and Relapse Prevent to Smart Recovery. I became so motivated I wanted to help others, especially people who didn't have anyone to turn to, to just listen, to be there if they were in trouble. As time went on several of my counselors started noticing my attitude, my positive mind, that I became confident. I wanted something more, which led me COPE. I



was at an intake within a week and it was there that I was asked if I knew what an Recovery Support Specialists was?

Because I had just celebrated my 1 year of being clean from any substance, I was recommended to apply to the RSS Institute. I was in awe of it; I couldn't believe I was actually filling out the packet. 3 months later I got the call if I was still interested in attending. As I called my momma to give her the news, tears filled my eyes along with barely even able to speak. I told her what I thought I'd never would. An opportunity I couldn't refuse. At that moment I knew my life had begun and with lots of hope & faith I'd be just fine.

Hope

Bettina Allen



My experience of hope occurred by letting help actually help me, by letting fear and the desire to feel what getting better feels like, drive my motivation. Just simply getting fed up with getting in trouble with the law and also fed up with the life I was leading. The way I handled my mental health led me to self-medicate with drugs, thus started my addiction not realizing that drugs were only going to make it worse. I have been in and out of SEABHS since I was 12 years old.

My way of life and my way of handling things in life has never worked, so I knew it was time for a change, time to try an approach I've never tried before by opening up my closed mind and closed heart and started taking the suggestions of others that were there to help me. I used to honestly think that I was hopeless, that my problems would never go away, that

my drug addiction would never cease, I felt so helpless. Guilt and shame are good teachers here, they teach you that you definitely don't want to continue to add to it because THAT HURTS, and it brings you to thoughts of suicide, for which I have attempted a few times in my life. Then I reverted to cutting myself as a pain diversion to forget about the emotional pain for a while.

Again all of this HURTS but also taught me that some part of me wants to be HAPPY and HEALTHY, so I began speculating with myself, telling myself that it is time to try a different routine than I've ever tried before. Then I got put on probation from charges 2 years prior, which I swear was GOD's way of saying "YOU PRAYED FOR THIS CHANGE, THIS IS HOW IT MUST CHANGE FOR YOU." I've tried at succeeding on probation and in rehabs before and failed, what makes this time different from the others? But it was because I somehow let myself build on my support system. I've always been afraid of building on a support system due to my lack of trust for others, but I also didn't realize that having supports meant much more than just other people as supports.

I have a pet rooster, Chipper, as a support, SEABHS Benson outpatient as a support, my boyfriend and his mother helped me through the battle of overcoming meth addiction as a support (well up until recent events they were a part of my support system), and I also have a Life in Recovery Bible as a support. GOD IS A HUGE SUPPORT! My desire and need to get my daughter back is also a support.

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Hope by Bettina Allen, continued...

But my recovery from substance and mental illness didn't happen at the same time; the substance had to go first. I'm one year and four months sober from meth and I'm still recovering from mental illness in a sense, but I am getting so much better. I never thought I could even overcome my addiction to meth, whether I felt forced or not in the beginning. I DID IT and it felt good to make that accomplishment, with all the hard work it took to get there, it's all worth it because this truly is a huge accomplishment, this addiction lasted over 10 years.

After proving that to myself it inspired me to want full recovery, utilizing and expanding my support system one day at a time, a little at a time, because you can overload yourself which in turn overwhelms you. That can turn into a bad thing sometimes, especially mentally.

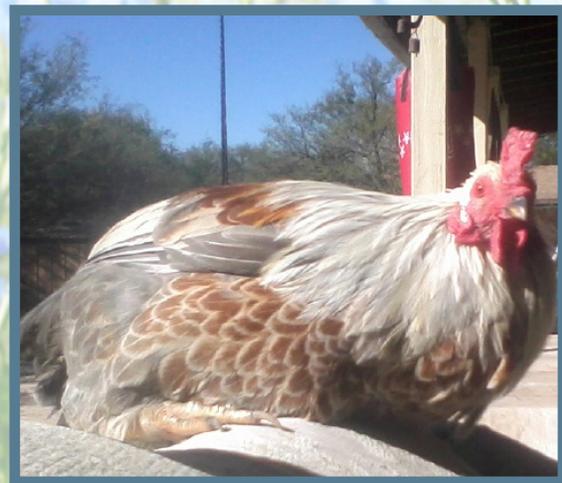
I go to groups at SEABHS pretty religiously to re-learn and be reminded of the tools used in recovery and actually utilized them and tried

new ones out. Recovering meant stepping out of my comfort zone to learn and realize my own potential, something I thought I had lost when I became addicted to drugs. Through all my trials and tribulations GOD has brought me true hope, recovery has taught me a valuable lesson, and my spirituality, amongst other external factors, has taught me that 'GUESS WHAT'; I am in control, that I don't have to suffer anymore, my suffering was by choice, MY CHOICE, from my perspective.

