

# Workforce Development News

## Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute

Tucson, April 19, 2018



### Introducing Workforce Development Program's Evaluation Team

To support its mission of providing quality instruction and support to peer specialists, Workforce Development Program is building new data management systems and instituting ongoing evaluation procedures. Jennifer De La Rosa, PhD, a sociologist and evaluator with the University of Arizona's Family and Community Medicine (FCM), is leading both activities. Cristian Quiñones, Student Evaluation Specialist, is an essential part of Dr. De La Rosa's team, which has now developed real-time reporting systems and is presenting findings on WDP's services and products at conferences and in peer-reviewed publications. James Cunningham, PhD, oversees evaluation efforts for Department of Family and Community Medicine programs and policies.

*Pictured above is Jennifer De La Rosa, PhD and Cristian Quiñones (left to right).*

*Pictured to the right from left to right are Cristian Quiñones, Jennifer De La Rosa, PhD, and James Cunningham, PhD*



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA





**Tucson, April 19, 2018**



## **Certified Peer Support Specialist Graduates**

Back Row left to right:

Antonio Mejia III, Benjamin Peduchi, William Tritz, Aubree Rose Hendess, Selina Rodriguez, Karis Reeves

Middle Row left to right:

Perla Marina Reis, Deljean Montana, Joel Welch, Rhyannon Ruiz, Jessica Viberg, Yvette Aguilar, Jonpaul Barrabee

Front Row left to right:

Elaine Kinslow, Lisa Foxx, Debora Martinez, Catherine Anne Benavidez



# Learning to Love Myself Again

By Aubree Rose Hendess, CRSS



I remember sitting in Pima County Jail, pregnant, approximately 7 days sober, and still thinking of how I wanted to get out and continue to get high. I didn't care about anything; I was selfish and destructive. My significant other said to me "Aubree, how do you know you don't like being sober if you never give it a fair chance?" I sat with those thoughts for a minute. As much as I didn't want to admit it at the time, he was right. Day after day, I listened to stories of other inmates; getting high, losing their kids, being homeless, put in jail multiple times, and then off to prison. I was in for a violation of probation and amazingly enough, I was given another chance at probation. I remember being told that I would not get

to a treatment center until April 28th, but I received a "miracle call" on March 7th. "Hendess! Pack your stuff, APO pickup!" I had no clue what that meant until I got down to where I would be released from jail. For some unknown reason, I was being released to treatment early.

My first few days at treatment were awful! I spent countless hours contemplating running away. My counselor told me to give it a few days and that things would get easier for me. Those few days passed, and it did get easier. Still, I wasn't there because I wanted to be. I was there because that's what everyone was telling me to do, and I had probation and more jail time hanging over my head. About a month and a half into my stay, my lawyer and case worker from DCS contacted me and asked if I was interested in seeing my son, Kendrick. Of course I wanted to see my son, but I had convinced myself that I would never be a good mom. Additionally, I was in no position or condition in which I wanted my child to see me. However, I agreed. He visited on April 24th; I was so nervous and scared that he wouldn't remember me! I saw the van approaching, and I walked up and opened the door. Immediately, he looked at me, smiled, and reached his arms out to me. The look he gave me was as if I had never missed a day. It made me feel happy and ultimately, like there was hope. I began my journey through recovery from that moment. Slowly I picked myself up, and began learning to love myself again, and become the best mom I could possibly be to my two children, Kendrick and Derek Jr.



## Opportunity and Hope

By Benjamin Peduchi, CRSS

I had to become destitute of hope before genuinely understanding what hope was. My struggle with depression and substance use took years to develop into a state of crisis in my life. However, with crisis came opportunity and hope. I had the opportunity to reassess my life, to change for the better, and to become a better person than I was before. Hope is the knowledge that I have the capability to change, despite suffering complete loss. From my experience, hope is something personal and it comes from within. Today, I hope that I can continue to move forward, always wanting something better, and continuing to seek out a state of happiness.



