

Workforce Development News

Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute
Tucson, Arizona March 31, 2016



Certified Peer Support Specialist Graduates

Back Row left to right:

Desi Gregory, Richard Jolley, Kristyn Beshaw, Angelia Dennis, David Julian, Adonis Wiggins, George Key, Kim Adele Hastert, George Fox, Misty Barnhill, Ernesto Cordova, Natasha Bracy, Ramone 'Trinity' Montgomery

Front Row left to right:

Kristin Koenig, Paul Sobrino, Cybra Coats, Elsbeth McKinnie-Bonnell, Jessie Jacobs, Daniell Nicolino, Desiree Orantez, Chrystal Pierce



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 **CENPATICO**
INTEGRATED CARE

Hope

Angee Dennis

Even though I have been clean and sober for almost 10 years, my personal experience of hope happened only 2 years ago. At that time I believed my brain had been damaged by drugs, causing my depression, anxiety and memory lapses. A recovery coach, Arianna talked me in to a Seeking Safety group. After the first class, I realized that I needed this group and have since found I have had PTSD and ADHD since childhood. My drug use had masked my symptoms all those years. Now, I have a wonderful support system, and I am able to live a wonderful life. And I want to help others to feel the hope, freedom, and happiness I now feel.



Hope, One Day at a Time

Adonis Wiggins



My hope and determination occurred when I was looking at ten years in prison, the least seven and a half. It was in 2012 when I was arrested for sales, and prostitution. At the time I was 49 years old, and looking at that time scared me. I realized my life had

to change when I looked in my granddaughter's face during visitation, and she asked me who was going to take her trick or treating. It tore me apart, so leaving that visit gave me hope.

I got two years and that was a blessing to me. I knew then that my life would never be the same again. I surrendered to my Higher Power whom I call God. There have been some bumps along the way, but I'm going to continue to take it one day at a time, I'm going to make it.

When I got out in 2014, I started school for my GED, since then my life has been changing for the better. Being in prison was also my turning point. God and my family have played such a big important part in my life. I will always see hope when I look into the eyes of the people who love me. I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired, I'm truly living life now, and helping others find their way back will remind me of where I was and how far I've come. Now I appreciate my life and others more.

A Little Spark of Hope

Casey Nagore

When asked to write about “HOPE” and how it relates to me in my recovery, I am reminded of the long journey it took to get where I am today. One-step at a time in my fight against active addiction, I truly believed that hope was with me all along. No matter how small, there was always hope in my heart that I could find a new way. In fact, I cannot remember a time when I did not have a little spark of hope in my heart. I have lived through homelessness, despair, and a broken heart-all due to my active addiction.

When I read in The Institute Textbook that hope is essential to recovery I am reminded that without hope, nothing is possible. I know every journey is different, but I believe with all my heart that one thing every participant in the class has in common is that at some point, whether living with behavioral health issues or

addictive addiction, we all had a spark of HOPE in our hearts. For hope is what drives anyone to try to be better...to try to do better. Without a core belief that life gets better- there would be no reason for the people challenged in this world to fight.

My journey of HOPE includes my mother. She never gave up on me and I believe that having one person believe in me greatly improved my odds of overcoming my heroin addiction. I also chose not to pay attention to statistics, because I am not a statistic. And, having HOPE allows me to ignore the possibilities of negative outcomes. I have HOPE and FAITH that I don't ever have to pick up again. I have HOPE that I can live a full and beautiful life. HOPE is the foundation of recovery, and I know this because I have lived this...and it all started with a little spark of HOPE.

Hope

Tyler Sax

I've had a long hellish past and it is a pure miracle that I survived this. Starting with my childhood, the violence I went through from my father was probably what brought on my never ending panic disorder, and I was diagnosed with OCD when I was four. I also know that my past childhood is what brought on my recently diagnosed PTSD. So, it's no surprise to me that I later on started self-medicating myself with narcotics. I've tried to quit many times before, but it was always for someone else. I got out of treatment from Casa last year and I was able to gain hope through my primary there. She opened my mind to the knowledge of figuring out that this was not my fault, and that person I was before was not the real me. In the past I went through so many medications that were supposed to help

my mental disorders, and none of them truly did. Which is why I turned to narcotics on the street. I found for myself, after going through seven months of treatment, that what helps me mentally is cognitive thinking therapy and having a therapist to open up to. The trauma and work that I went through was grueling, but in the end it very much helped me let go of a lot of pent up rage and emotions. Even after all the morbid hell that I put family through, my mother Megan, my sister Caitlin, my brother Eric, my brother John, and last but not least my best friend Dave, have all stood by me this entire time. I believe in keeping constant connections for myself at least, because it is a necessary ingredient in my recovery.

Realizing Hope

Crystal Pierce



When I was about the age of 18 I had what they called bipolar disorder. I was running around a lot and walking everywhere, far distance places where people could not pick me up or help. One time it was from Tucson Blvd to River Road and I just kept going until I stopped and came back home even if I did not know which way I was going. At night sometimes I would walk different hours, I got in manic depressed moods and lots of energy when I would get this manic. I was also walking around everywhere and was in and out of the house a lot of times.

