



A Beacon of Support

June - July 2026 | Issue #60

IN MEMORY OF
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CHRISTIAN KEYS
PAUL COOKE 3RD

By Bob McLaughlin, Executive Director

In recent weeks, Southern Colorado has experienced devastating wildfires that have displaced residents, disrupted local economies, and strained public resources. These events tested the resilience of entire communities and underscored the importance of having reliable, mission-driven support systems in place. In alignment with our commitment that no veteran falls through the cracks, our teams in both Pueblo and Colorado Springs moved quickly to activate support systems, coordinate with partner agencies, and ensure that military members, veterans, and their families, had timely access to the assistance they need.

Our Military, Veteran, and Family Services department answered the call through direct outreach, resource navigation, and coordination with local and regional service providers. Team members worked to connect individuals with emergency assistance, behavioral health resources, and benefits support, while also helping veterans and families navigate rapidly changing circumstances. This response reflects the strength of our service model, which is designed to maximize the reach and effectiveness of available support. Our Southern Colorado office also stood at the ready to connect individuals with additional resources and partners, helping to close gaps and reduce barriers for those in need.

While the wildfires were a specific and urgent moment, they are part of a broader reality for many veterans and families who face periods of instability, transition, or crisis. Our work is built on the understanding that support must be both immediate and sustained — centered on coordinated care rather than isolated interventions. By leveraging partnerships and maintaining strong lines of communication with public agencies, other nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders, we are able to respond to short-term emergencies while keeping sight of long-term support.

As we look ahead to the upcoming Patriot Day Giveback, we are reminded of the powerful impact that opening our doors can have on the lives of veterans and their families.



Bob McLaughlin

This event is an opportunity to bring services, partners, and community members together in one place, creating accessible pathways to support and connection.

The Patriot Day Giveback also reflects the strength of our partnerships across Southern Colorado, as community members, businesses, and agencies come together around a shared commitment to serve those who have served.

Through this event, we will continue to showcase what coordinated community support looks like in action — from access to resources and service navigation to opportunities for engagement and recognition. It is one more way we turn the lessons learned during times of crisis into proactive, meaningful support for the veteran community.

Thank you for standing with us and for your continued commitment to those who have served.

Bob McLaughlin ■



Partner Spotlight

CASE MANAGERS:

SHANTEL WARE
MEGAN HARRISON
NATHAN GONZALEZ
DARIA KLAUSNER

HEALTH & WELLNESS:

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Dir, Health & Wellness
VIVIENNE BELAIRE
BH Ops & Gateway Manager
NIKKI HAMILTON
Behavioral Health Auditing & Info Specialist
RODGER JOHNSON
Next Chapter Program Manager
DILLON ANDERSON
STEVE FUGIEL
ANDREW HARTMAN
SSG FOX SPGP

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COREY MCFADDEN

PUEBLO:

SAL KATZ JR
Director, Rural Colorado Services
DAIJAH ANDREWS
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MIA ALI
Peer Navigator

LAURIE COLLINS
Case Manager

Veteran Resources & Community
Development Coordinators

TRINIDAD:

DAVID SAMPSON

ALAMOS:

ALEX KAMRUD



Black Rifle Coffee Company (BRCC) is a Veteran-founded premium coffee company built on a commitment to serving those who serve. Founded in 2014 by former Green Beret Evan Hafer, BRCC has become a nationally recognized brand dedicated to supporting Veterans, active-duty military members, and first responders. Beyond crafting exceptional coffee, the company has made a significant impact through its philanthropic efforts, donating millions of dollars, helping

forgive military medical debt, and giving away tens of thousands of bags of coffee. With a social media community of more than 4 million followers, BRCC continues to use its platform to champion causes that strengthen the military and Veteran community. Their partnership and support of Mt. Carmel reflects a shared commitment to giving back and making a meaningful difference. ■



Department Updates



Transition and Employment

Mt. Carmel Transition and Employment had our 5,257th placement at the end of June 2026. Transition and Employment supported 6 hiring events and resource fairs recently with as many as 375 attendees at a Fort Carson Hiring Event. Jon taught the first federal resume class on USAFA as a backfill to the installation losing their instructor to retirement. Our second LinkedIn 101 class was a success.

