

# Workforce Development News

## Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute

Tucson, Arizona June 23, 2016



## Certified Peer Support Specialist Graduates

*Back Row left to right:*

Shane Wilson, Taylor Gavin, Geoffrey Smith, Tracy Berry, Jayme Estrada, Jessica Sottosanti, Alan Leon, Tamara Way, William Wayne Barnhart, Azalea Noperi, Meredith Reed, Aliceson Roberts, Terah Ochoa, Rebecca 'Renee' Crone, Linda Perez, Cynthia Rodriguez

*Front Row left to right:*

Joseph Weinberg, Frankie Lee, Jose Castillo, Sherri Sanders



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# Hope and Purpose

Alan Leon

It was over 30 years ago I was clean from heroin for about six years; I had accepted Jesus as my personal savior all was good with the world. Three years later my whole world flipped upside down and my life had turned into shambles. I did something so terribly wrong and I felt so guilty, and I wasn't able to forgive myself. That's when I lost all hope and I started using again, this time with the thought that maybe the drugs could relieve the pain I felt in my heart, but nothing could take that pain away.

I became homeless and was robbing and stealing from any and everybody even family so I ended up the scourge of the world no one would trust me. I ended up doing 9 years in prison for robbery, theft, burglary, forgery and a felony DUI. I went into prison in 1987 got out and went back in for 3 more years. When I got out in 2003 I didn't want to change. I was doing the same things I always was doing,

Finally in 2013 I got down on my knees and prayed to God; I needed to turn my life back to the Lord, and that I couldn't live like this anymore. Something had to change. I couldn't do this by myself, and I didn't know where to turn. At that time I was taking 80 mg. of methadone and shooting up a half a gram of heroin. Like I said I had nowhere to turn so I asked God to be my hope. I was working for a guy dealing drugs to support my habit. Little did I know that I was soon to get arrested for transportation of heroin for sale, and the RICO Act.

With my priors and the charges I had, I was looking at somewhere around 25 to 30 years in prison. I was resolved to change my life though, even if it meant changing it in prison. The more I trusted in God the easier it was to



accept the punishment that was given me. I couldn't afford a lawyer and I was appointed one (Mr. Panzarella) he believed I wanted to change and fought hard to get me probation. The Judge (Hon. Judge Tang), saw that in me, so he gave me six months in the county jail for the two charges, but he ran them consecutively so I did a year in the county jail, but the judge also allowed me to go out and get treatment.

I started to go to CODAC with the men's support group. I took any class that would help in my recovery going to early recovery, relapse prevention, SMART, WHAM and WRAP classes all which helped me in my recovery I also was taking a class in jail called "A Purpose Driven Life". I met some incredible recovery coaches there, Jay, Grant, Aaron and a few more. Some of the people I was going to the meetings with, this is my story of hope.



## Hope No Matter What

Aliceson Roberts

Hope occurred for me the moment my marriage ended. Once my now ex-husband was no longer in the home my triggers subsided and I was able to focus clearly on my recovery. This took a great deal of studying and therapy. Once I became mentally stable and realized that I could heal in all aspects of my life I all of a sudden wanted to share with others that no matter what, you can have hope and that help will be the power behind you getting mentally healthy and you will be able to help others to lead a happy life as well.



## The Little Flame Before the Fire

Azalea Gordon-Noeri



The little flame before the fire you need to survive in the wilderness, that's how I would describe hope. You need that flame to become fire, so you can see in the dark and keep warm. The same thing happens with hope. Hope is the little flame within us that will eventually turn into a fire within us, which makes us fearless and brave in facing whatever obstacles we must endure in life. Just as you need fire to survive the wilderness you need hope to emotionally survive in life.



# Hope, a Magical Thing

Cynthia Rodriguez

Hope is such a magical thing. I have learned to have hope after going through so many trials and tribulations. I really couldn't see the ability to have hope, because everything was so terrible and hopeless. I never knew how to look at anything in a positive way, only when something good happened to me or my kids. All of my surroundings never seemed positive. Just complaining and everyone having a "pity party", you know "everybody feel sorry for me".

Well enough with all of that negativity. I think I started thinking in a positive way when I started having faith. I started going to a Christian Church with my older brother who had lost everything even his kids. But I would see the hope he had in his eyes. The positive way he would talk, and him being happy. I couldn't see how he could be happy.

