



# One-Stop for Veterans & Military

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*By Bob McLaughlin, Executive Director*

This month, we enter a season of remembrance and honor. Our nation comes together to celebrate all those who heard the call to serve on Armed Forces Day, and to reflect upon the ultimate sacrifices made throughout history this Memorial Day.

With Spring in full swing and summer on the horizon, Mt. Carmel continues to support our military and veteran community by providing unparalleled programs and services through our expanded partnerships and reach. We have expanded our partner base with recent national alliances, which affords our clients even more impactful resources, support, and program opportunities.

Our new partners, Optum Healthcare and Colorado Computer Support will enhance our communication outreach capabilities by investing in new podcast equipment to extend the scope of our collective services, while Home Depot joins Mt. Carmel to offer materials toward upcoming facility renewal projects. Also, Raytheon, Feeding America, and Care & Share joined with us to spotlight food insecurities in the military community. This June, global partner Deloitte will partner with Mt. Carmel's food distribution program and provide staff development to Mt. Carmel as part of its National Give Back Day.

Not only has Mt. Carmel added impactful connections, but we also continue to grow our reach into Southern Colorado through vital ambassador relationships and partner expansion into our new Pueblo office. Over 20 community ambassadors have helped start our new Pueblo location. Embedded support services are now being provided at the Pueblo location by some of our current Colorado partners to include Valiant Staffing, Medicare Mentors, and Care and Share. This diverse group of tireless military advocates encompasses all service and industry spectrums from education, government, and small business to corporate leadership and veteran agencies.



Bob McLaughlin

These key ambassadors not only champion Mt. Carmel within the community, but they reciprocally bring the needs and resources of the public back to our organization. This symbiotic relationship continues to benefit and strengthen programs and resource opportunities for our military, veterans and their families.

There is a unique bond shared within the military community that spans generations and outlasts battles, wars, and duty stations. Mt. Carmel is committed to honoring the spirit of unity and loyalty, not only during this month of remembrance, but throughout the entire year.

We pledge to pursue meaningful partnerships and strengthen our presence to bolster programs and opportunities for our military communities and their families. We can't do it without our faithful partners, ambassadors, and volunteers. Thank you for your willingness to stand up for the countless individuals who fought for our freedom in the past and those who continue to put the nation's security ahead of their own.

*"Give thanks to those who defend democracy for they bear the gift of liberty and pay the price of freedom."—Unknown ■*

*Bob McLaughlin*





## TRANSITION & EMPLOYMENT:

**MARK SMITH**

Dir, Transition and Employment

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**JON DIX**

**ASHLEY HARDY**

**NICK WEREMBLEWSKI**

**SUNNY SHAFFER**

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Dir, MVFS

## CASE MANAGERS:

**ANDREA SINGLETON**

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**MIKE BAKER**

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Dir, Health & Wellness

**CHARISSA THAYER**

Gateway Coordinator

**ZACHARIAH GARNEY**

Behavioral Health Clinician

**RODGER JOHNSON**

Intake Specialist

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Client Services

## PUEBLO LOCATION:

**JUSTIN VERHULST**

Director

**SAL KATZ**

Community Outreach

**CHRISTA STONE**

Case Manager



# Partner Spotlight



**Partner Comcast is committed to keeping all Colorado communities connected through free internet and discounted mobile service through the nationwide Affordable Connectivity Program. Isolation and mental health challenges experienced by many Coloradans has propelled Comcast to focus on the digital equity within communities across the state.**

As part of an initiative to provide mental health support for military members and their families, Mt. Carmel joined with Comcast to create a Comcast Lift Zone to virtually host couples, families and individuals as they participate in traditional therapy, support groups, retreats, and alternative therapy sessions. This Lift Zone also provides free high-speed WiFi connectivity for military members and their families at the Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Campuses.

As we strive to bridge the digital equity gap, Comcast is participating in the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and recently introduced two new ACP-focused cost-saving opportunities to provide military-connected users with new choices. First, the enhanced Internet Essentials Plus program provides faster home broadband service which is fully covered by the ACP credit and has twice the download speed of the original Internet Essentials service. Second, Comcast's top-rated Xfinity Mobile service is now available to users participating in the Affordable Connectivity Program, giving them the ability to save even more money on their connectivity needs both at home and on-the-go. Visit [xfinity.com/acp](https://xfinity.com/acp) to learn more about these cost-saving opportunities.