T&E supported the Freedom Plane event at Denver Airport thanks to the generous invitation from Boeing, and just a week later we were supporting the United Airlines veterans event at their hangar on the north side of Denver airport. ■



Military, Veteran, and Family Services

MVFS is in full swing of Stand Down and THI planning. We anticipate that this year will house the largest number of partners to date and we are working to ensure there is adequate room for everyone. All DRMO is secured and we have sent an ask out to partners to help obtain civilian items.

MVFS has been selected by another Amazon distribution site for donations. While these donations are sporadic, they are incredible and often filled with much needed hygiene and household cleaning items.

This definitely helps keep our pantry stocked.

MVFS has contracted with Freedom Springs to provide case management on site for them for another 3 years. The team there has been instrumental in creating a collaborative relationship with the onsite management team and clients as we feel that a lot of ground has been made in changing the tone of the location for the better. With that, we have welcomed Nate to the team who has taken on the lead case management role for Freedom Springs! ■



Greet & Connect

June - July saw Mt. Carmel's Greet & Connect take it to the next level. With expanded roles the Team improved our Workstudy program, IT infrastructure, and Client CRM capabilities. The Client survey program continued to be spotlighted as we further refined the automated survey device in each of the core mission areas. The facility's security program also received an upgrade with the installation of the new server controlling our doors and cameras.

Looking forward, efforts are underway to conduct another Social Return on Investment (SROI) assessment on the impact Mt. Carmel has had on the community. Data fields have been identified and we're working with the vendor on finalizing the proposal. And we'll also be conducting our Annual Employee Survey in July.

Finally, as a reminder, event space is available for rent at Mt. Carmel for all occasions, including birthday parties, holiday parties, baby showers, office gatherings and graduation celebrations. For availability, bookings, or a facility tour, please contact our front desk at 719-772-7000.



Health and Wellness

We joined the 988 initiative to forward the message of 988 as a resource for anyone experiencing suicide ideation or life struggles.

Kirsten met requirements for certification to be a BCBT-Suicide Prevention provider. Our behavioral health team completed a Lethal Means Safety for Female Veterans training provided by VA Patient Safety Center of Inquiry – Suicide Prevention Collaborative, MIRECC, and University of Colorado, Anschutz.

We were honored to host a book signing by provider and author Nil Buckley for her book “The Care Method: Military Series.” Her work is changing the way providers treat people who experience domestic/interpersonal violence and other challenges. Kirsten provided training at the Forge the Force Fest “When Tapping Out is Not an Option”.

We are excited to begin the process of partnering with Denver University and their Military Family-Focused WeRead programming for families with young children. ■

Department Updates



Next Chapter

- **June 6, 2026 – CPW Get Outdoors Day, Memorial Park**

Next Chapter participated in Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Get Outdoors Day at Memorial Park, engaging with community members and sharing information about available veteran support services and resources.

- **June 10, 2026 – El Paso County Veterans Expo, Pikes Peak Center for the Performing Arts**

Next Chapter attended the El Paso County Veterans Expo, connecting with veterans, military families, and community partners to promote awareness of programs and services available to those who have served.

- **June 12, 2026 – Band-Aid Softball Tournament, Skyview Sports Complex**

Next Chapter supported the Band-Aid Softball Tournament, strengthening community partnerships while providing outreach and resource information to attendees.

- **June 17, 2026 –**

- **Western Street Breakfast, Downtown Colorado Springs**

Next Chapter participated in the Western Street Breakfast, engaging with local residents, community leaders, and organizations while promoting veteran-focused services and support programs.

- **July 11, 2026 – 2nd Annual Veteran Outreach Event, Rocky Ford**

Next Chapter attended the 2nd Annual Veteran Outreach Event in Rocky Ford, collaborating with community organizations and engaging with veterans to increase awareness of available resources, benefits, and support services.

- **July 16, 2026 – Forge the Force Fest, Peterson Space Force Base**

Next Chapter attended Forge the Force Fest at Peterson Space Force Base, connecting with active-duty service members, veterans, and military families to share information about available resources and opportunities.

- **July 16, 2026 – Pikes Peak Rodeo**

Next Chapter participated in the Pikes Peak Rodeo, increasing community visibility and engaging with attendees to raise awareness of programs designed to support veterans and their families.