Little by little I started seeing that he was hopeful that he was going to get his kids back. So I guess it started rubbing off on me. I started seeing hope for myself,

and it felt great! The feeling of having hope and thinking in a positive way because I had hope. Hope is the most awesome tool you can have and I can make it contagious.





## Keep Hope Alive

Frankie Lee Sr.

My experience with hope was when I was in this very toxic relationship. I was drinking very heavily and had a lot of domestic issues with my ex. Even though I hadn't stopped drinking before meeting her, I started drinking very heavily while with her. It was really easy to drink more and more due to the fact that she was a very heavy drinker.

During this time I picked up a DUI with my son in the car and had a couple domestic violence charges. It might not seem like a lot to most but my life was in a downward spiral. I was on the verge of losing my two boys and my relationship was horrible to say the least. I felt drained, empty, and helpless as if I was running out of options.

So, I started doing this court ordered domestic violence class. I figured I would just go through motions and get it over with, but I actually got a lot out of that class. I got out of that toxic relationship and started my recovery.



The thought of losing my boys at one of the most crucial times in their lives, weighed really heavy on me. I started my court ordered substance-abuse classes and finish the courts curriculum, and I continued with my therapy and my recovery. God gave me Hope and now I am a Certified Recovery Support Specialist. "Keep Hope Alive"

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## The Brightest Day with the Bluest Skies

Tracy Berry



Hope to me is the strength, willingness, self-determination, motivation, honesty and being able to seek out support. At times it has been only just a glimmer that I have held on to and has become the brightest day with the bluest skies that I can bask in. There are many situations in life that have come along and without Hope there would have been hopelessness. It has brought me from the deepest depths to the sparkling surface. With Hope I can persevere.



# Faith and Hope

Geoffrey Smith

Without hope, the best I could have is complacency. Prior to going to the Gospel Rescue Mission I had fallen into six months of daily drug use. The first 3 months were fairly good. I was playing my guitar 10 hours a day in preparation for a job performing. The crowds of people grew as they listened to me play until even the parking lot across the street was full. After many conversations with these people I realized that the one thing they all had in common was a lack of faith in God.

By this point I'd realized I was talking to people who had already passed on. It took a lot to convince me what was happening was real. If anyone had told me 2 years prior that ghosts were real I would have laughed at them. Real or not it was real to me and my hope was turning to an attitude of, "if they can think and answer questions, is it too late for them to accept Jesus?"

I started preaching the Bible. After a couple of weeks I stopped one day and asked who could tell me about Exodus. A woman about 30 years old started quoting Exodus to me word for word. I couldn't do that. I was stunned but not for long. Why? I didn't have time to feel good about what was happening. It was then I started getting attacked by what I believe were demons. The fighting was both physical and spiritual. It seemed God was always giving me ways to win the battles, but I was weakening due to the amount of attacks and the lack of food and sleep I was getting.



God didn't want me there. That became obvious. He wasn't angry with me about what I started out to do, or even the fighting, but I had broken one of God's laws to get there. Drugs! I started to realize that if I died I wouldn't make it to Heaven. I felt so out of balance with God that I became really worried. This was no longer a matter of life and death in the physical for me but to lose hope in where I would spend eternity. I set an exit date to get clean. January 7th 2015.

From the detox I looked for a place to go, not want to go back to my home. The first time I heard the words 'Gospel Rescue Mission',

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# Hope is Life

Renee Crone



Hope had a different meaning to me as I grew up. Sometimes it was wishing I got a certain toy for my birthday or Christmas, or

wishing that a certain guy would ask me out. I would even wish that the sexual abuse would stop or that my birth mother wouldn't blame me for how her life turned out. Throughout my life I have experienced struggles like divorce and homelessness that have caused me to question if there is any hope for me. After going to jail for an assault charge, I started counseling and began to learn how to love myself. Before I started to receive the help I needed, I didn't understand the power of hope. After several years in recovery, continuous therapy, and surrounding myself with positive people, I have learned what hope is. To me hope means to have strength and courage; the strength to pick myself up in a tough situation, and the courage to ask for help when I need it. Hope is understanding that I am a survivor and not a victim. Having hope has helped me understand that I don't have to be perfect and I might have bad days but that is ok. Hope is freedom. The freedom to be in control of my life. HOPE IS LIFE!

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## Faith and Hope by Geoffrey Smith continued...

and long term Bible based studies I jumped on it. It was HOPE. It was hope that I could redeem myself to and realign with God. Today I have grown way past the person I was before getting on the drugs and I know God has forgiven me. I find that without hope there is nothing. (I might add faith into that as well.)

