

Workforce Development News

Integrated Healthcare Recovery Support Specialist Institute

Marana, Arizona August 22, 2019



Certified Peer Support Specialist Graduates

Back row left to right: Stacy Stowe, Beatrice Washburn, Danielle Badalato

Middle row left to right: Crystal Marks, Candance Renee, Dana Hynes

Sitting left to right: Eden Omstead, Natasha Bonnick, Lia Lara



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON

**WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM**

Family & Community Medicine



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Discovering Recovery

Beatrice Washburn, CRSS

My first experience of hope in recovery was the day I got my diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder. My entire young life I'd lived not knowing why I was unable to focus on important things or accomplish tasks that were not of deep interest to me. I came to believe that I was a failure and had no inherent value to offer the world, that I was lazy, broken, and somehow wrong. But when I was diagnosed with ADD I felt liberated- not only did I have a name for the mysterious malaise, I had a plan to treat it, to recover a sense of self and a life that could be productive and worthwhile.



When I Opened My Eyes

Crystal Marks, CRSS

From a very young age, I didn't know that there was anything more to life than the drug addicted criminal lifestyle. I had come to accept that I'd always be an addict, but there was always the burning question inside me. "What IF there is more to life than this?" "How will I ever know?" I cried out for something, anything outside of myself and I opened my eyes to, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11). Having never read the bible, and not being a believer in coincidence, that was the day I experienced Hope for the first time in my life. I then began to believe there was hope for myself and my future.



My Story of Hope

Candance Renee, CRSS



Hello, my name is Candi and here is my story of hope. Hope played a huge part in my life about 2 1/2 years ago. I had struggled with substance use throughout my life since I was around 14 years old. I always felt that I was just going to be "an addict" the rest of my life. After a turning point at the age of 33, I realized that I severely needed help! My life had become something that I didn't recognize, and something that I was so ashamed of. I felt broken; I was no longer ME. A year and a half after I had my last child, I re-

enrolled into an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) at SEABHS. I met some amazing people there. My counselor and my case manager, along with some other people, completely changed my life. I learned things that I didn't even know existed. I realized there was so much HOPE for me. After 4 months in this class, I had regained my life. I now had so much hope, faith, and belief in myself that I decided to change a lot of things around in my life. Some easy, some hard.

I continue doing aftercare and many other types of recovery maintenance to further my growth in recovery. I decided I wanted to help other people with their personal growth and recovery, so that they too, can have HOPE in their lives. I choose to surround myself with positive, supportive and loving people as well. They too play an important role in my life and give me hope in humanity again. Since choosing to better my life, things only continue to get better. That doesn't mean things don't get hard but that's when hope comes in. On a day to day basis, I have to pray and hope things are going to continue in the right direction and I continue to do stuff that will keep me focused and driven for personal success. I now know there is so much HOPE for everyone, including myself. Nothing can stop you, if you don't allow it to.

A Brighter Future

Danielle Badalato, CRSS



My personal experience of hope in recovery began in April 2016. I was stuck in addiction and an abusive relationship, where I was homeless and became pregnant with his child. The abuse was an ongoing thing for two years, and because I was pregnant, I knew I had to find a way out. Five hard months went by living in the desert. As a mother, I began to feel hope for recovery. My higher power played a major role in this hopeful process. I prayed every day and tried to remind myself that I was in the arms of a loving God; he gave me the strength

to walk away from the bad. The life I was carrying inside me was far more important than anything I walked away from. God blessed me and I saw the light at the end of the tunnel. I had a bright future ahead of me, but had challenges and other obstacles to face such as legal issues and rehabilitation. I no longer had time to waste contemplating my next decision.

I then turned myself in to law enforcement and sought help within the jail's mental health. The honorable Judge Payton also gave me a great sense of hope; he believed recovery was possible for me. He made sure I got the help and support I needed. I was held for 57 days, then released from Pima County Jail May 31, 2016, to my probation officer. I was then immediately transported to a rehabilitation facility. He also played a role in my recovery, in a sort of negative way. He did not believe I could complete the 90-day treatment. This negativity had a huge impact, giving me the motivation to prove him wrong. On August 10, 2016, I successfully completed the 90-day treatment at The Haven. This was what I had hoped and prayed for. Today I am so proud to say I have been clean and sober since 2016 and I am a dedicated loving mother working hard every day for a brighter future.

Stronger Than Ever

Eden Omstead, CRSS



Two weeks before I ended up in Casa De Vida, an amazing rehab center, I had literally hit rock bottom. The devil had sucked me up, turned me into somebody I was not and had almost taken over. That devil was heroin, accompanied by meth. Even though I had been doing both substances on and off for almost 5 years, I had started using again after my baby girl was born, this time with a vengeance. I could not stand how much I was using and how bad I got, so I left home and ended up on the streets waiting for a bed to open up at Casa De Vida. I stayed at my drug dealer's house. She was supposedly my best friend. I had a vehicle and she had the drugs, so why not right? During this two week period I went through a lot and experienced what I wish nobody would have to.