It took me many years to realize that. I don't have to suffer from depression, I never had to self-medicate, nor did I have to let suicidal tendencies and self-mutilation get the best of me. But you know what; if it wasn't for all of that I wouldn't be who I am today. I deserve to live, I definitely deserve to fully recover from all of my problems, but most important of all I DESERVE ALL THE BENEFITS THAT HOPE BRINGS TO ME, WE ALL DO WHETHER WE REALIZE THAT OR NOT. That is my personal experience of HOPE.



Chipper the rooster



Hope is Born

Diane Miller



October 2012

Friday- Just discharged from the hospital with donated clothes and a fistful of prescriptions. My son decides I can wait Sunday to go home as he's visiting his girlfriend. Not knowing what to do, I call a fellow inpatient that was recently discharged and living in the area.

I end up somewhere outside Tucson at a low-rent trailer park in a ratty trailer with a weeping woman in the living room and a meth party in the bedroom. My ride is gone, I know no one, so I hide out in the bathroom.

Saturday- I'm really feeling the effects of not taking my medication. My emotions are intense and all over the place. I call my son again, and he tells me: "Quit being so f_____ selfish and I'll get you tomorrow!"

I grab some blankets (meth smoke stinks!!), go

outside and make a nest on a picnic table. I'm babbling, blubbing, anger tears and prayers. Pleas, curses, guilt, remorse, anger, and shame. "Somebody help me, dammit! I don't want to end up in that bedroom!"

To this day I can't explain what it was, but it literally felt like a blanket of peace and calm was laid over my body. Clarity ensues. No white knight was going to ride up and save me from myself. My family made it perfectly clear that I am on my own. Well, so be it. I've been strong for them all these years; I can certainly be strong for myself.

And Hope is Born

In hope, I go regularly to SEABHS, where Sandra becomes my number 1 sounding board and cheerleader. To expand my hope and support base, I attend every group I can. I make lists of my dreams, my short term goals, and my long term goals. I keep a journal, I wean myself off all medications, and I write a personal mission statement.

My hope has seen and continues to see me through: an abusive marriage, deaths of two children, times of no money, no food, no gas, no heat, and no hot water. My hope is what keeps me believing it will get better because I will make it better.

Almost four years into my recovery, and I am expanding my hope yet again. I'm hoping to help others realize that the dead-end they think is in front of them is really a crossroad. That with a determined mindset and hope in your heart, there is no limit to where you can go or what you can accomplish.

Believe That You Can Move Mountains

Deb Heidbrink

Wow, how do I start this one, hope? My road to recovery is pretty much non-existent. No one including family and friends ever thought that depression was something to be reckoned with. So - don't get me wrong they were always there to pick me up and to put a roof over my head (Thank the Lord), so I was better off than most, but mental disorder, depression? No way - just pick yourself up, Deb do this and Deb do that. But I kept falling down the rabbit hole.

Sure I got out, had another job, some lasted three or four years, but taking the blame for others and sticking up for others is not always the right thing to do. Sometimes I quit only finding the new job was worse than the one I left. And then came 'down' times that I loved my bed and pain pills more than my son. Not actually but that is the way my parents, brother and my son(s) saw it.

Recovery has consisted of hills and valleys. At some point I did realize that I had depression and did get drugs (which do not mix well

with alcohol). At some point after a night in jail, my dad and step-mother did help me with therapy for a while and again I started to smile, but only for a while. Right now and the last two years with the Lord, Randolph my (spiritual) counselor here at SEABHS, lots of appointments with him and other doctors to manage pain, I am up again. I'm not sure how, because home life has been so many hills, but hey, at least they were not mountains, maybe not too bad because - Jesus says I can move those.

In conclusion I am up - even though mom treats me as a child, on the other hand she has been supporting me financially. Too bad not spiritually, I so thought that I was here for some kind of reconnection. So, again the Lord sent me friends to do that and again THANK the LORD, because here I am and falling down is not an option. So I can smile again, I can run and not grow tired; I can walk and not grow faint. I can stumble and not fall!

Hope is Ongoing

Luci Sodari

Hope for me is ongoing. I'm still in recovery dealing with severe depression and anxiety so I still see hope every day. Without hope I could not make it through the day, hope is all we really have.

Hope is a savior for me in my life. I have been dealing with depression since the age of ten and had finally reached the point of no longer being able to deal with it. Suicide had always been in the back of my mind and I decided it was time to try it, I just could not take it anymore.

It seems I have tried every med available with no positive results. With the help of my family, friends and professional staff I was able to see that suicide is not the answer. Without hope I would not be here. My support system holds me together and keeps me going. For this I am so grateful.



Hope and support gets me through my current issues, without it my future would look very dim. Hope is forever with me.