Our ongoing partnership with Comcast displays our joint efforts to ensure digital equity throughout the military and veteran community. ■



# Volunteer Spotlight

## Jaliscea Grantham

In conjunction with National Volunteer Appreciation week, Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Event on April 20, 2022. Three individuals were recognized for selflessly giving their time and energy to Mt. Carmel. Michael Maasjo and Elisabeth Maasjo both received a certificate of appreciation, and Jaliscea Grantham received the Volunteer of the Year award to recognize her gift of 600+ volunteer hours. ■



Jaliscea Grantham (middle)

## Save the Dates

**7/12 – COUNTRY CONCERT**  
TBD, Colorado Springs

**8/24 – CHARITY  
GOLF TOURNAMENT**  
Sanctuary Golf Course, Sedalia

**9/2 – PATRIOT DAY**  
Mt. Carmel's day of giving  
for the military community

**9/3 – MISSION TO ZERO**  
Annual motorcycle ride fundraiser  
to support Suicide Prevention

**11/4 – HOEDOWN  
FOR HEROES**  
Boot Barn Hall



**More details to follow. Please contact  
Melodie Owens with questions –  
[mowens@mtcarmelcenter.org](mailto:mowens@mtcarmelcenter.org)**

## Department Updates



### Transition and Employment

Our new fiscal year has begun and we have hit the ground running! Transition and Employment conducted its first hiring event on April 12th. We had partner employers and 75 clients visit, and at least seven clients were interviewed on the spot and four job offers were extended. **Our next hiring event/job fair is scheduled for July 12th.** We also conducted Prep Connect 360 in May and this latest class brings our cumulative graduates to 881. Also in May was the first LinkedIn workshop for the fiscal year, having 17 students participate. Our outreach efforts continue as we have been steadily briefing Fort Carson, Schriever SFB, Peterson SFB, and the Air Force Academy. As the new fiscal year continues, we reflect on milestones that have been achieved and that we continue to accomplish every day! We are also in the process of expanding our outreach for Transition and Employment Services to Trinidad and Pueblo. ■





## Health and Wellness

**We are excited to announce that Rodger Johnson was chosen to hold the role of Veteran Suicide Prevention Program Manager for Mt. Carmel, as part of the Senate Bill 128 Grant.** We are excited to see Rodger, a previous intern, now a licensure candidate, advance into a permanent position!

We have been working hard to grow our spiritual and physical wellness program offerings. We are excited to welcome Don Spano as a spiritual counselor. Also, we have been expanding our referral partnerships to increase access for our clients. Lots of great progress!

Our Behavioral Health Team hosted two recent trainings- Internal Family Systems and Emotion-Focused Individual Therapy. We look forward to our future trainings as we all further expand our skills.

Kirsten Belaire, department director, was recently invited by Fort Carson's SHARP team to provide a presentation on "Trauma and the Brain" over three days to more than 200 Brigade DFAC soldiers.

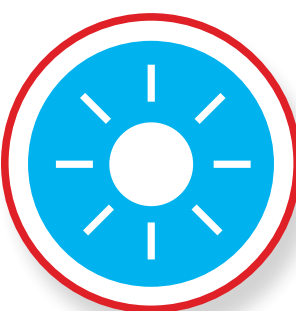
Our Gateway program is also greatly impacting our community as we are increasing our capabilities to provide more opportunities for more clients to get connected with behavioral health care. ■



## Military, Veteran, and Family Services

These last two months have been busy in Military, Veteran, and Family Services! We have focused on our Operation Step-Up Program and will be looking to add a Housing Coordinator position to the team as the program grows. We have also worked on partner relations by meeting individually with Silver Key, the Independence Center, Salvation Army, TBI Freedom, and the military team with Child Youth and Family Services. We also recently held our partner meeting and with

very positive survey results, we have decided to hold partner meetings bi-monthly. **We kicked off our Center on Fathering course in conjunction with DHS and trained our staff on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.** The team will be changing structurally again looking ahead as we have a new director, Shannon Olin, starting in May as well as a new case manager, Christa Stone, starting in Pueblo. ■



## Pueblo Office Updates

**The Pueblo office kicked off its new fiscal year with the inaugural Pueblo Ambassador Social on April 6, 2022.** The Ambassadors were welcomed by Jay Cimino, Bob McLaughlin, and various staff members to include Justin Verhulst, our new Pueblo Operations Manager. Justin is an Army combat veteran with a background in communications and marketing and is extremely passionate about serving the veteran community in Pueblo, connecting veterans with help and resources. We also brought on a new Community Coordinator. Sal Katz, Jr. is a retired Army Command Sergeant Major with over 30 years of military experience. Joining the staff this month is Christa Stone, a case manager who will work with our Pueblo clients. The Pueblo team

is working diligently with partners in the community to conduct outreach and events to support military, veterans, and their families. An example of these services are our food distributions where we partner with Care & Share Food Bank and their Mobile Market on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month. We also hosted the first annual Mt. Carmel Pueblo Charity Golf Tournament on May 20th at Walking Stick Golf Course. In August, we will hold a Veterans Resource Fair in partnership with Medicare Mentors and Pueblo Community College. In the Fall, we also plan to host the Pueblo Gala to further engage the local community. The future is bright for Pueblo, and the Mt. Carmel Veteran Service Center is proud to be part of that. ■