However, the spiritual lesson I learned prior to going to the mission was not to directly teach the word of God because I will be attacked.

When I teach at the mission I can feel the attacks coming but am no longer able to see or hear them so I have faith God will repel the attacks. As an R.S.S. working in a secular world I can't be teaching and preaching. When I realized the parallel between the time before the mission and the challenges coming up as an R.S.S. I was stunned.



# This is My Hope

Jayne Estrada

I sat in the courtroom, breathing in the stale air, feeling the shackles bite into my wrists and ankles. Even though it was freezing I sat sweating in my orange jumpsuit. I knew I was headed for prison; the only question was for how long? I had already blown my only shot at probation, on a case that should have involved mandatory prison time, and I was looking at anywhere from 2.5-11 years. It's no wonder I had cold sweat running down my back.

The prosecution had offered me one last chance to get out of this. Testify against the man that had held me captive, beat, raped and tortured me, and they could keep me out of prison. I had made my decision, and I chose prison over my grave. However set I was in my choice; it was still a nerve-wracking moment.

Judge Nanette Warner came back in and we all stood. She spoke about how disappointed she was to see me back in her courtroom in handcuffs, she had had faith that I could make it, and I began to get well and truly scared, I really thought I would get at least 6 years, which was my presumptive sentence. Instead she read off her decision in my case, 2.5 years, the absolute lowest sentence I could have possibly gotten. The breath I didn't know I was holding rushed out of my lungs.

I found my hope in that moment. I knew I could make it through the prison time, and



it would give me an opportunity to hone the skills I had learned while attempting to get clean while on probation and get me away from the lifestyle I had been living for so long. I have stayed clean from methamphetamine since then, and have never looked back. This is my hope



## What Hope Means to Me

Shane Wilson

Hope had been a fleeting feeling for me for years. Not until recently have I begun to harness it, February 27th 2013 is the day I got clean. Since this date I have been drug free. Being free from substances has made it possible to face life, something I had been running from as far back as I can recall. If not for hope, recovery is not possible and if not for recovery I would not have a life, which is truly worth living.



## All Things Good Are Possible

Meredith Reed



My personal experience with hope began the day April 24 - 3 years ago when the obsession to use drugs and alcohol was removed from my thoughts by God. Since that day I no longer, no matter what happen, I didn't have

the usual 'go to' solution of using; hope in all things entered my life. The challenge of day to day things is going to be there but never that thought again.

This by no means that I do not do the things necessary and have a wonderful sponsor who supports for me, I am so grateful for they are still part of my life. The meetings with my therapist and most of all giving back, just in case I were to get the thought again, are part of daily life. My prayers and thanks for the small things are sometimes moment by moment and after each challenge, being thankful for getting through it. Once again I am convinced that with God's blessings all things good are possible because he doesn't make junk. Thanks again to all of the staff who have helped me know I am capable of being a CRSS.



# A Life With Purpose

Sherri Sanders

There was a time in my life when hope was useless or so I thought. I didn't believe my life was ever going to change, even if I made changes and neither did anyone else. They deemed me irredeemable. In other words they believed that I couldn't reform or improve.

It didn't take long before I accepted and believed it. That of course took me nowhere. I wanted to change my life. I decided I had to start with myself. I hoped I wasn't the incorrigible lost cause I had come to believe I was. My mother and best friend kept telling me over and over "don't lose hope". They believed that with hope, faith and time anything was possible.

Still years later I only saw myself stumble and fall again and again. I had to keep promising myself never to lose hope. I looked and spoke to people I believed had what I hoped for, 'A life with



purpose'. People, places and things drifted either out of life or into the life I hoped for - A LIFE WITH PURPOSE - HERE I AM!!!

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## Hope

Mindy Barnhart

While my story is long, every part of it is a relevant part as to when I had my moment of Hope. For me though it was not just one moment of hope but rather a journey of discovering that hope will always be there, hope just needs to be sought out. My story greatly defines as to why I am the person that I am today. For that very reason I would never wish to change any of the following events that occurred throughout my life so far. My experiences have made me who I am and continue to form a person that I

am. I had a horribly tragic childhood, growing up with all types of abuse, but I did not want that to define who I wanted to be.