Same Person I Always Was

Mary Anne Schrader



When it comes to that moment of hope, where the World shines brightly and all of dark clouds of depression are lifted. This has not happened to me, as of yet.

The closest thing that has happened to this, I was talking to Cathy, a friend of mine, and she told me to remember that I was not a diagnosis, I was a person. I looked at the world around me to see if anything had changed, but no. The trees were still the same; the birds who filled the air with their songs were still the same. I was the same person I always was.

There was no change in me, only the added tag of major depression tacked to my butt. But I am a person first not diagnosis.

A Mission From Higher Power

Jessie Libfeld



She looked at me in a way that implied I better pay attention and she said, "Jessie, I think you are stable, but you lack purpose." Purpose. Purpose. That word came off her lips and popped out of my head like a lightbulb.

Just days before seeing this new psychiatric nurse practitioner, I had been suicidal. I had had zero hope.

Who knew that one little word, purpose, could change the trajectory of my life?

She continued, "You can get purpose by being a peer support where you can use your story to inspire others."

The idea that my story could inspire others affected me in a way nothing had before. I felt like I was on a mission from Higher Power to make a difference in the lives of others.

The counselor I had seen before her had told me I should get on disability and live in a group home. Now thanks to this other professional, I had hope for a rich future. My life suddenly took on a new meaning and purpose.

Hope

Sandra Carrasco

My hope began the day I went into the hospital after ingesting too much drugs 14 years ago. I remember seeing my children and the worry on their faces. They were thinking I was in the hospital due to my liver disease. The looks they had when they found out it was the drugs and that I was not dying from my illness, was devastating to me.

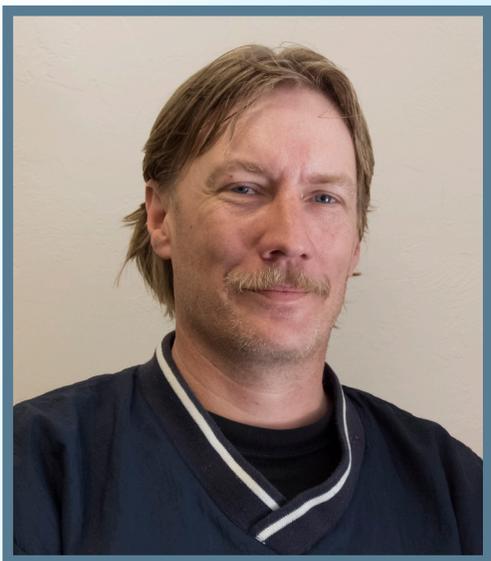
I made a promise to myself and to my children that I would quit the drugs. It has been a struggle but with the love and support of my family I have been able to stay clean and sober for 14 years.

With the help of the peer training I am now in the position to help others.



Take Those Small Steps

Kenneth Nichols



It is impossible for me to give an exact date or even year that HOPE entered into my life. What I am able to say I'd HOPE for me comes and goes like being in a hole with a ladder. I am standing on the last rung able to peek out and see open area all around. Somehow the hole gets deeper and I have to climb another rung or two to see out again. HOPE started with me and is a constant battle to maintain that glimmer. There are others that have contributed to that glimmer of hope for a future for me. My Recovery Coach is there for me and truly cares for my wellbeing. Without my interest and her assistance I would not have been here getting my Recovery Specialist Certification, another step in my recovery. It is my goal to not step backwards and to continue to take those small steps toward making a place for me in life that I may be comfortable and others accept me for who I am.

Hope Goes Hand in Hand With Faith

Nathan Bernier

I would like to take a few minutes to talk to you about my personal experience with hope. The first time I realized that hope was a key to life and to my recovery; I sat back and watched it take place in this journey. In the past when I was without hope and I believed the way my life was spiraling down was how it would be forever. I had to accept that.

The word hope goes hand in hand with faith for me. I have to believe that there is something better out there for me. I have a greater purpose in this world than to wake up every day just as another human that ingests air. The turning point in my life that made me understand hope is real, and I need to place faith in knowing that hope is to help. It is to give us a push or extra boost in the right direction.



I Chose To Live

Kim Magallanez



I was born into an alcoholic family watching my parents fight and hurt each other for years, I had corner in the kitchen where I would get on my knees and pray for my parents to stop; sometimes they would and other times it would get so bad we would get hit in the middle of cross fire. I hated being a part of that.

At age 11 took my first drink and loved the comfort of not caring, the feeling of being numb. My family caught on to my escape and made it impossible for me, the fighting and the drinking got worse I couldn't take it any more, so instead of going home after school, I'm 13 now, I decided to stay away didn't come home until 9 pm. They weren't fighting with each other their concern was about me, so I continued walking the streets doing nothing - going through changes.

