

Hope Highlights

"To restore hope and see transformation in the lives of gang-affiliated individuals and those involved in the justice system."



May 2021



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Participant Spotlight: Micaiah

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has become far too common among our nation's veterans. According to the US Department of Veterans Affairs, a veteran is 1.5 times more likely to die of suicide than any other adults dealing with the same issues and that nearly 20 veterans die by suicide each day. The effects of PTSD are catastrophic and lead to substance abuse, legal issues and even imprisonment.

Micaiah's Story

I grew up in Oregon. A typical family, parents, three siblings and graduated high school. In 2007, I joined the United States Air Force as an aircraft electrician. While in the Air Force, I met a wonderful lady and was married in 2009. After a 3.5-year stint in the Air Force, I joined the Army and was immediately deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. In late 2011, I returned home and struggled to reenter society while coming down from the high of war. To be honest, I really didn't think I was going to come home. I became distant and lacked the coping skills to deal with the trauma, so I turned to alcohol and benzos to mask the pain. My legal issues started in 2013 when I was arrested for fighting and was demoted. I knew I had PTSD, but I didn't dare tell anyone or my career would have been over. The military diagnosed me with Anxiety Adjustment Disorder. I continued to serve and was deployed to Israel. While in action, I did very well with my sobriety as I was stimulated by the action.

Sadly, while home and after my service, which ended in 2017, I continued struggling to reintegrate into society and once again reverted to alcohol in hopes it would help me cope with my trauma. There were times I would get drunk and be gone for days. I got help from the Veterans Administration (VA) on several occasions but continued to relapse. All the programs were voluntary, so when you are trying to escape your past, reflecting on it is the last thing you want to do, and I just kept running. It got to the point where my wife would drink to tolerate me. She was mom and dad to the kiddos and babysitter to me. I would black out and couldn't be trusted to care for the kids. The result was my wife leaving me and when alcohol wasn't enough, I attempted to end my life.

After two suicide attempts, six DUIs and a ten year prison sentence in 2018, there was nothing left; I had hit rock bottom, four walls, God and me. I couldn't drink, but most importantly, I couldn't run from myself and had to deal with my issues. I was raised to believe you handled personal issues by yourself; no one needs to know your business, but the trauma of war showed I didn't have healthy coping skills to do it alone. **Continued on page 3 >>>>**

Director's Corner

The first half of 2021 has shown that we continue to look forward to the final chapters of the pandemic and remain resilient and hopeful for a promising second half of the year. Here at Jobs of Hope, we continue to serve and bring hope to the men of the program as they transition their lives and see promise for a brighter future.

In 1999, Congress designated May as National Military Appreciation Month to provide the nation a chance to publicly show their appreciation for the troops, past and present, and we pause on Memorial Day to remember the sacrifice and service of those who gave all. It is important that we honor the countless citizens who demonstrate their resilience by serving and defending our great country.

In this month's edition of "Hope Highlights" we share the story of Veteran Micaiah and his journey that brought him to Jobs of Hope. In addition, we introduce you to Kennie, whom many of you already know as he is truly an icon of Greeley. We share with you a brief synopsis of his journey for the American Dream as he now shares his story, gifts, and talents with the men of Jobs of Hope.

As we move into the summer season, I pray that you are all well and will take some time to honor those who are and have served our country and, most importantly, take some time to be with family as we all start coming back together.

In Christ,



Ernest Cienfuegos-Baca
Executive Director



Employment Corner

Jobs of Hope works with a variety of employers so that we can better help our participants find meaningful work. Without these partnerships we would not be able to do the work we do. With this in mind, we would like to thank those organizations that have worked with us over the course of the pandemic.

If you are interested in supporting Jobs of Hope by partnering with us, please feel free to reach out and we can arrange a time to discuss potential partnership opportunities.

Jobs of Hope would like to recognize the following participants currently employed.

