



# A Beacon of Support

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*By Bob McLaughlin, Executive Director*

Now that the gifts have been opened and new holiday memories have been made, it is time for reflection on all that we accomplished and what we look forward to in the coming year. As I look back on 2022, I am proud to say that Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center has made a difference in the lives of our Veteran and military community members and their families. Opening a center in Trinidad and Pueblo, we have expanded our reach in the community and helped even more Military, Veterans, and their families. We have partnered with UCHealth to champion a new program – NEXT CHAPTER, focused on Veteran suicide prevention and mental wellness.

We continue to partner with you, essential programs, and organizations in the community to help our veteran community members and their families. Through Mt. Carmel, we offer help with the basics like rent and food, and we provide services to help them obtain employment and improve their mental and physical health. We celebrated their victories with them and stood beside them when times were hard.

As I reflect on this year and the six before it that I have served at Mt. Carmel, I feel a sense of resolve. While many make resolutions at this time to make their lives better, I am further cemented in my determination to continue the work Mt. Carmel does in making others' lives better. It is a resolution I have had since the beginning of my service here.



Bob McLaughlin

We have only been able to keep this resolution year after year because of your support. With a growing number of veterans, military, and their families that need help in our community, we need your support more than ever. We look forward to continuing our support of the American Heroes who sacrificed so much for us. I want to ensure that Mt. Carmel continues the work to support, uplift, and celebrate with our veteran and military community members and their families.

Can we count on you to resolve this year to help others – to help Mt. Carmel support veterans in our community? ■

*Bob McLaughlin*



#### TRANSITION & EMPLOYMENT:

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Dir, Transition and Employment

#### PEER NAVIGATORS:

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**JON DIX**  
**NICK WEREMBLEWSKI**  
**JUSTIN VERHULST**

#### MILITARY, VETERAN, & FAMILY SERVICES:

**SHANNON OLIN**  
Dir, MVFS

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Client Care Coordinator  
**ALICE MILES**  
**GLEN COOPER**  
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Operations Manager  
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**MIRANDA BEDBURDICK**  
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Ops. Mgr. & Community Outreach  
**NEISHA WRIGHT**  
Client Services  
**JOSHUA WILLS**  
Peer Navigator  
**TAMIECA TRUJILLO**  
Case Manager

#### TRINIDAD:

**EARL SCHMIDT**  
Case Manager



Ronnie (far right) with Kelly and Riley.

## Partner Spotlight



Army Veteran Ronnie Hatheway of Ronnie's Automotive made the 2022 holiday brighter for many families thanks to his commitment to fellow veterans. "Helping fellow veterans regain reliable transportation and watching them leave with relief and a smile is what we love to create," Ronnie said.

Ronnie's Automotive has been a valued partner since 2017. Clients reach out to Mt. Carmel with a variety of vehicle needs ranging from simple quick fixes to larger, more expensive repairs. Ronnie and his team have frequently provided free labor and parts, often going above and beyond. Ronnie has donated more than 50 cars to veterans

through various non-profit organizations over the last seven years!" Ronnie is a Godsend for the Military, Veteran, and Family Services Team and the clients we serve," says Shannon Olin, MVFS Director. "He is honest, fair, and highly committed to helping the military and veteran community."

Ronnie's Automotive displays the power of partnerships, as his specialized service gives fellow veterans a hand up. If you or your organization would like to offer your specialized service to positively impact veterans with Mt. Carmel, please call (719) 772-7000. ■



**DID YOU KNOW?** FOR EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED IN HELPING VETERANS, MT. CARMEL **DOUBLES ITS VALUE** IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

# Department Updates



## Transition and Employment

Happy New Year from the entire Transition and Employment Team! It's a new year and the same great work continues.

**The new Milspouse job coach Blair Erato is on board and fitting in nicely.** For 2023, we will continue both the LinkedIn 101 class for veterans and the Civilian and Federal Resume Workshops. Hiring events for partners will be held quarterly, and the first event was held January 25.

