



One-Stop for Veterans & Military

September 2022 | Issue #39

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By Bob McLaughlin, Executive Director

On September 11, 2001, I was stationed at Fort Hood Texas with the 1st Cavalry Division. When the second tower was hit, I remember thinking, “we are going to war with terrorists.” Three years later I found myself doing just that. I was stationed in Iraq with my childhood friend and hero, Marine Major John Ruocco. We were two proud patriots from Lexington, Massachusetts, serving and protecting our country.



This photo was taken in October 2004 right after the Red Sox won the World Series. John and I were together at Al Asad Air Force Base in the Al Anbar province prior to the battle of Fallujah. At the time I was serving as the 2nd Marine Division Fire Support Officer. John and I were both proud of our service and honored to be serving in Iraq together. On the night this picture was taken, John and I reflected together on the events of 9/11 and spoke about how those events changed our lives. Four months later I remained in Iraq, but John had returned home. I received word that he had died by suicide. John’s suicide was a direct result of his combat experience flying close air support as a combat pilot.

I am driven today to honor John’s memory by doing everything I can to prevent veteran suicide. This September is the 20th anniversary of 9/11 and is also National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Tragedy can strike at any time and takes on many forms – with no tragedy lesser than another.



Bob McLaughlin

Next Chapter is the promise of a fresh start – a community coming together to uplift and serve those who have served for us, working together to begin again. Next Chapter is a combination of resources and people to help military personnel and veterans start the next chapter of their lives. To transition into a space where they understand how to deal with past tragedies and move forward confidently.

I’m proud of Mt. Carmel’s involvement in this partnership that will last for years and hopefully reach people like my friend John. Next Chapter is set to support our military neighbors create new goals and dreams for the next phase of their life that honors where they’ve been and who they are and help them see who they still want to become. ■

Bob McLaughlin

"When Americans lend a hand to one another, nothing is impossible. We're not about what happened on 9/11, and we're about what happened on 9/12."

— Jeff Parness, founder of New York Says Thank You

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The poster features a dark, textured background with a close-up of the American flag's stars and stripes on the left side. The text is primarily in white and red. At the top, it says '7TH ANNUAL' in white, followed by 'PATRIOT DAY' in large, bold, white letters. Below this, a red banner with white text reads 'GIVE BACK'. Underneath the banner, in a white script font, is the phrase 'For military, veterans, and their families.' Below that, in white bold letters, is 'NORRIS PENROSE UPPER LOT OFF MORENO'. To the left of the event details, the word 'FREE' is written vertically in large, bold, white letters. To its right, in white bold letters, are the items provided: 'DRIVE-THRU NON-PERISHABLE FOOD', 'FRESH FOOD', 'HYGIENE ITEMS', and '& MORE!'. On the far right, in white bold letters, is 'PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED'. Below this, in white, is the text: 'To assist with traffic control, you will be required to sign up for a time slot and you may NOT arrive earlier than your registered time.' Below that, in white bold letters, is 'Register at eventbrite.com'. At the bottom, in large white bold letters, is 'FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 2'. To its right, in white bold letters, is '9 a.m.–12 p.m.'. Below this, in white bold letters, is 'Military, veterans, and their families.' and below that, in white, is 'Open to the community after 12 p.m.'

Partner Spotlight

The **Patriot Day Give Back Event** held in September was once again kicked off by partner Honor Bell Foundation, a Denver-area nonprofit founded in 2014 with a primary mission to honor Colorado veterans as they are laid to rest. Honor Bell Guard volunteers regularly toll the 1,000-pound bronze bell seven times at Ft. Logan National Cemetery and Pikes Peak National Cemetery providing veterans with a proper and dignified final sendoff while providing their families and loved ones with a lasting sense of pride and patriotism.

The Honor Bell Foundation serves the general public through outreach and engagement at public events, such as Patriot Day, and school activities, meant to give students a sense of history.

One of the most important parts of their mission is acting as a Bell Guard, which gives them the opportunity to serve again. A majority of the Bell Guard veterans are of the Vietnam era, which allows the Honor Bell Foundation to enrich the lives of the Colorado senior veteran community. The Bell Guard also serves combat veterans who endure PTSD; working with and being around other veterans on the Bell Guard is an organic therapy group.

