



# One-Stop for Veterans & Military

November 2021 | Issue #34

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*By Bob McLaughlin, Executive Director*

**M**t. Carmel holds the month of November close to our hearts as we celebrate Veterans Appreciation Month. This is a time for Mt. Carmel to honor the amazing men and women who love and protect our country. I am proud to lead Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center, which supports our incredible military community through connection to Behavioral Health and Wellness services, Transition and Employment resources, and offers a critical hand-up through our Veteran and Family Resources department. **This month, we celebrated Mt. Carmel's 3000th job placement through our Transition & Employment program!** We knew this milestone was close, but having it officially take place during the month of November made it even more memorable. Now thousands of clients have gained one-on-one assistance from a peer navigator who helped determine career goals, develop resumes, practice interview techniques, and identify and network for jobs. Because of your support, veterans and their family members are living their career dreams.

Veterans Day, previously named "Armistice Day," was proclaimed a national holiday in 1926, as a day to commemorate all veterans. It first occurred in 1919, on the first anniversary of the end of World War I. At Mt. Carmel, we are lucky to give tribute to our veterans not only in November, but every day.



Bob McLaughlin

November is also a month to practice gratitude as we celebrate Thanksgiving. This month we are especially grateful for our partnership with Safeway for our fifth annual Operation Turkey for Troops and Thanksgiving Meal Distribution. This year we were able to provide the blessing of a Thanksgiving meal to over 1,200 local military and veteran families. We also had a fantastic night at our 3rd Annual Hoedown for Heroes fundraiser. We are grateful for your patriotism and support as this was certainly a night to remember. If you did not get the chance to join us, we celebrated with a western BBQ dinner, live country and western music, dancing, and a silent auction. Thank you to everyone who attended, donated, and supported us on November 5th!

This month and always, we honor the men and women who serve our country and give thanks for their service. Your support allows us to continue to serve our military community, and for that, we are most grateful. ■

*Bob McLaughlin*





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Dir, Transition and Employment

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JON DIX

ASHLEY HARDY

NICK WEREMBLEWSKI

#### VET & FAMILY RESOURCES: KATIE TRAVIS

Dir, Vet & Family Resources

LIZ FOSTER

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## Partner Spotlight Citizen Soldier Connection



Founded in 2006 when deployments were high and support networks for stateside families limited, Citizen Soldier Connection was created to help families on the home front. Today, their mission has evolved to connect military service members and their families with programs and citizens offering friendship, support and resources.

Initiating a partnership with Mt. Carmel was a natural progression for the fellow nonprofit that generates financial donations and collaborates with Mt. Carmel to implement funding to vetted veteran clients who are ineligible or experience barriers to accessing resources. Through the Veteran Connection partnership, Mt. Carmel has helped more than 50 clients with common necessities such as rent and utilities, to more unique needs like home renovations for accessibility, retrieving a homeless client's vehicle from impound,

and repairing a donated vehicle we then provided to a veteran with the support of Ronnie's Automotive.

Without the Veteran Connection program, and partnership with Citizen Soldier Connection, veterans would have fallen through the cracks. One of the veterans helped said, **"I've spent my life helping veterans and giving back. When COVID hit, I found myself in a bind and became the veteran in need, but there was no help for me; I didn't qualify. Mt. Carmel helped me pay the vet bills for my service dog. I thought I was going to lose him."**

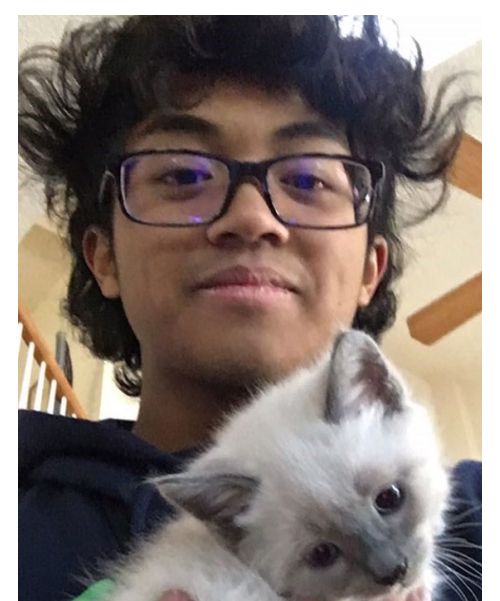
This partnership displays the joint determination to ensure that no service member, veteran or family member is left behind. If you would like to support Citizen Soldier Connection visit [CitizenSoldierConnection.org](http://CitizenSoldierConnection.org). ■

## Volunteer Spotlight Dylan Castro

Dylan has volunteered for the last year with the Development and Events team. He attends Colorado Early Colleges in Colorado Springs, and wants to be an engineer or an IT technician. Dylan has said, **"Volunteering helps one learn and experience many opportunities."** He has been instrumental in producing spreadsheets and tracking and organizing files and data. Dylan has assisted with our

food distribution days for the community and set up the process to

track hours for our volunteers. Dylan has a positive outlook on life and treats everyone as if they are his family. He has a brilliant mind, kind heart, and wants to serve. We know he will go far in life and we are so grateful for his efforts. ■