I got home one night and my mother asked me where I've been, what I'm doing, what am I on? I told her funny you ask now. I slit my wrist in front of her, jumped on her and put my wrist to her mouth. I told her I started my period a year ago been having to steal my pads and to top it off the embarrassment of starting at school and not really understanding what was happening, I never went back to school.

After that I was admitted in Charter Hospital in Scottsdale, Az. I was there for a couple of months diagnosed with chronic depression. I became pregnant a year later and got out of my parents' house. So I didn't have much of a childhood, but I do have a few good memories. I later had four more children and left them all for drugs and alcohol, just couldn't stop using. I loved my kids so much but I couldn't stop. I ended in jail spent ten months. I found that place where I kneeled and prayed for God to take the hate and the anger from my heart, to take away all addictions that took over my life. At that moment I chose to live. There is so much mixed emotions in my life experiences, in the recall of hurtful feelings I hold close to my heart and I can honestly say my life is valued - a life work progress.

My kids have been in the system for a couple of years, finally in May we will be reunited. My biggest achievement! It took many changes to be able to get my kids back, the way I look at life, the way I perceive it, and the way I choose to live it now.

Without hope none of this would have been possible.

Hope is Knowing it's in Me

Shawn Palmer



When did it Occur?

My personal experience of hope began on August 18, 2006. I had just gone through a nasty divorce and decided after a murder attempt was made on my life I would move to Yuma, Arizona to live with my parents at their request. After what had happened I knew I had to make a drastic change in my life. Leaving Oregon and getting away from the negative influences I was associated with was my best option and my only option for survival. At the time I was drinking about a fifth plus of alcohol a day straight from the bottle to ease my pain from life and mental disorders. Little did I know that by making this change it would transform my life into the person I am today.

What Role did it play in my Journey of Recovery? Was there anyone else involved?

Upon arrival to Yuma and settling in with my parents I continued to drink extremely heavily. My parents began to encourage me to cut

back or even quit drinking. This was rough on all of us because I didn't want to quit but knew something had to give. At the time my parents and I didn't understand my substance abuse would leave scars. We only saw an alcoholic in need of transformation. My parents became so involved in my recovery process by showing that someone did love me enough to discourage me from further destroying my life. It finally set in my thick head. It was now time to begin the road to recovery.

After trying for three months to cut back and quit we all knew I needed external help. I had talked to the director of a recovery center and he stated just let him know and he would arrange for a bed at the recovery facility. Unfortunately, I cannot remember his name, but I will never forget what he did for me. On November 23, 2006 I checked into the rehab facility and met some of the most interesting people I would ever meet. I knew this was where I belonged. I knew these people understood my torture and pain.

When I left the facility on December 23, 2006 I knew I had an uphill battle, but now I had some tools to fight my addiction. I knew there would be setbacks, but I was ready or at least I thought I was. Approximately one month after leaving the Facility I began to have feelings of dread that something was wrong and began to be extremely depressed and anxious. I had my first full blown panic attack and it lasted four days. This was something I had never encountered before and it scared me and my family. What caused this, what could it be? It

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Hope is Knowing it's in Me by Shawn Palmer, continued...

seemed my substance abuse took on a new face and started my current chapter in the book of Shawn's Life.

I was diagnosed with PTSD, depression and high anxiety. I now had some names to what I was experiencing. Now knowing what was going on and through a better understanding I started winning back the person I always knew I was. I can't say I won the battle, but the hill I was climbing got a little less steep and rough. I was given medication to alleviate my symptoms and attended therapy regularly.

During this time which was a 5 year span I started school to get my Bachelors and eventually my Master's degree. Unfortunately, during this time part of my world was crushed. I lost my Mother to cancer and went a rough grieving process. She was my rock and a big part of my world. I almost started drinking again but remembered her words "One day at a time and no matter what I will always love you." I chose not to drink. For the first time in almost 25 years I had control. It was me who guided my life not alcohol.

I met one of the final people in my saga shortly before my mother passed. There was something special about this person. She was one of the final pieces to what was the hope

in my life. This is my beautiful angel, my wife Cheyenne. She quickly became my best friend and introduced me to someone that had been missing from my life for much too long. I began attending church with her and got back in touch with my Lord Jesus Christ. The puzzle was complete. With Christ and my soon to be bride by my side I felt a new sense of empowerment. I married Cheyenne on March 19, 2011 one year and one day after laying my Mother to rest.

My personal experience of hope is knowing it's in me, I have the power. We don't know it's there but given a chance and making the right decisions in our lives we can become empowered. Of course I could not have done it without my Mother, Father and all the wonderful people I met along the way. This is especially true for my beautiful bride and my new connection with my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I was baptized on November 25, 2015 something I never thought I would do. So yes, there is hope, it lives in all of us. It may take a while to find it and extra help bringing it to the surface, but it's there.

God Bless, dedicated to my mother Joan R. Palmer 1939 – 2010. I miss you mom.

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Workforce
Development News

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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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