I would cry, get depressed and once I even threw a dish, because I was also hearing a voice telling me **THINGS TO DO - LIKE HARM MY SELF** and other things that weren't good, but it was just bipolar disorder.

The thing about the voices is I was also getting to think that everyone was watching me like people outside the walls of my house or anybody. Those thoughts made me even more bipolar and I would get into this rage. I was thinking these voices are replaying in my head, but now I know they were just my bipolar thoughts.

The thing I was doing was also self-harming by cutting and doing my mother's prescription drugs that were harming me. I was trying to cure myself with bad stuff. But I did not even think I was doing them to harm myself, I was just trying to cure the symptoms myself with that self-harm stuff.

But I stopped that as soon as I got the diagnoses of bipolar, I was relaxed that someone finally told me I had an illness and these episodes of rage and hurt were part of the disease.

So when we went to La Frontera on Mountain I saw Dr Romo who for the first time explained all these symptoms, so then that was when she got me on new medications. After awhile my bipolar was starting to relax me a lot to where I was also gaining weight but to me it was nothing new - for me it wasn't far from what I thought, but I knew it had to be something like the bipolar disease that was beginning to bloom at 18.

HOPE is realizing that somebody wants to help you in the area of your illness and that there are resources out there to help you with a lot of stuff.

A Huge Step

Cybra Coats



I am a person who has been diagnosed with mental illnesses, and has also struggled with substance abuse more than a little bit. My substance abuse began in 2002 when I was in a bad car accident. I started taking prescription pain medication and before I knew it, I was hooked. I went back and forth for quite some time, quitting and starting again, only every time I would quit and start again it was more severe than the last. I never could get ahold of myself when there were pills of any kind around. I would think to myself "I'm not addicted" or "I can afford it" and the best one was "I can quit if I want to". It got to a point where I couldn't work or even function in my daily life if I did not have that morning boost (5 to 10 pills at once). This is when I knew I could not stop if I wanted to, and I was just killing myself slowly but surely.

I got up enough courage to tell my family I needed help, some were surprised, and some

not the least bit surprised. Some were even acting as if I did something to them personally. Well I actually did, I robbed them of their piece of mind, leaving them to worry if I was going to overdose today or not, and mostly just the isolation from me was hurting them. I have some great support in my life, my mother is my guardian angel, loving me with no judgment whatsoever. That is what made me realize I was worth saving my own life. My husband went with me to the appointments I was scared to death to go to. As my support he has been so patiently waiting for me to be confident and strong in my journey. Then just to admit I had a problem that I couldn't fix was a huge step, but after I told somebody it made me stronger, and I was ready to begin my journey to recovery.

I was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, PTSD, depression, and bipolar disorder. As time goes by, what I do to stay strong and ahead of my mental illness, is just simply take time out to be thankful for my new found sobriety, meditate every spare chance I get. If there is something that is creeping up on me, whether it be a trigger, or a mental break, I have hope that I am right where I want and should be. I do believe my drug use played a big part in my mental break, which led me to understanding myself enough to go forward and do great. It all boils down to me being healthy. I have to be aware of all the consequences good and bad. I'm weighing them all, informed decisions is what my new lifestyle is all about, every single decision is thought out critically so that I may be a productive citizen in this society. As for the mental illness, I am doing great, I no longer take any medications and I feel great, and it's time for me to help someone else.

Hope Evolving Into Something Profound

David Julian



My personal experiences with hope have changed multiple times over my lifetime. Hope, for me, has evolved into something so profound that it has altered my life, and my path to a positive outcome. In the past, hope looked like hoping my grades were good,

hoping my car would start, hoping someone liked me the way I was.

Today, hope looks much different. Today, hope is what gets me out of bed, gives me the energy to move forward, and to know that no matter how bad the day is there is a brighter day ahead. Hope now motivates me to make better decisions, keep my thoughts positive, and work towards an obtainable goal.

Sometimes, hope is all I have. Now, I hope for things that I need, instead of things I want. I now have hope for a better future, hope that I have a place in this ever spinning universe, and possibly a new career where I not only feel wanted but where I can do the most good for my community, for fellow friends and addicts, and those with a history of mental health.

I now feel this is my calling in life, and my chance to show likeminded people that there is still hope. And, show them recovery is possible, if you are just willing, if you have a little hope in life and hope in the process.

Living the Program - First Things First

By the Grace of God , thru my pen. George Key



Surrendering oneself to God, humbling oneself to the proper place, which we take no presumption of pseudo-intellectual hierarchy. Giving it over to God, asking to serve His will, not mine, may it be done.