---

## Hope - Everything I Need

By Yvette Aguilar, CRSS

What would I have done if I didn't believe in hope? I know if I didn't believe in hope I wouldn't be at where I am in life right now. My life has been so hard; I went through pain, laughter, joy, tears, and love. At one point, I had lost everything I had worked for - even my children were gone. But one day, I grew strong through all my pain and the tears I shed in my life, and found HOPE. Hope is everything I need to get to where I want to be in life.



# God Let Me See the Light

By Antonio Mejia III, CRSS

I experienced hope about halfway through my first six months of recovery. That is when the light bulb went off in my head. I was doing everything in my power to be right. I was almost four months into the program, but I was still negative about my life. I really felt nothing had changed. I was terribly mad at God. "Am I not doing everything I'm supposed to?"

I ran into a man on the bus, and I could tell he had it a hundred times worse than I did. Finally for a moment, God let me see the light. If this man could be happy, why couldn't I? My life isn't so bad. I am working a program and doing some good things in my life. He made me feel truly grateful.

Since then, I ride more often, so I see many different people each day. Since that day I started really watching people, and overhearing their conversations. I never fail to see someone struggling, or to hear the problems of someone else. That's when I remember my life isn't so bad. It's not perfect, but I can be grateful now. This experience opened my eyes to HOPE for the future. I just



have to be reminded by God sometimes, usually on my bad days. There is HOPE for me in my life. And I will never give up. Now I carry that little piece of HOPE everywhere I go.



# Hope

By Deljean Montana, CRSS

I found hope in a rundown trailer on the Southside of Tucson. I was coming off another two week drunk spell. I felt so lonely, and I wondered, "Why am I here?" I decided that I was FINALLY done. I begin my journey to sobriety by reaching out for help and not stopping. The Creator God is my higher power, and the program is big with me. I am thankful for the support of the women and men in the AA program. Hope for life is why I am still here, and that is also why I would like to pass on what was freely given to me.



---

# Evidence Evokes Hope

By Jessica Viberg, CRSS

When I think of hope, I think of inspiration evoked from evidence. Stories of rags to riches inspire actors and musicians to follow their dreams of achieving stardom. People suffering from cancer willingly undergo painful treatments, because they know remission is possible. Some current world-renowned psychiatrists and powerful advocates in the mental health community were once deemed "hopelessly mentally ill".

I feel that the belief that the seemingly impossible can in fact be achieved relies mostly on proof. Evidence evokes hope and inspiration to those that bear witness. Evidence doubles as the proverbial 'light at the end of the tunnel', shining light into the darkness. I too, have experience with being deemed "hopeless". Recovery success stories from the pioneers that came before me, gave me the glimmer of hope and courage I needed to become a success story



myself. After all, the word "hopeless" itself cannot be spelled without first, having a little hope.



# A Living Example of Hope

By Perla Marina Reis, CRSS



My hope comes from my higher power Jesus Christ. I met him in a dark place, full of sadness and pain. A place where criminals go to be taught a lesson, a place called "prison". In that place I felt alone and frightened of the unknown. One morning, my desperation was unbearable, and I fell to my knees. I prayed;

please take me out of this place, save me, forgive me. Being that I didn't even know what I was asking for, he still heard my cry. As days passed, I opened my Bible. The same Bible that I had opened before but never understood. As I continued reading with tear drops in my eyes, I was understanding every word; God was talking to me!

That's when the most beautiful relationship started. He told me he loved me, I was not alone, and he had always been there with me. As I continue reading my bible and attending church, God shared many stories of love, of triumph, and of hope. He taught me to be patient and to always have hope. He told me that I was going to be part of his beautiful story. God told me of his big sacrifices, in where his only son died for my sins. He told me that because of his son's blood, I had been forgiven. He told me because of that act, he gave us hope and love. Even though going to prison was terrible, what I gained from it was life-defining; I had meaning, and I wanted to go out and help others. Help others to have hope and to believe that anything is possible with love. Today, I am a living example of hope.