In 2021, Honor Bell Foundation was able to honor 1,089 veterans and log 4,449 volunteer hours and attend more than two dozen events and presentations. We are honored to partner with Honor Bell Foundation at our annual Patriot Day Give Back Event and join them as we remember the sacrifice and service of our fellow veterans. If you'd like more information, please visit www.honorbell.org. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hoedown for Heroes

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center is hosting Hoedown for Heroes, a western-themed charitable event on Friday, November 4, 2022 at the Boot Barn Hall in Colorado Springs.

Mt. Carmel's flagship event will feature cocktails, Bourbon Brother's BBQ dinner, live & silent auctions and LIVE music with the Sandy Wells Band! KOAA's Dianne Derby and Ron Quirk will serve as Emcees. You won't want to miss meeting our Keynote Speaker Kim "KC" Campbell, a bestselling author, leader and fighter pilot.

RESERVE YOUR TABLE SPONSORSHIP EARLY!

The silent auction will be available to all online October 30, 2022. More surprises coming, so stay tuned! ■

Events Wrap Up

Thank you! Mt. Carmel extends our deepest appreciation to more than 120 golfers and 39 sponsors for our 18-hole scramble! The Sanctuary Golf Course hosted our 6th Annual Mt. Carmel Charity Golf Tournament presented by RE/MAX on August 24, 2022. Mt.

Turkeys for Troops

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center is excited to be hosting our annual Turkeys for Troops drive on November 17, 2022. Mt. Carmel has partnered with Safeway to provide turkeys for our military service members in need. Last year we were able to provide over 1,500 turkeys and meals to our military and veterans. This year brings additional challenges and a greater need among families in our community. We appreciate your support, as 100% of donations will be used to provide turkeys for a Thanksgiving meal for our heroes and their families!

Please join us in helping local military and veteran families enjoy the blessings of Thanksgiving. Operation Turkeys For Troops is an annual Mt. Carmel event where we have a chance to say Thank you! ■

Carmel's direct assistance to veterans, military and their families was supported and celebrated at this annual fundraiser. We also extend a special thank you to our title sponsor Dominos, Stacy and Craig Williams, and Sally and Mark Tanner. ■

DEPARTMENT UPDATES



Transition and Employment

Transition and Employment has bid a heartfelt farewell and good luck to our former Military Spouse Job Coach Ashley Hardy. She and the family have made a move to the Republic of Korea in support of her husband's service. We now welcome Maisy Kunytsky as the new Military Spouse Job Coach. Maisy is a U.S. Army veteran originally from California. She worked in Human Intelligence for five years and took on family advocacy during her time in the service. She has experience working with Casualty Response Teams, Family Readiness Groups, and Public Affairs. Maisy is a military spouse of five years who deeply understands the challenges and obstacles of the military lifestyle. Her passion is to support military families and help them

reach their transition and employment goals. Maisy has a Bachelor's in Public Relations. While overseas, she earned her Master's of Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma. When Maisy is not working, she spends time with her husband and two beautiful girls traveling, going to museums, and spending time as a family. Welcome, Maisy!

Also, Transition and Employment bids farewell to Veterans Integration Program member Sunny Shaffer as she is taking over as Program Manager of Hiring our Heroes! And, we welcome Justin Verhulst from Mt. Carmel Pueblo to the Transition and Employment team! ■



Health and Wellness

Mt. Carmel hosted two S.A.V.E. trainings to help empower the Health and Wellness team and community to respond effectively to individuals experiencing suicide ideation. In addition, we connected up to 100 new registrants to Operation Veteran Strong, an online support tool for our veterans and their families. We thank Colorado National Collaborative for the funding and support.

Our team and behavioral health partners have been working hard to reduce suicide in our community by increasing access to services, joining community collaboratives/initiatives, and sharing our story with local media outlets.

We are passionate about supporting all of our military community to increase their experience of a fulfilled and meaningful life.

We were excited to have Dustin Halliwell, LCSW, join our team as a full-time employee! His main role is as a clinician and intern supervisor. We also onboarded two new behavioral health interns.