Meeting each new setback that I perceive to be as an insurmountable hurdle with a serene pause for prayer and a relaxing poise of "insta-meditation". I am able to readjust my instinctive and cognitive core beliefs with a resetting of my mindset. Discovering that this set back, as in each before, is redefined, and thus, transformed into a new challenge. I know if I act with faith in my belief, and moreover belief in my faith, then I shall not only meet the challenge, but conquer my fear, and overcome by the Grace of God, and my want to become a better human being.

Life Keeps Getting Better Everyday

Desi Gregory

I started drinking when I was seventeen years old here and there, but it wasn't until I was about twenty-seven that I had any real indication that I may have been heading for trouble. I had been diagnosed with manic depression at thirteen, I had a hard time relating to my peers, I was socially awkward and I used the booze to cover that up, which is something that I had unfortunately carried with me into adulthood. The vodka had become my coping mechanism and I was in a downward spiral that I didn't know how to pull myself back up out of. I had a million different reasons and justifications for drinking: it made it easier for me to deal with people, it was my

reward for making it through another day, and it helped me sleep. By the time I reached thirty I was heavily drinking vodka to the point of blackouts every night. I was drinking secretly in my room, I would wake up every day and look at the evidence from the night before. I was saddened and disgusted by myself when I saw the vodka bottle and the cup I had been drinking out of the night before. I would swear to myself that I would not drink that night, but come 3:30 I found myself going back to Circle K for another bottle.

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Life Keeps Getting Better Everyday, by Desi Gregory, continued...

One day my Mom asked me to come spend the week with her, which I happily did. I bought a bottle of vodka and took it with me, knowing that we would be having cocktails. Mom had put a limit on it, and I think I had maybe three or four drinks a night, but what she didn't know was that I had found my first stepdad's oxycodone in their medicine cabinet, and I was helping myself to it. By the end of the week I had taken all of it, and a couple days later my stepdad was doing his weekly meds and he found the mostly empty bottles. He and my Mom called me, and I knew I was in major trouble and if I didn't do something about it I was going to lose my family. Mom called one of her best friends, knowing that her daughter K. was in AA and had some sobriety under her belt. She told me to call her, so I did, and she listened to me talk and cry and told me that she would take me to a meeting the next day.

When she picked me up and we were talking, I asked her about getting a sponsor because I knew that was part of sobriety, and she offered to be my sponsor. I had known her since she was ten and she was one of the few people in my world that had known my father. We went to the noon meeting at the Northwest Alano Club where we met up with her sponsor, then we spent the next couple of hours hanging out before we went to the 6pm Weeknight Newcomer's meeting, which later became my home group.

Four and a half months later was Thanksgiving. After dinner with fourteen friends and family gathered around, my stepdad suffered a massive fatal heart attack. About a week later I was outside the house that I was living at then, and I promised him that I wouldn't drink over his death. He was a big part of the reason that I got sober and I felt that drinking over his death would be like a big eff you to him.

Two and a half years later I found myself homeless and after staying with a friend for a week and a half, I had to go. I spent the next four days alone and terrified in Santa Rita Park, with basically any street drug and booze available to me, yet I know that God was with me the whole time and kept me sober. I spent the next ten months at Church on the Street where I got a strong foundation and a personal relationship with God. When I left there I was in and out of friend's houses, the Salvation Army, and Gospel Rescue Mission (GRM). As my time at GRM was ending I had the opportunity to move to Oregon and work housekeeping at an Inn on the coast and I jumped at it, knowing that it was a chance to start over in a new place where no one knew me. I met some amazing people there who made a profound impact on my life and my heart but after thirteen months everything fell apart, so I came home in July.

I spent the next three months back in the homeless cycle, bouncing from Gospel Rescue Mission, friend's houses, Mercy House, in and out of the Salvation Army, and three horrendous nights out on Speedway before my Mom offered her help. She invited me to come stay with her and my stepdad until I found housing. By the grace of God, Cenpatico, and COPE, that opportunity came in October, and I got to move into my own beautiful apartment. I have waited so long to be able to get into this training and now here I am, completing it and ready to work and give back. I have a great support system of people that love me, people I love, awesome relationships, and a life that gets better every day! It's been a long hard road but it has made me who I am and brought me to where I am at in life today. I am extremely grateful for the people and experiences I encounter every day, and I am excited to see where life will take me next!

A Beautiful Future Awaiting Me

Desiree Orantez

I kept telling myself “I don’t have a problem or an addiction, I can function perfectly”. What needs to get done gets done. Slowly but surely, I was watching my loved ones and my foundation I had built slowly slip away until I no longer had control. I had DCS knocking at my door and disconnection notices being placed on my door. The day my five beautiful children were put into that system is the day I realized I was selfish, I was miserable, and I was the devil. I had control of all this, I let my addiction take over and get the best of me. I failed to be that caring, loving, protective shield, good role model my babies need. I failed to be the wife I promised to be, not only all this, but I failed myself as well. I set my standards so low, and I’m ashamed of the things I’ve done and said. I have seen the darkest days and could never picture myself seeing the light of future days.