At 22 I was blessed by God with a miracle. My lymphoma had disappeared. It was then that I decided I was meant for something greater. I stopped using. My friend did not want to follow suit, she felt no need. Her family disowned her, she lost both her children and she went to jail. This was the major moment in my life where I said I did not want that. It was hard for me to let her go; we were people that became co-dependent addicts. I had to though, I wanted to live, and I did not want her life to be mine.

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## Hope, by Mindy Barnhart continued...

I went back to school; I obtained my degree in early childhood education. I had moved back in with my parents. I held my job at T.U.S.D., I loved working with kids. When I was 26 years old my father passed away from a sudden heart attack. That was so very hard. My mother and I moved into a place together. I felt obligated to be with her so she would not be alone.

Months passed and one evening I was going dancing with a friend. I had stopped at a 7-Eleven for a newspaper and ran into Billy. He and I dated before, we were even engaged previously. Billy was my first love. I had left him years ago because of his drug addiction; I could not subject myself to that lifestyle once again. He chose drugs over me, said they were too important to him. Here I was though walking into this gas station and he worked here. I was curious about him, if he was better now. He had never had a job before when we were together. I bought my paper and walked out to my car. I just sat there, it seemed like forever. I wrote my phone number down and walked back in and handed it to him. I told him that I was not sure if anything would come of it but that if he were interested we should talk. I waited all night and he never called, until the next day. We talked for hours; he had been sober since a few days after I left him.

The rest of the story between he and I is really just history. We have been married for almost 8 years now. When I was 34 years old, we became pregnant with our first child together. At that point in my life I was on medication for chronic pain disorder, a non-narcotic, non-habit forming prescribed medication for pain. My OBGYN said it was not a safe medication to take during pregnancy and she switched me to something called oxycodone. I asked if it was safe she said if I was in pain I needed

it. I believed her. It really did help with pain but after 3 months I was concerned that I was becoming dependent on this medication. I also had a doctor that managed my diabetes during pregnancy, some kind of specialist OBGYN. I told the prescribing doctor about my concern. She returned with saying she never prescribed that medication to me and that it was not safe, I should not be taking narcotics in pregnancy. My other doctor had known about her prescribing this medication to me since they had to communicate to provide care. He suggested I go to a detox facility. So, I did. I was so terrified there. They later moved me to a hospital because you cannot safely detox from that type of narcotic while pregnant. They said it would be fatal to my baby and potentially fatal to me as well. At the hospital they transitioned me to something called methadone. I was not given a choice; I was told if I did not take it Child Protective Services would take my baby. So I obliged and took the methadone. It was the worst thing ever. I could not function on this methadone. On top of that no agency would accept me because I had no drug use disorder and no mental health disorder. I spent 2 weeks waiting for the hospital to find an agency to accept me. CODAC finally did but, I had to go every day to get this medication and we lived in another city. I moved in with a friend of my husband's and for 3 months commuted by bus. It was so hard being separated from my family. We had to move to Tucson all because of this doctor who prescribed a medication. Needless to say it was hard. We contacted the medical board and she is no longer allowed to prescribe narcotic medication. I have a beautiful daughter and thankfully no longer take methadone. Now, I live my life to the fullest that I can.



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# Hope, a Vital Link in the Chain of Life

Joseph Weinberg



Hope by definition is “the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best.” And to many others it means “a person or thing in which expectations are centered.” Hope to me goes beyond this scholar worded definition. Hope is a vital link in the chain of life, not just for me but for all human beings that share the world. Hope is the key to our human survival. Think of it like this, hope is the candle in the darkness, sometimes it can be hard to see, and other times it’s as bright as the sun. But sometimes it can be easily extinguished leaving one hopeless in the darkness. Just remember that

sometimes it takes that darkness to show us the light. That light is hope.

Let’s look at the scriptures in the bible. Romans 5:3-5. 3: Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4: perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5: And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy. Job 11:18-19. 18: You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety. 19 You will lie down, with no one to make you afraid, and many will court your favor. Joshua 10:25 Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the LORD will do to all the enemies you are going to fight.

Hope is strength. This teaching means a lot to so many. Regardless of whatever darkness consumes us we still hold onto the light. Hope holds us together. One example is the story of a farmer. The farmer tended the land, planted the seeds, and cared for it in hope for a lush crop. That lush crop will feed himself, his family, along with many, many others. It took his hope, hard work, to feed so many. We all have that seed, all it needs care, love, support, and that light of hope. With all of those we can all become luscious crops.