- Toby - JBS
- Micaiah - JBS
- Danny - Andersen Salvage
- Anthony - Andersen Salvage
- Clint - Elwood Staffing
- Geno - Self employed barber
- Abdul - Cargill
- Mark - Mountain States Plastics
- Timothy - Wal-Mart
- Joshua - Labor Max
- Mark - Labor Max
- Sontu - Blackjack Pizza
- Alex - Ag Tek Security

Prayer Points

- We pray for the participants of JOH that you would make them strong and courageous for the road ahead.
- We ask for your wisdom, strength and power to lead us in each step of this summer.
- We pray for your continued protection over the participants, staff and friends of Jobs of Hope.
- We ask that you provide for our needs and help us prosper.



Volunteer Opportunities

Jobs of Hope is looking for passionate volunteers to help in following areas:

- Resume assistance
- Online application & job search assistance
- Banquet planning committee

If you like to volunteer, please don't hesitate to reach out! Visit our website at www.jobsofhope.org or we can be reached by phone at (970)451-5007

Micaiah's Story Continued

The Lord sent me on this journey, and my time with him helped me realize I didn't have to do it alone. I developed a relationship with the Lord, and acknowledged that "he leads me but never leaves me". Through prayer and hope, I was given an opportunity to be part of a program referred to as the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC); I could be released and get the help I needed, but with the understanding there would be consequences (prison) if I didn't follow through this time and get the help I needed. This time, I wasn't alone.

I was released from prison in March of 2019, and have not had a drink in over two years. I learned that it's about relationships and surrounding yourself with healthy people. You don't have to do it alone. Jobs of Hope and the "Men of Valor" program provide me with the characteristic values and the brotherhood I need when I think I can't go anymore. I'm still at the bottom slowly climbing up, but I have what money can't buy. I'm overwhelmed by the richness of my friends and the love and mercy of God.

Employer Spotlight Andersen's Sales & Salvage

Have you met him? If not, you're missing a real treat! Jobs of Hope have been blessed to have many supporting employers who not only say, "Everyone deserves a second chance" but live it by hiring our participants. One such employer is Anderson Salvage owned by Kennie Andersen. At the spunky age of 84 and no taller than 5'6 or so, you can still find him out in the salvage yard working and causing havoc.

On a nice Thursday morning Kennie and I had an opportunity to visit. His story started in 1959 when he was a young man in college and began collecting scrap metal from various places and would store the metal on his father's farm. It was a one man show back in those days and then in 1961, he purchased the 37 acre property the salvage yard sits on today and the operation grew to a whopping 3 employees, including Kennie. Today Anderson Salvage employs 70+ individuals and consists of multimillion dollar machinery that can rip apart metal in minutes. Kennie and I sped around the lot on a golf cart. Don't tell him I said so, but it was like a grandfather sharing his story with his grandson and I couldn't help but feel the great pride in his voice when he talked about what he has built and to be honest, he should be proud. Kennie lives the American Dream.

Kennie's relationship with Jobs of Hope is personal. He is a self-proclaimed alcoholic of 25 years and has no issues with saying, "Jesus saved me overnight" His story is captured in a book titled Recycled by Jesus. Kennie believes he was given a second chance and wants to share that same experience with the men at Jobs of Hope. "No Jesus, no hope. Jesus is what keeps me going"

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank Kennie and all our employers (who we hope to share their story as well) for sharing their gifts to those in need. May God Bless you always!



Participant Anthony standing with Kennie Andersen

Save The Date: Banquet

We would like to extend our most heartfelt thank you to Julie Yoder who has graciously volunteered to chair our upcoming Jobs of Hope Banquet. This year, the banquet will be taking place on Thursday September 9th. We look forward to seeing you there!



Board Recruitment

Jobs of Hope has openings on the board of directors! If you would like to fill one of these vacancies, please reach out to our executive director Ernest Cienfuegos-Baca. Our office phone number is 970-451-5007.



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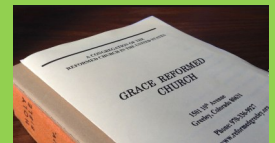
Staff

- Ernest Cienfuegos-Baca, Executive Director
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- Cisco Davila, "Men of Valor" Facilitator
- Casey Fogel, Communications/Social Media Specialist VISTA

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