As the days passed, I was now letting my depression take full control of me as well. It was all chaos; I seemed to get bad news after

bad news. I felt like this misery and storm would never end. One day when I was sitting in IOP something hit home, and after that, all I had was hope. Hope that I would see brighter days. I had a beautiful future awaiting me, five beautiful children waiting on me to get them home, and to fight as hard as I could to be a successful and better individual. I have come a long way with hope, support, groups, my higher power, therapy, and believing in myself. The list goes on and on. I believe every individual has it in them to overcome any illness or addiction; I’m a firm believer in that.

I’m truly grateful and blessed for the opportunity and support I continue to receive in my recovery, and I want to be the one to make a difference in my life and in others. Nobody is alone, there is hope out there. By attending the U of A Recovery Institute I have been given more motivation to go make a difference in someone else’s life. I will make a change, and I will help change the system.

My New Hope Began

Elsbeth McKinnie



I have lived with sadness all my life, and it wasn't until 1991 that I went in and saw a doctor after an assault. He told me that I had P.T.S.D., depression, and multiple personalities. My P.T.S.D. and depression came as a child and my multiple personality came as a coping mechanism.

When I was 21, I suffered from postpartum depression after my son was born. I felt like I wanted to kill my new born son and myself. This is what led up to my first hospitalization. I was there for 72 hours, they gave me medication, and sent me on my merry little way.

I took the medications I was prescribed, but after they ran out I never got them refilled. I

went many years without help. I felt sad that there was no one to love me and no one there to care for me etc. etc., so on and so on.

Then in 2012, I was married to a man who had a very bad drug and alcohol problem. I was staying strong for a person who wanted to die. I had started to forget who I was and what I was doing with my life. I began to get sick, I was not eating, I was in severe pain, and any pain medication I would get prescribed he would steal. That made me stop cold turkey from my regimen which was Fentanyl, Dilaudid, Oxycodone, and Norco. This sent me into a whirlwind downward spiral, which led to my death and a comeback in a hospital from what they thought was a drug overdose, just to find out it was the total opposite of an overdose.

I woke up in Desert Vista a Mesa hospital in an all women's ward. It was here that my new hope began. I found out that I was in a toxic marriage, and it did not matter what I was doing, I was in a relationship with a man that was not going to be happy until he was dead. I was put on meds and was in the hospital for three weeks before I was discharged. While I was there I took every class they offered. I met a peer support counselor who showed me that there was a way to live a happy healthy life.

I know that I will be on medications for the rest of my life, just like any of my other maintenance pills, such as my thyroid medication, or anything else I have to take to "maintain a healthy brain to live a healthy life".

Where I Found Hope

Ernesto Cordova



When I first came to Tucson it was for the weather. The cold of Salt Lake City (Utah) was affecting my work, my body, and my state of mind quite a bit. Every year was getting worse for me and I was feeling lost. Being new at work and missing a few days due to my chronic illnesses always kept me looking for another job, and another job. From there, I would fall deep into my own shadow, and each time finding harder to get to the light. Every time this happened hope was that much more difficult to reach.

Finally, I found this great clinic that I still attend and with it came an awesome support network. Starting to get better in my own head, I was told about the RSS program. Feeling much better about who I was, I progressed in my wellness very rapidly. Realizing that hope had crept into me, I was finally ready to take that first step into my new life and future. I will always be broken in comparison to the man I used to be, but I have learned to accept me and the new limitations in my life. Moving forward with the new me and not dwelling in my shadow, I have become the man that is now standing in front of you today whole and complete. Hope was just another word in my vocabulary, but now I've realized how powerful words can be. Every day I struggle to keep my shadow at bay with help from my new support team and network. I now look forward to tomorrow with hope to be whole again and put my life and family back together. That was something a year and a half ago I could not see through, my shadow held and beat me down. Hope is something I now wish to share and pass forward. Thank you very much to all the people that helped me get to where I am today.

Hope Can Help You Reach Your Dreams

Jessie Jacobs



I first experienced hope three and a half years ago.....I was homeless, I had been to the Salvation Army, I had been drinking for 12 years and had lost all everything, friends, family, and my dignity. I was very depressed and suicidal.

I was downtown one day I went to a lady I knew and told her I needed some pills to take my edge off, so she gave me a few pills and didn't tell me what they were. I took them all hoping they would put me out of my misery. Thankfully a friend of mine saw me, asked what I was doing and told me if I didn't call the CRC she would call the police. I called CRC and was only planning to stay until I found a place to stay.

One day at the CRC I was doing some coloring and this nice lady sat down with me and asked me how I was doing, I didn't mean for it to happen or maybe I did, but I started pouring out everything that had been going on for far too long. She just sat there calmly and listened, no judgement, no fear just listening. When I was done she looked at me and said "I'm sorry that you are going through all this." I spent the next week talking to her learning about myself and the possibility of having the life I always wanted. I quickly decided to get sober NO MORE BOOZE! I found a recovery home that would take me as I was no discrimination; I looked up info on how to become an RSS. If this person helped me, think of how many people I could help.