---

## Why I Have Hope

By Joel Welch, CRSS

I have had a lot of troubled times in my life, maybe more bad than good. I have felt like giving up at times, but a force beyond myself has given me the strength to get back up. I know that many others out there are feeling and going through the same, if not worse. I want to help them in any way I can; in doing

that, I have come to find that I am helping myself. In closing, this is my hope that when things get bad, there will be others like me willing and able to help me, just as I am willing to now.



# I Saw a Shimmer of Light

By Catherine Anne Benavidez, CRSS

What is Hope? For me, hope is the shimmer of light at the end of a lifetime of darkness and rage. I never gave hope much thought as a teenager because I suffered from depression, anxiety, and a panic disorder that always made me feel trapped in a bottomless black hole. Going into adulthood, I never gave hope a thought because I was always full of rage and anger for the bullying I suffered, or for having to fight for everything I wanted.

I felt like I had a thunderous black cloud over my head wherever I went, because if something could go wrong, nine out of ten times it would. In July of 2012, I lost my best friend, my husband, my soulmate to a massive heart attack, and I hit what I thought was rock bottom. Any hope I thought I had was lost. We were married for 17 years and together a total of 29 years. He was my whole world, and although we had our share of tough times, one thing was certain; we always had each other's back, and we had an amazing 29 years together. When Michael passed away, my better half died. He was all I knew, my whole reason for waking up in the morning. I didn't know who I was without him, so I crawled into a bottle and stayed there for 3 years. My drug use tripled. I hoped in the back of my mind that I would accidentally overdose, so I could be with my husband and feel like my life mattered again, even in death.

Friends rallied to my side to give me their idea of support, telling me how I was "Such a good wife to him" and how I took "Such good care of him", and that he loved me more than he could ever say or show me. I just wanted everyone to leave me alone and stop telling me things they thought I needed to hear. None of it mattered; he was gone and I was alone. I gave up on life, just hoping that the pain of losing my husband would pass quickly. Even today, the pain is still there as if it happened yesterday.

In April 2015, I thought I found hope when I met a man who put that spark back in my life. For the first time in 3 years I had hope that I had found love again. But only after 2 years, I was about to hit a whole new level of rock bottom than when I had lost my husband. I honestly didn't think that kind of pain existed or was even possible.

After enduring 2 years of physical and emotional abuse in my new relationship, and getting addicted



to meth, I woke up one day with a feeling I had never felt before. I woke up with the courage to see things for what they really were, and I left the relationship. I had hope that there was something else out there for me that was better. For the first time in 33 years, I saw a shimmer of light coming through a lifetime of darkness and rage.

I felt free and I had hope that I would survive my addiction and my mental illness. I was going to do it in recovery. I never realized how powerful hope could be until January 2017, when I woke up paralyzed from the shoulders down. This was the result of a beating I had sustained 6 weeks earlier.

Hope is a powerful thing to grasp. It took me 46 years to understand what the idea of hope is. I never thought it was possible because I never understood it, but now my life is full of hope. I believe that I can pass hope to others who don't think they have any, want any, or even believe in it.



# Renewed Faith and Perseverance

By Elaine Kinslow, CRSS



Hope is a feeling in my heart and soul that things in my life will improve through my belief in God. I can't see hope, only feel it. Hope touches me deep within my being and moves me to a new level of thinking, feeling and action. I have to trust in God and myself. I have survived a lot of situations in my life and will continue to thrive through the hope which God gives me.

It wasn't always this way for me, as far as having hope or being hopeful. I cannot let the boundaries of my mind or my mental and physical illnesses take away my passion

for life, art and recovery. This is a quote I enjoy "Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time." - Thomas A. Edison.

Hope gives me the ability to try just one more time until infinity. I had many instances in my life where I was full of life and hopeless at the same time. The last three years stand out as a turning point in my life. I moved to Tucson, Arizona in May 2015, full of hope and thoughts of things being great, calm, and no abusive relationships. I would finally be in control of my life and my future. Things did not turn out that way. One good thing that resulted from the bad situation was that Behavioral Professionals listened to me. I got help for years of mental and physical abuse, depression, anxiety, and extreme trauma. This was very unsettling for some of my family. It was not accepted too well and eventually there was a falling out. I was forced to live in a Christian women's shelter.