We continue to reach out and brief all installations and follow up with new and current partners and clients. We will also continue to assist other departments to provide wrap-around services and events. Transition and Employment always strives to make each year better than the last, and this one will be no different! 2023 is shaping up to be amazing! ■



## Health and Wellness

**We are excited to add new interns to the team in January, and as we do so, we continue to be a top internship site for all of our educational partners. Our team is working to increase behavioral health programming in Pueblo. We are also focused on increasing access to physical and spiritual wellness opportunities for our clients.** Arts in Society provided Mt. Carmel Health and Wellness with a grant to increase community access to art expressions and art experiences. This gracious grant helped Mt. Carmel host the Veteran Art Exhibit on November 11, 2022, at The Warehouse. Opening night

was powerful as we witnessed the artists and community members connect over the amazing art pieces. Mt. Carmel Behavioral Health and the Next Chapter Teams met with representatives of the Veteran Administration and TriWest (also known as Community Care Network) to discuss stronger partnership opportunities to ensure all veterans receive the support they need. Next Chapter had over 190 enrollments by the end of December and the Next Chapter Team, which includes members from Mt. Carmel, is working hard to fulfill the requirements of the State's veteran suicide prevention goals. ■



## Military, Veteran, and Family Services

Military, Veteran, and Family Services (MVFS) has had another successful holiday season. **MVFS, with the support of the Mt. Carmel Team and community members, provided gifts to 15 children of veterans and active duty members. MVFS partnered with Mesa Ridge Safeway to provide gift cards for holiday meals for veterans.**

Moving into January, we will be onboarding new interns. We are very excited for the new faces, new perspectives, and additional support to meet client needs!

We are continuing to provide support at Springs Rescue Mission, Salvation Army in Fountain, and the El Paso Criminal Justice Center. We continue to evaluate, renovate, and expand our services and partnerships to better address the needs of justice-involved veterans.

As we transition into 2023, MVFS will continue to evaluate how to best meet the needs of our community and support continued growth by developing and fostering new partnerships. ■

## Pueblo

The Pueblo office continues to work toward our goals of supporting veterans in Southern Colorado. Our Military, Veteran, and Family Services (MVFS) Department has been busy building partnerships to support the community with assistance navigating resources and creating financial wellness. We offer these services throughout Southern Colorado at no cost to our clients.

The Pueblo Team is working diligently with partners and community agencies to conduct outreach efforts and events. ACI, Medicare Mentors, and the Colorado State Veterans Service Office actively

work to support veterans and their families in our office. We have partnered with CSU Pueblo for the Pueblo Veterans Voice and placed advertisements in The Pueblo Star Journal and The Livability Magazine.

**Our inaugural Salute to Heroes took place on Thursday, January 19, 2023, at Pueblo Community College. This free event featured many guest speakers from the Pueblo community, including Drew Dix. ■**

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## Trinidad

The Trinidad Team is assisting veterans and their families in Southern Colorado with a focus on Las Animas County and Trinidad. The team has been working collaboratively with Las Animas County Veteran Service Officer, Ray Odum. Recently, we partnered with the Fort Wootton Stand Down event and engaged the community with an educational seminar on PACT Act benefits.

**The Trinidad Team has begun assisting the Southern Central Council of Governments with their monthly food distribution and are working on a way to track and report attendance to address the growing need in the community.**

The Trinidad Team has developed relationships with many local veteran organizations. Local organizations include the Trinidad Post 11 American Legion and its VTF Grant Program, the Las Animas County Veterans' Council and their VA Eyeglasses Program, and the Las Animas County Veterans Memorial Council. The team also initiated a Veterans' Cup of Joe Peer-to-Peer Program.

We're also proud to announce that we've joined the Trinidad and Las Animas Chamber of Commerce so we can stay better attuned with local events and employer hiring initiatives. ■

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## The Veterans Voice Project

The Veterans Voice Project Team is working hard to make a more significant impact. **In addition to streaming on "Wreaths Across America" Radio, the VA's Veterans Experience Office has recognized the program as one of the nation's top 10 veteran-themed podcasts.** Veterans Voice now airs weekly in Pueblo, hosted by Army Veteran Cassime Joseph on CSU Pueblo's KTSC 89.5 FM.

Utilizing Veterans Voice studio and production services, Mike Lewis and Lindsey Caroon are co-hosting UC Health's Next Chapter Podcast. We've recorded two installments and will announce publication soon.

In the new year, with our baseline budget and fundraising goals established and Ted Robertson moving to full-time, we plan to develop new funding streams and attendant partnerships.

As always, we deeply appreciate this opportunity to support Mt. Carmel's mission and the encouragement we receive along the way. ■