This was it this was my calling, my purpose; I walked in to the recovery house sober and began my journey. I got a job as a BHT and started working on my process to be an RSS, pushing through even when I wanted to give up, persevering hearing those words "You can do anything!"

I would say I found hope when one person finally looked me in the eye and said I could do anything, that I could have the life I wanted, that someone who had been through what I had been through could have it all. And I do I have 3+ years clean, a blessed family, an amazing support system, and an incredible, amazing sense of how hope can help you reach your dreams and so much more. I can't wait to help others reach that place where you know everything is going to be alright.

I Am Grateful Everyday

Joan Obery

I had smoked crack cocaine for 22 years with my husband, Bob. November 1, 2013 we went homeless and were living in our car. We bathed in different park bathrooms, ate food out of garbage cans, and slept in our car on side streets in Tucson. Our car wasn't registered or insured. On April 17, 2014, Bob and I just got some crack cocaine, and were pulled over by Tucson Police. Wow, we were scared! TPD could've impounded our car, but instead TPD took the license plate off, and gave Bob a ticket. TPD said it was okay to park in an abandon parking lot. After TPD left, we partied in our car right there. 4am the next morning TPD came by and asked what we were doing parked there and Bob said we were sleeping, showed TPD the ticket, and said we're waiting on a friend to help us. We went to a Walmart parking lot, till Monday April 20, 2014.

That was our turning point because we decided we weren't going to live like this anymore. So, we drove without plates to our Provider, COPE, and both of our case managers told us to go to Compass Level 1, Desert Hope,

for 2 days and had permission to park our car there. At that time, then we went to Compass Level 2, Pasadera, which we were there 3 weeks. I went to Los Altos Rehabilitation for 4 months, and Bob went to a half-way house just down the road from me. Bob came to visit me only on Sundays for the first 2 months, and then I was able to go on dates with Bob on weekends. So we got to know each other and ourselves completely clean & sober living.

Bob got a job and we got our car legal with registration and insurance. Bob paid his ticket. We got this apartment September 4, 2014, and been here since. Bob has maintained his employment with the same employer that he is still with, CPI, to provide for us. As for me, I had 3 different surgeries. We both go to groups, meetings, have a support network, and remain clean & sober. Here I am, wanting to help others help themselves. We're very fortunate not to be in jail, dead, or in a hospital. I'm grateful everyday of what happened, not what could've happened.

Where I Found Hope

George Fox

My personal experience of HOPE occurred in 1983, the first time I decided to take my addiction home, no one was there, so, I decided to use in the bathroom. It was just going to be one quick hit but I ended up being in there for 2 hours. It got hot so I raised the bathroom window, what I didn't know was that my oldest son had seen me through the bathroom window getting high.

Later that night, my son asked if he could talk to me about something important, and I asked him what it was. That's when he explained that he saw me through the window, that he loved me, and that he didn't want to see me that way. That's the moment I felt hope for

the first time, my kid loved me. And, at that time in my life I had relapsed twice, been in 2 private hospitals, and the state hospital - nothing worked after thousands of hours and thousands of dollars. Two companies also paid for my rehab, but the turning point to my recovery came from an 11 year old.

From that day on, Aug 15th, 1983, I did my last hit of coke. I wanted to expand my role as a FATHER. The incident with my son seeing me, made me realize that I was a good father, because at 11 my son was able to come to me and express his feelings. This made me feel that I wasn't a failure like my family had been telling me all those years.

Hope, #1 Motivating Factor

Kim Adele Hastert



This year I found HOPE through the Assurance 9 week Health and Wellness program; unfortunately I also had my hopes and trust dashed

by a few at Assurance, but I will not let that dampen my hopes.

It taught me a valuable lesson about my upcoming role as an RSS and how the system must be improved. With this experience I learned what types of details I will be required to do and that I will have better follow through than was demonstrated in my own person journey through "the system."

I know deep in my heart that I am following the right career path because I'm a helper, a giver, a teacher by trade and I've never met a stranger.

In my class at Assurance we had 8 graduates. We were the 2nd largest class to graduate the program and we were like a family.

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Hope, #1 Motivating Factor, by Kim Adele Hastert, continued...

The path that took me to the Assurance program started when I was working at a call center from Nov 2014 – Mar 2015. When I was assaulted by a co-worker; that exacerbated a previous injury. (which I should have attended to following doctor's orders, but I mistakenly put the companies needs ahead of my own and adhered to the "don't call in unless you're dead" policy).

This incident caused me to be unable to work, to become homeless and a resident at the Salvation Army. I attended and completed the Sullivan Jackson program and received housing assistance, thankfully and have been on an upward trend since then. I completed a teacher's recertification class at Pima in spite of becoming homeless and was 4 little points away from an "A."

I have made major progress in healing my shoulder. I have been able to greatly reduce my pain level of the lupus etc. through exercise and dietary changes.