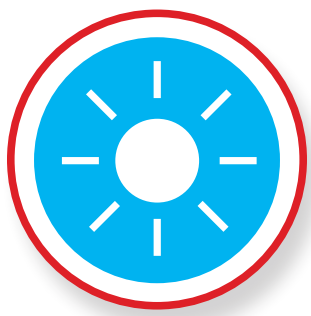
Our new Chemical Addictions group will meet on Mondays from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. We completed a round of anonymous satisfaction surveys for our clients and have an overall 95% satisfaction rating. ■



Military, Veteran, and Family Services

Military, Veteran, and Family Services has said farewell to previous case managers Mike Baker and Andrea Singleton. MVFS has officially welcomed Glen Cooper, and a previous intern, now full-time case manager Amber Hansen to the team. MVFS has welcomed two new interns as well, Nikki Gibson and Madi Pellow. Glen and Nikki started outreach to the Colorado Justice Center as of Thursday, Sept 8. The CJC staff are excited about this partnership and have been fantastic at supporting the mission and vision of Mt. Carmel for our shared population! The Center on Fathering and Cooking

Matters have requested to renew classes on-site and will be starting in October. Financial Peace University has kicked off and is holding steady attendance. Jonathan, Financial Coach, has seen an increase in requests for his services from other agencies, demonstrating a continued and great need for this service. Pueblo was able to connect with Target and they have developed a partnership that allows the Pueblo team to “shop/receive” products from Target for free, helping to fill their pantry. ■



Pueblo Office Updates

The Pueblo office continues to provide best practices in serving the over 14,000 local military, veterans and their families through accessible programs, integrated resources, and collaborative partnerships that empower lives and strengthen our community. The next Ambassador Social will be held October 26th at the Legacy Bank Community Room provided by Pueblo Community College. We also welcome a new Operations Manager / Community Coordinator, Sal Katz, Jr., who is a retired Army Command Sergeant Major with over 32 years of military experience. The Pueblo team is rapidly growing and working diligently with partners in the community to conduct outreach and events to support military, veterans, and their families.

We continue to collaborate and partner with Care & Share and their mobile market the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month. We held a Medicare Mentors Veterans Resource Fair in partnership with Medicare Mentors and Pueblo Community College. We attended the Governor’s BBQ and became members of the Pueblo West Chamber

of Commerce. We received a briefing from Veterans Healing Veterans and hope to partner with them in support of justice involved veterans. We will be working a booth at the Pueblo Chile Festival September 23-25 providing information about Mt. Carmel Veteran Services in Pueblo; supporting the Pueblo Veterans Stand Down supporting Homeless Veterans on September 30th; attending the Pueblo Latinos Chamber “Profiles in Courage” awards Ceremony October 1st, honoring five Puebloan Veterans, and as always attending the Pueblo & Pueblo West Chamber meetings every other Monday evening.

Lastly, we partnered with the Target distribution center donation office to help support military, veterans, and their families with additional healthy food choices, clothes and items of need; plus we are actively planning the Inaugural Salute to Heroes Reception at Pueblo Community College rescheduled for January 19th, 2023; the future continues to be bright for Pueblo and Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center is proud to be part of that effort. ■



The Veterans Voice Project

With special thanks to Gina Cimino, Dane Scott and Mt. Carmel leadership, the Veterans Voice “Optum Podcast Studio” is now nested in with our gracious host, Windstar Studios. We have received universally positive feedback with regard to how comfortable the setting is, how well it presents and its efficient and professional functionality. That move has been an important addition, greatly easing our expansion of the program to a weekly half hour and the additional special features in the form of new categories of coverage and short form interviews posted exclusively as podcasts. The next step in our growth is our expansion to a full hour each week beginning in November.

We’re able to attend events - or promote them in advance - capturing, processing and posting audio in near real-time. We are now also able to take on privately-sponsored and commissioned work with relative ease. The first of those projects launches in October. Proceeds from all such endeavors go directly to fund Mt. Carmel programs.

As we wind up Q3 and head in to Q4, we begin the process of sponsorship renewals and enter into discussions with prospective new partners and sponsors. As our listenership grows, we’re able to add new, impactful content each week beyond the regular broadcast/podcast, we’re increasing the value of our offerings and we can adjust our sponsorship asks accordingly. On the mission support side, we’re able to reach many more members of the community, thereby helping to lead more people to Mt. Carmel and contribute to general awareness.

Finally, September 2022 marks the beginning of our 5th year of production. Our mission is to inspire more clients and partners to come through our doors. We offer our humble thanks and sincere appreciation for all who have contributed and supported on the technical side; provided space and furniture; assisted with providing content, guest ideas, podcast distribution and so much more. We look forward with eager anticipation to Q4, 2023, and beyond. ■



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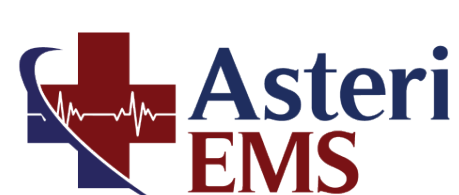
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