VBOC

During the June–July reporting period, the Colorado Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) continued to make measurable progress toward program objectives while expanding outreach and service delivery to veteran entrepreneurs throughout Colorado.

During this reporting period, the program enrolled 49 new clients, bringing the total to more than 1,560 since program inception, conducted 115 individual business counseling sessions, and increased its LinkedIn audience to more than 1,255 followers, reflecting continued growth in client engagement and program visibility.

The Colorado VBOC maintained an active presence in the veteran and small-business ecosystem by participating in outreach, networking, and educational events that strengthened relationships with stakeholders and increased awareness of its services. These activities included the Veterans Beer Club, Pikes Peak Small Business Alliance (PPSBA) Monthly Meeting, El Paso County Veterans Expo, Leadership Pikes Peak Community Leadership Conference, Small Business Support Services Forum with Colorado Springs City Council Member Ronald Rainey, the Mayor's Small Business Listening Tour, From Swipe to Settlement: Credit Card Processing 101, Financial Foundations for Startups, and the ACHIEVE Monthly Meeting.

A significant accomplishment during this reporting period was the planning and execution of the inaugural Mt. Carmel Veterans Business Conference. The conference provided veteran and military-connected entrepreneurs with direct access to business education, technical

assistance, and resource partners that support business start-up, growth, and long-term sustainability. The event emphasized the importance of establishing a strong professional advisory network through the “BAIL” concept—Bankers, Accountants, Insurance Professionals, and Legal Advisors. Attendees also engaged with representatives from the SBA, Colorado Department of Revenue, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), SCORE, and numerous additional federal, state, local, and private-sector resource partners.

The Colorado VBOC also continued delivery of the SBA Boots to Business entrepreneurship training program at Schriever Space Force Base, Fort Carson, Peterson Space Force Base, and Buckley Space Force Base. These trainings provided transitioning service members and military spouses with foundational business ownership education and connected participants with post-training counseling and technical assistance available through the VBOC program.

Program activity during this reporting period demonstrates sustained demand for veteran-focused entrepreneurial assistance across Colorado. Continued growth in client enrollment, counseling services, training delivery, and stakeholder engagement reflects the Colorado VBOC's commitment to supporting veteran entrepreneurs through counseling, training, resource coordination, and strategic partnerships that advance small business formation, growth, and long-term success. Outreach efforts and program engagement remain strong. ■

Department Updates



SSG FOX GRANT

Client Outreach and Engagement (SSG Fox SPGP)

Outreach efforts remained strong during this reporting period, with 36 outreach and community engagement events conducted in June across military installations, rural and frontier communities, community events, and partner agencies. These activities increased awareness of the SSG Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program and expanded access to Veterans, Service Members, National Guard/Reserve members, and eligible family members who may be disconnected from VA care. All referrals generated through outreach were promptly routed to case managers for eligibility determination, C-SSRS suicide risk screening, and enrollment in accordance with program policies and required timelines. Sustained outreach at this level continues to strengthen the program's referral pipeline and supports Goal 1: Identify and Engage At-Risk Individuals by increasing access to suicide prevention services for underserved populations. ■

Case Management and Direct Services

Case managers completed C-SSRS suicide risk screenings for 100% of newly enrolled clients during intake and completed all required follow-up risk reassessments due during the reporting period. Clients identified as being at elevated or high acute risk received same-day safety planning, lethal means safety counseling, and expedited referrals through documented warm handoffs to appropriate clinical and community-based services. Warm handoffs were initiated within two business days whenever clinically appropriate and documented in accordance with program requirements.

Following the transition of all suicide risk screening responsibilities to case managers, referral volume, screening capacity, and caseload distribution continue to be monitored monthly to ensure timely access to care and compliance with grant performance expectations.

VA-required outcome measures were completed at intake, follow-up intervals, and discharge for all applicable participants, with data entered by Apricot to support ongoing program monitoring and reporting. ■

Partner Relations and Development

Collaborative referral pathways within Mt. Carmel remained active with Behavioral Health Gateway, Next Chapter, and the Transition and Employment Program, ensuring coordinated care for participants requiring additional behavioral health or supportive services. Efforts also continued to expand clinical referral capacity through the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Our Healing Village and additional community behavioral health providers to reduce waiting times for ongoing treatment following program referral.