While I was in the depths of "hell" living in the shelter, I kept asking God why? I'm educated and did not understand how this could happen to me and how my family (especially my step-mother) refused to assist me in any positive way. The reply that I would receive from God was "I brought you here so you could fix it." My thought was "My plate is overflowing right now, how can I possibly help?" but remained positive and just kept swimming. I know that if I experienced that level of challenges with all the tools in my tool box, without background issues etc. and that I had difficulties that it must be even more challenging for those that have other complications.

I served meals at the Salvation Army Thanksgiving dinner and they gave out calendars. I checked my birthday for 2016 and it is "Poverty Eradication Day." I burst out

laughing when I saw that. It was confirmation for me that I was right on track.

In my position as an RSS I will focus on providing HOPE, empathy and will listen to my peers, because I know that HOPE is the #1 motivating factor in a person life if they are experiencing any sort of unrest in their lives.

The deeper personal experience of HOPE for me is my love of PGA Tour golf. I attribute my love of golf to saving my life. I followed my passion starting in January 2006 and have attended 61 PGA Tour events and volunteered at 26 events worldwide. I am writing a book about my big adventure called EVERY PGA FAN'S DREAM COME TRUE. The premise of my book is to get everyone to volunteer where ever their passion lies and to connect with people who share their same passion.

I am very blessed because I have received lots of free tickets, parking passes, free lunches, beverages and lots of water, etc. I have met all of the golfers and have pictures with them.

In the 10 years that I have been divorced I have been a hermit. During this time I worked diligently on my spirituality. I have read almost all of Deepak Chopra's work, plus Wayne Dyer, Zig Zigler, and Eckhart Tolle. I have attended 26 Release Techniques retreats, AKA the Sedona Method and 3 Deepak Chopra retreats.

I don't go out unless it's to a golf tournament (which has been greatly reduced since 2010) due to financial and health difficulties. I have lupus rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, high blood pressure and a shoulder issue. I have been successful in healing and managing all of these issues without the aid of medications.

So because of my drive, dedication and support from the golf community, I know that my HOPE will become a reality in the very near future and I will be living the best time of my life.

My Journey to Hope

Kristyn Beshaw



I had just taken my fourth bottle of pills in hopes that it would send me on my way to the other side. A place I had longed dreamt. When I woke from my coma I was upset. How could I fail at this as well? I am still on this earth, still living this life of shame and guilt. The hope was gone. It had lost its way in my life many years before my suicide attempt.

I remember when I was 14 years old I was told by my stepdad that I was a druggy slut that would end up in jail when I get older. Not a lot of hope was given to me there. I had been married for 11 years and was told by my husband routinely that I was a cold-hearted, crazy, druggy, piece of crap mom. Its weird how at first deep down inside you know those words are not true. But hearing it constantly you begin to believe it.

I had lost all hope, all the will to live. I was ready to surrender to the pain, addiction, heartache and mental confusion. I met this man when I was battered, bruised, deep into addiction and on a major meltdown. But through all that he saw something in me that I had long forgotten. He filled me with hope, he told me daily that I had a good heart that I was a great mother and human being who deserved to live and had a purpose in life. Wow, what a shocker that was hearing those words. It had been so long since someone had told me something good about myself or let alone that I had told myself.

Once I got myself clean and sober and began taking care of myself by attending groups and receiving services through COPE, I slowly began to feel more hope. I had an amazing case manager at COPE who told me what a breath of fresh air I was when I told my story and how I accepted full responsibility for my actions and that I could help others out by sharing my experiences. With such an amazing support system backing me up and continuing to bring hope back into my life I am proud to be where I am right now.

I have the courage and confidence to go fight to get my kids back, I have the strength to conquer any demons I may have. I have the will to live and the desire to better my life not just for myself but for my family. I would not be where I am today without the hope that is driving me to strive for the best. I am so grateful to every person that has been a part of my recovery because without them I would not be on this wonderful journey.

Hope Into Action

Phyllis Machelor

My first experience of HOPE happened early in my recovery. This occurred while I was attending a 12-Step meeting at Erie County Medical Center, Buffalo, New York. A close friend of mine was in the Detox unit and I went to visit him. While I was visiting a member of the AA program asked if we would like to attend a Speaker Meeting. Seeing that we would receive a pack of cigarettes if we attended, we agreed with some chagrin.

When the speaker began to share a strange feeling came over me. Every word he spoke

seemed to be directed at me! It was if I could see clearly for the first time into the nature of my addiction. When I am feeling depressed or hopeless (sometimes both), I think back on this experience and remember that it was the first time that I experienced HOPE. If the man who shared at this meeting could stay sober, perhaps I could as well! Sustaining this feeling I realized that I needed to put action into recovery. "Hoping" I will stay on this journey of recovery means nothing unless I put Hope into action.

My Hope

Natasha Bracy



I would like to tell you about my Moment of hope...the day that started my journey was a very rough day. I had been struggling emotionally due to a traumatic time in my life, when I was 20, that caused me to suffer Severe PTSD

and the rollercoaster ride that went along went with it. This particular day I remember, because it was the first time, in a long time, that I felt - hope.