*References:*

<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/hope>

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/>



# My Turning Point

Tamara Way

My personal experience of hope occurred two years ago when my grandma and I were driving down aviation highway and I got a call from my attorney and she said "Tamara you got accepted to the Drug Treatment Alternative to Prison (DTAP) Program". I felt a big sense of joy and relief. Before I got that phone call I was on way back to prison with for another drug charge. I had a prison only plea. I was already a three time felon and had just spent four years in prison. Getting the DTAP program gave me hope that I could change my life around, but it was a struggle.

I'm a person who liked to use drugs. I was used to using drugs. I had to change everything in my life. I didn't stay completely sober the first year, I ended up back in jail and found out I was pregnant. That was my turning point. That was the moment I had to make a choice on what I wanted for myself. I chose to put my heart into this time. I chose to be sober, to be a mom and better my life. Today I'm happy being sober. I'm happy that people gave me chances and that they believe in me. Today I feel very hopeful.



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# A Loving and Intelligent Force

Taylor Gavin



Hope is very important to me... Having been diagnosed with Asperger syndrome, (now autistic spectrum) officially at 16 and I have been dealing with it most of my life. I naturally had quite a bit of social anxiety and other issues from this, but overcoming it all and experiencing an acute psychosis brake down, woke me up to the idea that a loving, more intelligent force is really in the driver's seat in my life and I have a say in how it all works out.



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# While I Breathe, I Hope

Jessica Sottosanti



Dictionary.com defines hope as “the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best.”

So what do I want that can be had? What is hope to me?

Hope to me is the reassurance that with perseverance, I can create and live a fulfilling life. Hope encourages resiliency in the face of adversities, such as mental illness; it is hope that, even though there have been moments when I was unable to

accomplish even the most basics of daily living, I could potentially recover a lost sense of myself.

Because hope waxes and wanes with my depression, a particular event generally becomes the catalyst that reinvigorates my confidence; the most recent event occurring six months ago when I moved into a house to assist a man with diabetes. While stationed in Afghanistan, thousands of miles away, the man’s son had entrusted me with his father’s well-being. The time away from my regular home life left me feeling more independent and a desire for something more; for me, it was time needed for self-reflection. When I returned home, I took proactive steps that have led me to become a healthier, more active member of society.

Surrounding oneself with positive support can aid in further progression of a better life; however, as on most occasions when I rediscover misplaced hope, I find it not from another person but from within myself. By recognizing my true purpose, I grant myself the power and determination to move forward with my life. For me, hope is an ongoing and necessary development for without it, life is futile.

Cicero’s paraphrased, Latin motto, “dum spiro spero” or “while I breathe, I hope,” simplifies the importance of hope; for as long as I am alive, I will continue to hope.



# My Journey of Hope

Thomas Fleming

My journey of hope began about 22 years ago in Portland, Oregon. I was around the age of 28 years old. Since about the age of 12 (first drink was at about 7) I had been self-medicating on alcohol and anything else I could get my hands on. I was severely depressed due to the death of my brother and my family's inability to cope with it, among many other things. I was so much younger (7 years) than my next sibling and immediately after the death of my brother

I was left alone in the house with my severely mentally ill mother. Dad was a road warrior. Gone Monday through Friday; either in Boston or Chicago; distant and cold. And I was terrified of my mother. All she did was weep. She never spoke to me. She seemed angry that I was alive. She hated me and she made me know it every single day. I was a prisoner. And there was nobody to tell. As a result I drank and did as many drugs as possible to fill the void and ease the pain and fear.

The depression lasted until around the age of 17. Then it turned to massive anxiety and panic. Although I had no idea what it was at the time. I just figured I was crazy and bad. I internalized that. I acted crazier and worse. That's what I was supposed to do. From the age of 17 to about 28 I don't think I got more than a few hours of non-drunken sleep a night. Drinking was my everything. It worked for me...sorta. I was pretty high functioning. I could keep jobs if not forming deep relationships.

At about that same age I began to increase my usage of cocaine and meth. I had first done it as a 12 year old. It was given to me by my 19 year old sister. This was all very normal in upper middle class suburban New Jersey in the late 70's and 80's.

Everyone was doing it....The next 10 years or so saw me doing lots of cocaine and meth and drinking, always drinking. I decided at one point in my early 20's that the coke and meth were starting to become a problem also. They were threatening my baby...alcohol's supremacy. They had to go. I basically stopped all of that at around age 27. Panic was getting worse and worse.