This is where a glimmer of hope began for me. Through a renewing of my life in Christ, I was able to work on my own life, and what it meant for me to be a well and whole person. A person I wanted to be around and whom others would want around. I saw hope on the faces of others there and I wanted hope for my life as well. I worked very hard on myself with the help of God and the staff at the mission, Cope Mesquite. They helped me with mental health and employment services, and my primary physician was very instrumental in getting me on the right track with my physical health.

While I was still at the women's shelter, I was awarded Social Security Disability. A new (and now very dear) friend, Donna B., let me come stay

[continued on next page](#)



# What is Hope?

By Lisa Foxx, CRSS

What is hope? Everyone experiences it differently, but to me it is a strong sense of self-worth.

When I called 911 on September 6, 2017, I asked to be taken to the Crisis Response Center. This time I was ready to change, to accept guidance, and to try a new path. The Recovery Support Specialists shared their rehab experiences with me, as well as resources to set me on my own path to recovery. While in rehab, I was able to learn many coping skills. I also worked on strengthening my ability to build and maintain relationships both in and out of rehab.

I spoke more openly with others than I had before, and this truly allowed me to recognize the gifts and lessons of recovery. Later, I received housing and received support through the aftercare program. It was through that program that I found the U of A Workforce Development Program. My own dedication to recovery, along with the investments made by the community around me, instilled in me a strong sense of self-worth; it gave me hope. I know now that I am not a victim, but a survivor. I accept my jagged edges, and believe in my own abilities to achieve my goals.



---

## Renewed Faith and Perseverance by Elaine Kinslow continued...

at her home until the actual money came in. She helped me find a place of my own, and now I live in the same area as her and I own an adorable older mobile home. I was also able to buy a newer car, which was a huge blessing because it gave me more independence. Now that I have my own place, I was able to have my daughter live with me and work on mending our relationship. I am also mending the relationships with other family members

who could not believe or understand my mental health issues.

I am a client at P.S.A. Art Awakenings 442 Warehouse Program, as well as a studio assistant in the studio portion of the program. I am also a graduate of D.K. Advocates program. Hope did all of this for me through a renewed faith and perseverance. I am thankful for these changes and the person I am becoming.



# From Black and White to Color

By Jonpaul Barrabee, CRSS



When I was 18, I suffered my first bout of serious depression. I thought there was only one way that my horrible feelings could end. I was in therapy but I was not making progress. Starting anti-depressant medication was something I resisted. I was afraid the medication would turn me into someone who was gullible enough to believe the world was not a horrible place full of suffering.

A few days after I started anti-depressants, it seemed like the world changed from black and white into color. I noticed the

mountains and thought that they were pretty cool. Back then, I would often fantasize about being a hero in an action movie. Action movies are fairly simple: fight the bad guys or the monsters. I came to realize that in complex stories, characters are working on their own demons. I started to see myself as a hero in my own story. My plans for saving the world were unrealistic. It was not going to be that kind of story.

This was my first experience of hope in regards to my depression. That hope allowed me to go to college and move forward with life. Anti-depressants allow me to participate in therapy where I am able to examine and work on thoughts and behaviors that are counterproductive to living the life I want to live. I have also learned coping techniques to help when I have rough days. Some days are much more of a struggle than others.

There were times I came close to losing all hope. I did not want to play this game anymore. I wanted out of the story. Often this occurred with a major life setback. I have had to change medications many times in my battle with depression. Sometimes it can take a little while to find the right combination. Right now, I am doing okay. The mountains look pretty cool.

I look forward to helping others discover that they are the hero in their own story.