I was sitting at home alone, as usual. I had cloistered myself due to severe depression. This particular day was a bad one and I felt suicidal. I was lost and didn't know where to go. I was tired...tired of fighting...tired of trying...tired of everything. I decided to go next door to talk to my Mom. She helps me a lot, just talking me down. She listened to me and how I felt. She then reminded me of her own struggles, and the moment things changed for her. I'm going to share her story, with her permission, because to tell you mine, I must first tell you hers and how it affected me.

My parents have been together almost 27 years. About 25 years ago, their marriage began its slow decline. In part due to 10 years of depression, death in the family, drugs, and alcohol abuse. Finally, things came to a head about 15 years ago. My dad, sick of the rollercoaster, and feeling there was no other option, had my grandfather

continued on next page

My Hope by Natasha Bracy, continued...

help him remove the problem. Papa went in to my parent's room and woke up Mom and told her "pack your stuff and get out" (because they were renting from my grandfather he could do that). Distraught, my Mom turned to my Dad and said, "What are we going to do?!" Dad said "not me, you, and I'm keeping the kids." Now at this point I had a lot of anger towards my Mom so the separation didn't bother me. But, I felt sorry for her. Her world was crumbling around her. My Mom later told me, that the night before she was kicked out, she had cried out to God and told him if he didn't do something she was going to kill herself. She now refers to this moment as the worst and best thing that could've happened to her, although she couldn't see it at the time.

She was lost and felt worthless. The family was sick of their drug use and Daddy blamed, not being able to get clean, on her. Although he admits now, they were equally to blame, but he didn't know what else to do. Mom was suffocating in blame, feeling alone and unloved. In this, I could relate to her because that's how I felt. Like no one was paying any attention to me and no one cared. My older brother was diagnosed with Bipolar II Disorder, and my younger brother needed all of my Mom's attention due to his Autism. So there I was the middle child and used to holding everything in, so no one needed to worry about me.

Mom left with only her clothes and nowhere to go. Her parents had a place out in the country, empty, being remodeled. So, that's where she went. She had nothing, there was no furniture. She found an old mattress and put it in the living room floor. This is where she lay for two weeks detoxing, crying and wanting to die. One day she heard God say "Are you done?" She cried and said, "Done? but Lord, I've lost everything... they threw me away!" Again He said "Are you done feeling sorry for yourself?" It was like a

light went on and she realized that she had been feeling sorry for herself. She said "You know what God, your right. "I know that even if I never get my kids or my husband back, I'll be okay, as long as I have you". It was if a weight had been lifted from her and she was healed. When my Mom told me that, I realized that I too, was feeling sorry for myself.

Then God gave her a promise, Romans 8:28 "All things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his service." In other words he could take her crap and make something beautiful out of it, if she would give it all to Him. God restored all that was lost and more. My whole family has given their lives to Christ and now He uses all of us to help others.

My Mom told me that I have wisdom that only comes from experience and perspective, that many don't quite understand, unless you've been through it. She reminded me that I've always been a helper and that this is my gift. Because my Mom had come from an abusive childhood, was traumatized and is now helping others, that I could do the same. Somewhere deep inside, I believed and I felt the first kernel of hope.

Things started to change maybe because I did. My Recovery Coach from COPE and VR Councilor offered me the Café 54 program. This watered that kernel of hope. It got me thinking about my future. I had some rough patches still, but like my Mom said, "Two steps forward one step back, is still forward progress." "Stay positive, look at all the possibilities that your future holds for you." "You can do anything look at me."

I thank everyone, my Mom and Dad, all my family and friends, my VR Councilor, Café 54 and everyone at COPE. Every new step feeds that hope and I'm becoming whole.

I Have My Faith, Hope and Love

Paul Sobrino



In April of 2015, I checked into the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center. This action was taken after I decided to let my younger brother assist me in getting help from my addictions from alcohol, cocaine and pornography. Before this point I had been struggling with these addictions for 17 years.

My first year of marriage was "dry" for me. At least from the drugs and alcohol. Pornography was very present in my life causing my relationship with my wife to be awkward. I was used to living isolated where I could indulge in my addictions without being accountable to

anybody. I enjoyed being alone but I thought marriage would help me stop my behaviors.