One day hungover or still drunk, I woke up drank a couple of pots of coffee and headed to the gym in downtown Portland. This was my routine for years. Drink like a fish then work it off. I was on the treadmill and I suddenly got a panic attack that was unlike any other. Like the mother of all panic attacks and I was a pro. I ran out of the gym like a chicken with its head cut off; into the rainy street; commuters rushing by. I fell to the ground and just hung on for dear life, water and mud splashing all over me. I wanted to die; badly!

It was then that I decided to either kill myself or seek help. Obviously I chose the latter. I think it was about a week later that I went to see a nurse practitioner called Paul Kohn. He explained that I was suffering from anxiety and panic attacks. This was the first time I had ever heard those words spoken about me. He started me on some Zoloft like product and it immediately had a positive effect.

Coworkers were shocked at how much calmer and more reasonable I had become. That was the turning point. Simply knowing what was wrong with me was very empowering. I am still very much a work in progress though. I do believe that with my empathy and compassion for others that I am in a very good position to help others get better. It is very interesting to note that all of my surviving siblings are in some way involved with helping others. I guess that's just what we have to do.



# Making the Transformation

Jose Castillo



For me hope started when I realized that there was another way to live. I had been in my addiction for as long as I could remember, in jails and in my own self destructive thinking for years. I did not know any different and had pretty much accepted that this was what life was going to be for the rest of my life. Throughout my journey though, I had a few "aha" moments where I had said to myself; I do not want to be this way. One particular moment was during my incarceration, I had an older friend who asked me to borrow some coffee and tobacco. During this conversation, he mentioned that he would pay me back as soon as his 86 year old mother received her social security check and sent him his package.

I remember thinking to myself, there has got to be a better way to live. If I was going to have to be dependent on my mom and her social security check I would definitely be out of luck.

Another moment for me occurred when I was going to trial for this case. My aunt had been working with my attorney and I to see what could be done to help me get out of this jam. I was in and out of jail this year and particularly remember because the same public defender had been re-assigned to me. I of course had been pleading my innocence and would not budge on a plea deal that was offered to me. The attorney clearly saw past my act and was not supportive of my fight to be released. I remember talking to my aunt, and when she shared with me that the attorney had advised her and my family to just give up on me and I was just another lost cause. My aunt said to me that she told the attorney, I don't know how it works in your family but in ours we don't turn anyone away because they are struggling. I remember thinking to myself, after everything I have done, she still refuses to let go. Why?

My aunt played a very big role in my life and always has encouraged me to do better, work harder and just pick myself up and keep going. She held the hope for me when I could not. We did, however have opposing viewpoints as I was the first in my family to seek help with my addiction, the first to openly share that I was working with a therapist, and the first to say that I was not going to live in the dark anymore and pretend that things did not happen. You see my family's thoughts

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## Making the Transformation by Jose Castillo continued...

and beliefs are that we don't air our problems out in the community (like calling the police), we don't seek help from counselors or therapists (we just keep going as if nothing happened) and we don't go to places like treatment centers (we stop using or just stop the behavior). I was sharing with my aunt how nothing was working for me, that I did not understand why I did what I did and that I needed to try something different (a discussion we had previously had many times). I told her "Tia, I am going to keep going to these recovery things and I am going to see a therapist". She told me, if that's what you think you need then do it.

I continued on this journey and it was of course one with many twists and turns. What I did find, was that there were many like-minded people out there, looking for the same thing, to "recover". I found hope when I saw other people like me living a different way of life. Other men just like me, who had been in and out of prison, lived on the streets and had lived the street code for so long that they knew no different. They did not know how to live.

This was my turning point, knowing that these guys could make the

transformation and change, despite of our ties to the prison code, despite of our age and race differences; we all had the same goal. To recover!

I gained hope from these men knowing that we had walked through similar paths and were making the transformation. During this process I have discovered many things about myself. What I have learned is that even if I am a person who struggles with depression and substance use; I have found what works for me through my recovery! With this knowledge, I have also learned that, "anything is possible in recovery."

How do I know this? The proof is in the results, today I am raising my 13 year old son (on my own), this year I graduated with my Associates degree in Psychology/Sociology, and I recently took a leap of faith and started a new job, a job with more promising opportunities and room for growth. All this would not have been possible without hope that there is something bigger and better out there for me! I have come a long way from being the guy that was okay with going to jail every holiday season. Today I choose to live in my recovery.