# Advocates

By William Tritz, CRSS



My thoughts of hope change constantly for myself. At first it was all about me, me, me; that would be addiction and self-centeredness. Then there is my own experience with mental illness - I have bipolar disorder. This all led to my own self-pity and hopelessness. I learned later of my dual-diagnosis, and had a flood of individuals willing to help me in my struggles. This gave me my own personal hope. But it would come at a cost to me, my family, and my community. Was I worth it? I found out that YES, I was. And the fight began. It was not easy, and not without relapses. The relapses did not always occur at the same time. I think it is important for me to add, that because I had a mental relapse does not mean I was using substances. I think we often characterize signs and symptoms because it is so hard to tell.

My community and family have supported me through all my transitions, and from Missouri to Arizona they have made sure I had a support system. It has been a huge fight. I have another word for HOPE. It is "ADVOCATES". Advocates and other people in the behavioral health system have guided me to lay my own groundwork and have given me the tools to work towards my view of recovery. I knew I had damaged my brain. My thought process was really messed up. Was it going to come back? It is slowly getting better. I thank God for people and their patience.

I just read an article "Recovery as a Journey of the Heart" by Pat Deegan. I was so amazed by it. Although I don't dismiss my own hope and recovery. I have taken my recovery and hope to a new level and directed it to helping others that are in situations less fortunate than my own. I directly related the article to an individual peer I'm working with right now. This peer has schizophrenia and has had APS and Pima Animal Control called on him. He has already lost some of the animals in his home. They are threatening to put him in a group home. His family does not really support him, or is unable to. He is clean and sober, but he struggles and has lost all hope. I try my best to help. I think the agency involved is doing all they can, but I never can tell. I do know people in the system stepped up and intervened in my case, but I had many advocates involved. I am not sure my friend does. At any rate, my hope goes on by helping others. After reading "Recovery as a Journey of the Heart", my effort at my recovery and my personal journey strengthened!



# Hope - My Existential Crisis

By Karis Reeves, CRSS



My journey began when I was 22 years old. I had been having mental ailments that bothered me for years. Being in my early twenties with the whole world ahead of me, and fueled with youthful know-it-all syndrome, I always looked outward and never inward. When things became stressful enough, I developed a substance use disorder. For the next eleven years, I visited the hospital on numerous occasions. The very first time

I went to a hospital to address the confusion, anxiety, and dissociation I had been experiencing, I mentioned I had also used drugs. Ever since that first encounter, I was never looked at the same. Just as my first experience, every other time I would seek out help I would be shunned and labeled a drug addict. It did not matter how long I had been sober or if my issues were even related to drugs. I was black marked as an addict and received little to no help. Nothing can destroy hope more than being labeled an addict and never being able to receive help. I knew during that time that I was alone and there was no help for me. When my life had become unmanageable, I ended up incarcerated for drug possession. I was in jail for the first four months of 2017. During those four months I spent 26 consecutive days in solitary confinement because the medical staff in the jail thought the mental issues I had been experiencing were just attention seeking behavior. This is where I eventually found my spirituality, and most of all, hope.

Being in solitary confinement, I felt hopeless and wanted to give up. It was at this moment of despair when I looked inward and addressed my existential aloneness. I embraced the isolation and took the time to really think about why I was so alone internally. I focused on my spirituality and how far I was dissociating from others and myself. I was able to compare the severe isolation I felt being locked in a cell, with no neighbors or windows, to the severe isolation I had been

[continued on next page](#)



# Hope

By Mario Raul Enriquez, CRSS

I have a personal experience of Hope to share that occurred a couple of years ago, when I found myself on the crossroads of a continued life of failures and regrets, or HOPE. When I think back to where I was, and how I got to this point of my life, I realize now that not everything is lost. The experience that I accumulated throughout my life made it seem as if there was no hope, and that it was my fate to live by other people's standards and not my own. The turning point for me came while I was on Probation in Nogales, Arizona. There were two officers (L. Preciado and G. Shults) that were responsible for my compliance of conditions ordered by a Judge.