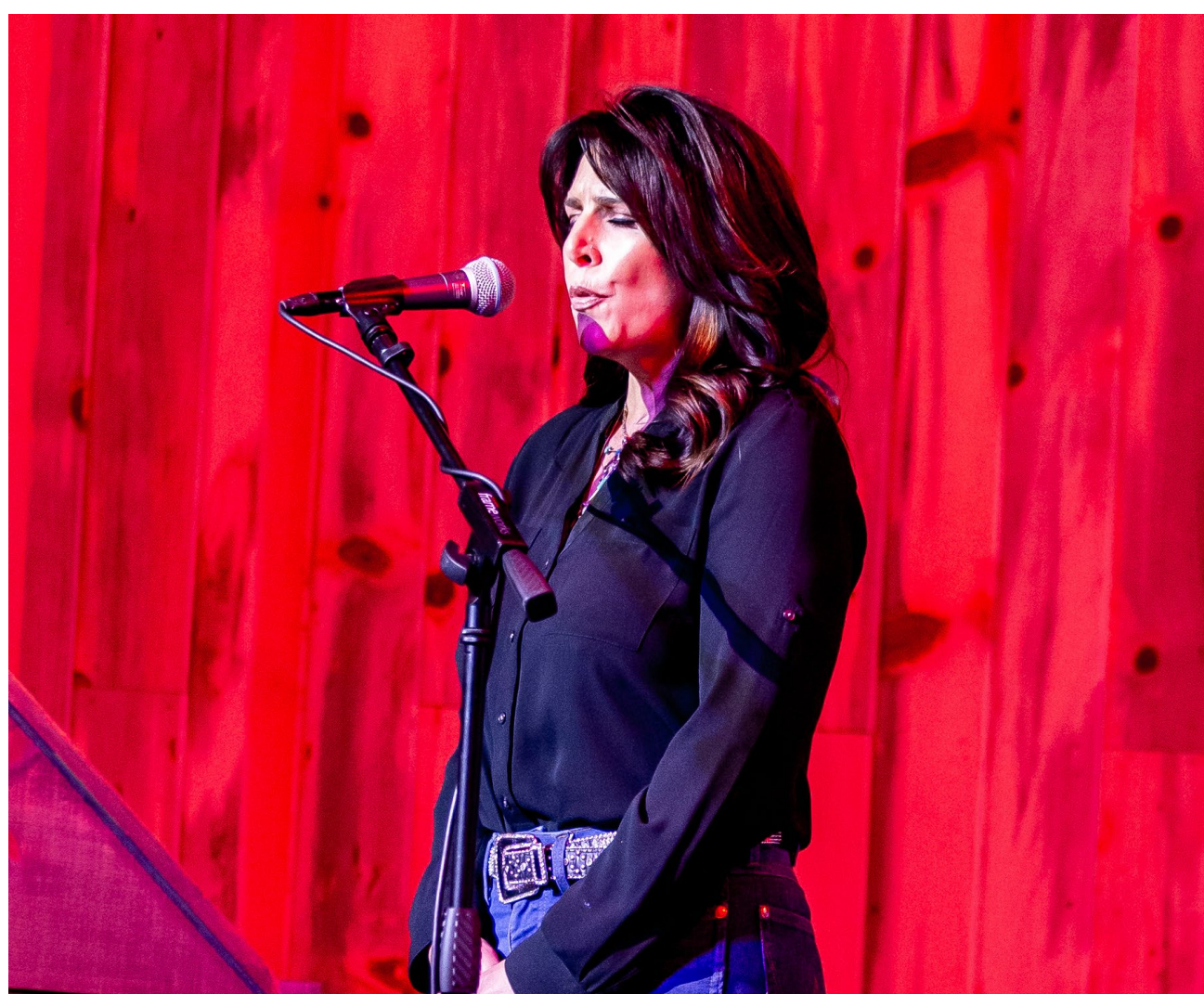


Dylan Castro



# HOEDOWN FOR HEROES

November 5, 2021





# DEPARTMENT UPDATES



## Transition and Employment

The Transition and Employment team has some amazing news to share! Our team has achieved our milestone of 3,000 job placements! **Clarissa Johnson-Troutman, a military spouse, filled the 3000th job.** Clarissa was hired with our partner Spectrum. Reaching 3,000 placements was not an easy feat, especially after a global pandemic, but teamwork and partnerships made it happen. We know that

veterans bring incredible value to the workforce and achieving this milestone reinforces the important place veterans hold in our local community. We would like to thank everyone who has supported the Transition and Employment team at Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center over the years. Thank you. Together we have accomplished the mission! ■



## Behavioral Health and Wellness

As we begin the holiday season, our Behavioral Health Program continues its efforts to prevent veteran suicide. **Out of 999 Mt. Carmel intakes, 77 clients indicated suicide ideation.** Our team took care to address each person and offer support as needed. Members of our Behavioral Health team attended the VA Mental Health Summit as well as the VA Learning Collaborative and Postvention training. We hosted our annual Fish Breck

Retreat with four couples in attendance. Measurements indicated that the retreat was a success in increasing the connection and communication between partners. We also added two PsyD interns from Denver University who have begun their externship this month. Finally, Mt. Carmel has partnered with UC Health to collaboratively submit an RFP for the Colorado Senate Bill 129 Veteran Suicide Prevention Pilot Program. ■



## Veteran and Family Resources

The holiday season has arrived. Are you ready for the hustle and bustle of the most magical time of year? Do you have mixed emotions? This season is fun and exciting, but can also be more than a little stressful. With that in mind, Mt Carmel's financial coach, Liz Foster, in partnership with Monica Griffith of Guiding Light Coaching, hosted a workshop designed to help relieve the stress of the holidays and create a more enjoyable holiday season. 'Jolly Up Your Holidays' was a fun and interactive workshop designed to help attendees

create an extraordinary holiday season. Monica and Liz shared information on how to approach the holidays with ease, create meaningful holiday memories, achieve holiday financial freedom, and reach the "Space of Gratitude." The VFR team was also involved with Thanksgiving Meal Distribution on the Mt. Carmel campus and at the Fountain Mesa Safeway. **This event certainly warmed our hearts as we distributed over 900 turkeys to military members and 300 Safeway gift cards to veterans.** ■