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# Hope to Rely On

Terah Ochoa



Hope has always been more of a fickle topic for me, seeing as I have these moments when my disorder takes over and it triggers a depressive episode; and I am stuck wondering how to get out of bed. One of the few encounters I had with hope would have to be 16 years ago. I was only 24 and I was in the middle of giving birth to my second child; but let's go back a few months, when I was 4 months along. I didn't have long to go through with the abortion I had told my mother and my grandfather about. I had sought counsel from them even as I was losing hope. My grandfather who was bed ridden and knew he didn't have long to live told me that for every death is a birth, and to come in between the two wasn't always right; he had hoped to live on through my unborn child and he had spoken of the grief he knew my mother and I would soon undergo at his departure and said that this child, my child would be the perfect distraction for my mother and I would learn to love her and that would save me.

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I began to think I was already a parent to a 6 year old could I really provide for an infant? Time soon ran out and I was stuck with her whether I was ready or not. The further along I got in the pregnancy the more worried I was. My grandfather's condition had worsened rather quickly and I had hoped that he would live past my due date that was rapidly approaching. Soon enough he had passed and not long after I was being rushed to Tucson Medical Center. It was June 20th, 2000 I was in labor for hours, it felt like days...then at 1:00 a.m., exhausted and flustered, the doctor told me that my daughter had Fetal Stress Syndrome due to the lack of oxygen in her brain and would suffocate and go brain dead if left in me any longer; so I pushed, and pushed with all my might and out came a screaming little blue baby.

I was terrified she had so little air in her that her whole body was blue, they placed her in an incubator in hopes her body would absorb the air and allow it to pass into her lungs and brain but it wasn't working, my hope was diminishing. I thought I had been too late and then I heard the most joyous sound, a tiny gasp and it was like the life was breathed back into myself and in that moment I knew what it was like to have nothing but hope to rely on. I named my daughter Faith Henry; Faith because I didn't give up on her and Henry as a contrition and reminder to the man that was responsible for her being alive my grandfather, her great-grandfather Henry Yourgulez who would have loved to meet her but has and never will have the chance to meet her.



# My Path to Hope and Recovery

William Wayne Barnhart

I would have to start at the age of 3 years old when my half-sister's father fed me a tray of brownies which he had placed a large amount of Angel Dust and told me to go ahead and eat all of them. That night my mother came home from work to find me under the kitchen table with multiple knives. My mother called 911 and he was placed under arrest for child abuse. I was told that it took six police officers to get me out from under the table and to the hospital. The doctors informed my mother they would have to keep me because I was suffering from a massive drug overdose. I spent 3 weeks in the hospital. After I was released I was taken to a mental health inpatient facility where I was diagnosed with schizophrenia. From that point to age 6; I would return 7 more times.

At age 7 my mother moved me and my half-sister to Tucson, Arizona where I would begin treatment with La Frontera, this is where I would do therapy for my illness. Then at 8 years old I lost the only person that made me feel safe my Grandfather Kenny Johnson. The day I found out that he passed away I hung myself in a tree at my elementary school, where staff and police found me; I was taken to Desert Hills. I would remain here until I was 11 years old. I would be arrested several times for domestic violence and running away in following years. At 16 years old I began experimenting with drugs at first it was mushrooms which led to acid and

crack cocaine. At 18 I would end up in prison for a year and a half where I still used. Upon getting out of prison I would be placed at a CODAC drug rehab facility. After rehab I went back to crack thinking I was in control, at first it was great with my girlfriend and family. Things started going wrong. I began smoking more crack, stealing from family in which they would disown me. In 2003 my girlfriend gave me a choice between her and the drugs. I chose crack. She began packing and I flipped out three days later I ended up in jail. I was placed on one year supervised probation.

I told myself I need help I was tired of losing everything that I valued.

I was fresh in my recovery when I got married, after have my son in 2004. This marriage failed so I began working long hours to keep me going back to crack. I was working when my current wife Mindy would come in to the store, my moment of hope. From this point my recovery was more important because she was the one I lost. Now I'm 13 years clean from crack, I have had my felony dismissed. Just 2 years ago I started my road to my mental health recovery. I no longer need medications to help me cope with my everyday life. I now enjoy spending my recovery with my son William J. Barnhart, my daughter RubyAnn C. Barnhart and my loving wife Mindy R. Barnhart and our two dogs.



*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 Integrated Care 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

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