They made it clear that there was no tolerance for bad behavior. However, they used a human approach to help me, instead of just giving me the go to jail free card that I deserved because of my continued use of drugs. They believed in me and gave me hope.

They encouraged me to make decisions on my own behalf, instead of controlling my thoughts, which they could have done with the authority they had over me. Since the time after the termination of my probation, I started to see that I could make choices. One of the first choices I made was to get help. I found that help in a network of people in different places: family, friends, and Mental Health Agencies. These individuals, without judgement or bias, gave me tools and encouragement to take control of my life. I am now on a journey of Recovery, where I will integrate my life experience in order to help others without judgement, and give hope of a full and happy life.

---

## Hope - My Existential Crisis, by Karis Reeves continued...

experiencing internally from a lack of hope. It was like a light went off and I finally understood spirituality and hope. I really started to understand the meaning behind hope. Separation in animals, including humans, can represent an existential threat to life. Some animals lose track of their herd and can actually die, because their fear is so great that they give up. In humans it has been shown that lack of

hope in patients can lead to death because their primal fight or flight instincts kick in and hope becomes the decision to fight or flight life itself. Without hope to fight, the body can weaken the immune system which in turn can precipitate death. Understanding all this and believing in myself is where hope became the catalyst to my recovery.



# Living Story of Hope

By Selina Rodriguez, CRSS

During my fifteen years of substance use and struggling with anxiety and depression, I found myself lost, confused, and worst of all, hopeless. I had no desire to live. I tried ending my life many times. I was desperate to escape my feelings of hopelessness and despair. For me, after losing everything, it took one moment of clarity to see that there is life after death. In that moment, I found hope. I found a desire to live and to change my life. I began to believe that I could pull myself out of the deep pit I was in. Hope was the only thing that kept me going through my recovery and through my relapses. The hope that one day I could stay sober, that one day I could be happy, and that one day my family would forgive me. The hope that one day I could forgive myself and let go of all the shame and guilt that kept me down for so long.

This was my “turning point” in my life. I came to believe in hope, and to believe I was worth it. I am worth everything good this life has to offer. Throughout my life, my family has been a big part of my support system. Throughout my journey in recovery I was able to see hope in action. It began with the Recovery Support Specialists actually doing this whole thing people call recovery. They gave me hope that it was possible for me to be that person changing for the better. A hope that I could leave my past in the past



and move forward. A hope that my life and the lives of my family could be restored. Hope has changed my whole outlook on life. Going from wanting nothing more than to die, to now, wanting nothing more than to live. Life is not about how many times I fall. Life is about how many times I get back up. As long as I have hope in my heart and my mind, I am able to continue to persevere and move forward. I am more than my past, my substance use history, my mental health diagnoses, and the stigmas people put on me. I am a living story of Hope.



---

*The Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute is administered by the Workforce Development Program in the Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) at the University of Arizona. The Institute is funded by Cenpatico Arizona. Cenpatico Behavioral Health of Arizona (Cenpatico) services are funded through a contract with the Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services (ADHS/DBHS) and AHCCCS.*

---

**Workforce Development News**

---

**Rita Romero**  
EDITOR

**Patricia Philbin,**  
DESIGN

---

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

---



## **Make sure you get your next issue!**

If your contact information has changed, or you would like to be removed from this list or you have any questions or comments please contact UA Workforce Development Program at:

[fcm-wdp@email.arizona.edu](mailto:fcm-wdp@email.arizona.edu)

Visit Our Website at:

[www.workforcedevelopmentprogram.org](http://www.workforcedevelopmentprogram.org)

### **Workforce Development Program**

1450 North Cherry Avenue #203, Tucson AZ 85719

(520) 626-7473

Fax (520) 626-7833

---

### **Trainers**

**David E. Delawder,** CRSS, CPRP

**Rita Romero,** CRSS, CFSP

**Stephanie Tellez,** CRSS

---

### **Program Director**

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

### **Administrative Associate**

**Vanessa Larios**

---



COLLEGE  
OF MEDICINE  
Department of Family  
& Community Medicine

