

Hope Highlights

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



March 2022



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Alumni Spotlight: Sontu

Growing up, I moved around a lot with my mother and brothers and ended up spending time in three cities in Southern California. My father left when I was young because my mother was very difficult to live with. Unfortunately, there was a lot of physical and mental abuse when I was growing up. My mother abandoned me and my brothers a couple times in Mexico and even put me up for adoption numerous times but would always come back before it went through. She often abandoned me with strangers and left me in abandoned cars. Sadly, this forced me to become an adult at a really young age as I had to care for my brothers. Ultimately, my mother was arrested by the FBI for fraud, and I was sent to live with my grandparents.

I started drinking when I was seventeen. I felt that alcohol broadened my horizons and made me less socially inept. I also drank to mask the trauma I had experienced. Sadly, it also led to my first DUI when I was nineteen. I continued to struggle with drinking in my twenties and ultimately received a variety of charges including driving on a suspended license, vandalism, and petty theft. As a result of my DUIs, I was placed on probation, and I received my first felony when I was twenty-two. I pled guilty and was placed on probation. While on probation, I was arrested twice for possession of meth and went to prison for the first time in my life. I was incarcerated for two years, two months and two weeks. I was released in 2000 and just returned to my old ways. I received my third DUI, violating my parole and went back to prison. After years of my bad decisions, I served a little over eight years behind prison bars.

Following serving my last sentence, I got involved with Jobs of Hope. I was tired of the stop and go lifestyle, and I was tired of not feeling good. I knew I needed to change my life. I knew I needed some stability and to feel better about myself if I was going to turn my life around.

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Director's Corner

Lent is a wonderful time for believing, for welcoming God into our lives, a time to renew our faith, hope and charity. My mom used to describe it as a journey that leads us to Easter. She loved Easter and today, at the young age of 73, still enjoys decorating eggs and inviting as many children as possible to her home for an easter meal and egg hunt.

For many of the men in our program, it is a time to reflect on the path they are taking and to find the route that leads them to rediscover their relationships with themselves, their families and God. Lent is not just about the little sacrifices we make, but about discerning our hearts. It's an excellent time to turn off the television and separate from cell phones and dedicate ourselves to serving those in our community in most need.

One of my greatest joys in being a part of Jobs of Hope is our ongoing "commitment to serve in a nonjudgmental way and spread a message of hope and unity for all mankind. It's as simple as this: Jesus came into the world to save all, and that "all" includes not only you but also those others seen as less worthy of his saving grace. When the men of our program move from shame and guilt to promise and mercy, they find a profound sense of peace and hope for their futures. It is the most amazing and indescribable happiness you will ever know, and I am so honored and proud to share this journey with them.

In this edition of Hope Highlights, you will learn about Sontu and his journey of discovery after so many years of fear and trauma to a place of peace and knowledge that no matter his past, he can endure and be the person God had intended him to be.

May this Lenten and Easter season bring much hope and love to you and your family.

Ernest Cienfuegos-Baca



Executive Director



Prayer Points

- We pray for Sontu and his continued success as he continues his journey towards fulfilling his goals.
- We pray for the men of Jobs of Hope and for their success.
- We ask that you provide for our needs and help us prosper.

Father, thank you for all; for everything that is working in my life and even for the things that are not working as yet. Just want to say thank you Lord for all and in all, in the name of the Lord Jesus.
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)



Donate To JoH

Please consider supporting Jobs of Hope and its ministry so that we can continue helping people like Sontu.

You can donate by going to https://paybee.io/@jobs_of_hope@3 or by scanning the QR code in this newsletter.

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Alumni Spotlight Continued

I was living across the street from Jobs of Hope at a sober living house called the Oxford House. One of the residents recommended Jobs of Hope, so I reached out to Cassandra to get more information about the program. Ultimately, I got involved in the “Men of Valor” program, and it enhanced my life tremendously. I found that the curriculum brought to life in me the values that I hold near and dear but couldn’t focus on. I found that discussing the values once a week really stuck with me and allowed me to keep the values we discussed viable. Additionally, the one-on-one discussions I had with Cassandra were extremely valuable in the development of my plan and next steps.

Today I feel an overwhelming sense of accomplishment and balance in my life. I am so proud of what I have accomplished. I was able to receive my “Men of Valor” Leadership certificate and have also completed my education with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation which has allowed me to get into truck driving school where I am currently pursuing my CDL. Additionally, I have managed to secure gainful employment as a security guard while maintaining my sobriety. I am now able to pay all my bills on time and am rebuilding my credit. I also have rebuilt relationships with my family and have earned their respect. My goals for the future are to get a career as a truck driver. I also want to continue improving my health by going to the gym and eating healthy. Now that I am doing better, I hope to find someone that I can settle down with and maybe start a family.

If I could give someone who is struggling advice, I would tell them to get involved in groups and counseling, or a program like Jobs of Hope. I would tell them to do whatever it takes to get back on track with their mental faculty. Surround yourself with people who can support you and strive towards developing healthy relationships. Never give up. If there is something you want in your life, you are the only person that can make that happen. Put one foot in front of the other and strive towards bettering yourself.

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.

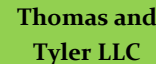
If you are interested in supporting Jobs of Hope by partnering with us, please feel free to reach out and we can arrange a time to discuss potential partnership opportunities.

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

- Anthony - Red Lobster
- Clint - Circle Graphics
- Daniel - Andersen's Sales & Salvage
- Frank - Loveland Products
- Ivan - Avila's Barbershop
- Jose - Hire Quest
- Tim - Ag tek
- Adrian - Contract work (various employers)
- Lupe - JBS
- Corey - Front Range Roofing



Community Partners



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Staff

- Ernest Cienfuegos-Baca, Executive Director
- Casandra Gallardo, Re-entry Case Manager/Navigator
- Cisco Davila, "Men of Valor" Facilitator
- Billy Morones, House of Hope House Manager
- Micaiah Schneider, House of Hope Resident Lead

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