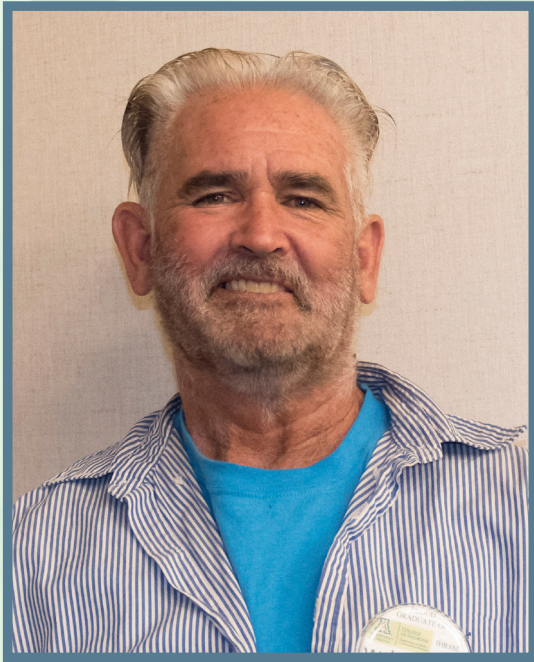
In 2013 we moved from Tucson to Phoenix to help my wife peruse her goal in obtaining a law degree. I tried finding a job in the business administration field but I had no luck. So I worked 7 days a week as a licensed barber. It took about 2 months after the move for my first all night drinking and strip club binge. It then became routine to disappear on all night benders.

My wife and I sought marriage counselling for 5 months until I decided I did not need it any more. During this time my wife installed internet blocks on my phone and computer and a tracking device on my phone. This made me feel very insecure and emasculated and I went back on the substances that enslaved me.

Nov. 2016 I completed the Salvation Army program and since then, my marriage is still on the rocks, I am working a part time minimum wage job and my future is unclear. I have shared all this to relay the message that for so long I did not see (or refused to see). This message is hope. I came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me, my marriage and my sanity. All I have in this life is my faith, hope and love. I know that God can work through me and through my experience to reach others. And when that does happen, it all would have been worth it.

Hope Is An Ongoing Experience

Richard Jolley



It hit me like a ton of bricks, I never saw it coming. The year 2007, business was bad for my tree trimming business. I was not getting along with my daughter, and my girlfriend and I broke up, which turned out to be a good thing.

My state of mind was not good and I was very confused, couldn't focus and I was very sad and anxious about things. I could not get my mind in a positive state.

I was going from ER to ER, to try and find out what was wrong with me. Finally a Social Worker at one of the ER's, referred me to SAMHC, which was a Crisis Center, who referred me to La Frontera. The social worker at the ER thought I might be suffering from depression.

I was diagnosed with Depression and Anxiety at La Frontera. Through months of medication changes I finally experienced positive results and recovery. I suffered from severe depression and anxiety for two years, until I found the right medication and therapy.

During those two years which I suffered from severe depression and anxiety, I was able to handle myself like in a positive manner, and was able to keep my business open. Although my relationship with my daughter did suffer, I am still working on it today.

My hope to recover is positive and an ongoing experience.

I Know I Have Options

Ramone 'Trinity' Montgomery

There was one instance when I was going through a baking class the last time I was incarcerated. I was extremely frustrated and upset and I wanted to give up. I had a teacher for this baking class that kept pushing me and refused to let me give up. My teacher pushed me to the point that I was able to stay focused and complete the class and gain my baking certification. Afterwards I was proud and it was a turning point because it made me realize that I had options, and I could open up a baking shop and it would be a sort of good stress. With having a mental illness I did not end up letting that hinder me from obtaining my baking certification and it helped me see different choices I had for myself.



Holding Onto Hope With Both Hands

Misty Barnhill

I have to say that my personal experience with hope started a number of years ago, with my husband. We were working at a drop in center for adults with mental health issues. He was invited to go to a training called the Leadership Academy.

For a week, they trained consumers about the system, about mental health, and how to help people recover. When he came back from that, I saw something in him that I had never seen before. It gave me hope that recovery was possible. My journey was not so easy, though. I went out and searched for opportunities to find it, which took me too many places. I did not find it all at once, like he did, instead I found it in many places.

One of the first places I found was NAMI Wisconsin, and the NAMI Wisconsin Consumer Council. I started going to conferences throughout the state, to get more information about mental health and recovery. The more I learned, the more involved I became. I have learned that hope is the most important tenant of recovery, but it can be lost if you don't surround yourself with the right people.

I lost mine for a while, but I have found it again, here in Tucson, and I am going to hold on with both hands, and not let go. I am very interested in seeing where it takes me this time

Hope Connects You to Possibility

Daniell Nicolino



Hope to me is when all else has seemed to fall apart and you want to give up, somewhere inside of you there is a thread that still connects you to the possibility that things can

start to look up. It is what pushes you to keep going, when you feel that you can't push on any longer. It is what gets you out of bed every morning, and makes you happy to be alive.

My most memorable experience of Hope occurred when I found out I was pregnant. It played not only the biggest role in my life at that point, but also in my recovery. It was the turning point in my life which made me realize, and most importantly, believe that I was finally more than just a 'drug addict'. It made me see why I was put on this earth, and that my life entailed so much more than what I had believed for myself.

The hope distilled in me had made me get up every single morning and push myself to accomplish things I never thought I could. Hope gave me the strength to become a person in recovery from addiction and a mother. Two of the most important things I have ever accomplished in my life.

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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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