I ended up stranded at Walmart way out by the casino for 12 hours because my supposed best friend's brother took off in my car while I ran inside the store. Since my car had been stolen, my phone was dead, and I had no money, I was stuck. I hoped they would come back with my car to pick me up. Being very hungry, I remembered that I had a gift card for a restaurant that was in the same parking lot as Walmart. After I ordered, I must have kept nodding off, and after a few warnings they politely kicked me out. I went back to Walmart and walked the parking lot for hours, going to the bathroom to get high. 12 hours later, I ran into someone I knew, who thankfully gave me a ride back to my "best friend's" house. There my car sat. I did not want to say anything because that is where I was staying, so it was not worth it. I remember just breaking down crying, wanting a way out. I missed my precious babies so much.

On Mother's Day, I helped save a person's life that had overdosed right in front of his mother. His mother and I watched as he collapsed. He had a look of death; he was pale, grey and bluish. Full of panic and shakiness, after five shots of naran, two nose shots of naran and his mom yelling and hitting him, he slowly started to come back to life. I could not believe the person I had allowed myself to become. Finally, Maryland from Casa De Vida had called me and said there was a bed that had opened up for me. I dropped to my knees, an overwhelming feeling of relief hitting me. A feeling that I was so sick of being sick and

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A Work In Progress

Natasha Bonnick, CRSS

To be honest, hope to me means many things. For me personally, it's the process of moving forward. It is that first step one takes in a positive direction. The role that hope plays in my life is crucial. Without hope, I would not have the will to keep pushing forward despite all the obstacles I've faced in my day to day life. I feel that despite having my family in my life, it was and still is a much higher power that's involved in keeping me strong. After going through all that I've gone through in my almost 30 year life span, the turning point is more like a starting point. I am still a work in progress myself; there is no writing on the wall. I'm just trying to figure things out as I go. And if I can help someone along the way, then at least I know I'm not alone.



Stronger Than Ever by Eden Omstead, continued...

tired, that enough was ENOUGH. By the grace of God, I knew that I needed help. I realized that I just about lost everything. The ones who I thought were my friends were only using me. All the stuff that I had also stolen during this two week period could have landed me in prison for a very long time. The life that I had saved could have been mine, or possibly a life that couldn't have been saved.

Now that I have been clean for 81 days, I know that I am truly blessed to be here and to still be alive. God has been by my side and helped me realize that I have so much to live for. That I can be happy sober and actually want to stay sober. I have two precious babies that

need me and depend on me. I have put them through so much. Even though I was always there for them and took care of them, out of nowhere I just disappeared. It really hurt and confused them that they had lost their mommy. They did not deserve that one bit, and deep down inside it still hurts me that I would ever do that to them. I am so glad that part of my life's journey is over with, and that I learned from it and overcame it stronger than ever. This personal experience of hope has led me to be happier and healthier than ever. Now my beautiful babies can have the most amazing mommy that they deserve. Sobriety is 100% possible with the willingness to do so. Thank you God for giving me the hope and courage that I needed to show myself how well sobriety rocks and fits me.

Hope Through Osmosis

Lia Lara, CRSS



It was in December of 2018, when I felt lost and I experienced loss - the loss of my dignity, goals, aspirations, confidence, self-respect, and support system. I hit rock bottom. Although I knew God's presence was there, I felt so far from his grace. Jesus says, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Luke 19:10. I believe God uses people in our lives to send his message of hope and love. I found hope and love through other people: my family, friends, providers, and my peers. People would tell me I was intelligent and capable of achieving my dreams, but I stopped believing in myself. Although I pushed many people away due to my substance use disorder, there were people who never gave up on me. Some helped at a distance and some were in the trenches with me.

The prayers and visits from my family and friends, compliments from my peers, and the choices my providers gave me were "molecules of hope." Those "molecules of hope" from others transformed me through osmosis. I absorbed the hope from others and eventually had genuine hope for myself. Choice was something I had not had in a long time. This gave me the confidence to take charge of my own care plan and life responsibilities. There were times I checked myself into treatment because I knew I needed help, but I didn't believe I could really stop. Therefore, I "went back out again." When I relapsed, people from COPE and Unhooked welcomed me with open arms. They told me I was still a worthy human being, that the stigma didn't have to shame me, and they believed in me.

Bill Anthony, a pioneer in mental health, says, "Recovery is a journey from resignation to hope. . . it is sometimes necessary for someone else to believe in better outcomes for an individual, even when the individual does not believe in her/himself." When I was told that I could have a rich and meaningful life even though I struggled with substance use disorder, that was the "turning point" in my belief system. This CRSS program taught me that, "Recovery means gaining a sense of meaning, positive identity, fulfilling relationships, the capacity to cope with adversity, a role in community, and recognition of the gifts and lessons learned through the recovery struggle." Dave, Rita, and Stephanie have inspired hope in me. The bottom line is that by listening to those people around me, I found hope. Take a moment and listen to those people who have faith in you.

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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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