Cross-program SSG Fox training continued across Mt. Carmel to strengthen staff knowledge of suicide prevention protocols, referral processes, and grant requirements. Sustainability planning also progressed during this reporting period, with continued exploration of braided funding opportunities and strategic partnerships to support long-term program continuity beyond the current grant cycle. ■

Compliance and Administrations

All required VA reports and grant deliverables were submitted within established reporting deadlines. Staff training requirements remain current for C-SSRS administration, safety planning, lethal means safety counseling, HIPAA compliance, and other required SSG Fox competencies. Program documentation continues to be reviewed for compliance with grant requirements, with ongoing quality assurance activities supporting data accuracy, documentation standards, and continuous quality improvement. ■

Challenges and Leadership Considerations

Limited behavioral health capacity within the community continues to contribute to delays in accessing ongoing clinical treatment following warm handoffs. To mitigate these barriers, the program is actively expanding referral partnerships and formalizing additional MOUs with community providers and the VA.

Given the significant increase in outreach activity during June, continued monitoring of referral conversion, screening capacity, and case management workload will remain a priority during the next reporting period to ensure timely service delivery, maintain compliance with SSG Fox performance standards, and support sustainable program growth. ■

Office Updates



Southern Colorado

Over the past two months, Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center has expanded its impact across Southern Colorado by strengthening partnerships, increasing access to services, and enhancing support for veterans, service members, and their families.

Through collaboration with local governments, Veteran Service Officers, nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers, businesses, and volunteers, we continue building a coordinated regional network that ensures veterans can access critical resources regardless of location.

Outreach efforts have grown significantly as awareness of Mt. Carmel's services increases through community meetings, veteran organizations, food distributions, and regional events. We have strengthened partnerships with Veteran Service Offices, American Legion Posts, United Way of Southern Colorado, Care and Share Food Bank, YMCA, Pueblo Diversified Industries, Xcel Energy, and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. These collaborations have improved service coordination, expanded behavioral health resources, and enhanced our ability to respond quickly to veterans in crisis.

Access to care has improved through expanded rural outreach and the continued growth of our Veterans Connections Program. Veterans now have increased access to benefits assistance, employment resources, financial counseling, legal services, wellness programs, behavioral health support, and emergency aid closer to home. Stronger alignment with regional partners has streamlined service delivery and created a more unified approach to care.

Health and wellness remain central to our mission. Veterans have participated in acupuncture, chair massage, arts and cooking classes, and other therapeutic activities designed to reduce isolation and improve well-being. Demand for these programs continues to grow, reflecting their value in fostering connection, healing, and resilience.

Food security and emergency assistance remain critical priorities. Through Helping Hands food distributions and partner support, we continue providing groceries, hygiene items, and essential resources to veterans and families in need. Our coordinated response during the Aspen Acres Fire demonstrated the strength of regional collaboration, as we assisted displaced veterans with housing, financial support, food, clothing, and case management.

Community engagement remains strong through participation in veteran roundtables, chamber events, and regional initiatives, alongside signature programs such as the Pars for Patriots Golf Tournament and Quilts of Valor Ceremony honoring veterans from World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

One example of our mission in action occurred during the Aspen Acres Fire, when a displaced veteran's cancer medication was delayed. Mt. Carmel quickly coordinated with the VA and USPS to locate and recover the prescription before the veteran's supply ran out—demonstrating our commitment to timely, compassionate advocacy.

As we move into the fall, demand for financial assistance, housing support, behavioral health services, and disaster recovery will continue to rise. Mt. Carmel remains committed to expanding outreach, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring every veteran and military family has access to the care they need. ■



Pictured: Volunteers participating in Helping Hands.



Pictured: US ARMY Vietnam Veteran, Mr. George Wilson participating in Pars for Patriots



Alamosa – San Luis Valley



Over the past two months, several positive developments have strengthened our ability to serve veterans throughout the San Luis Valley.

One of the most significant changes has been the relocation of our office from the Care and Share building to the Alamosa County Building. Being co-located with the Veterans Service Office (VSO) has greatly improved collaboration, communication, and accessibility for veterans seeking assistance. This move has allowed us to work more closely with the VSO, providing a more streamlined approach to connecting veterans with the resources and benefits they need.

During this reporting period, I have also established a strong working relationship with representatives from the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Through ongoing meetings and collaboration, we are developing better pathways to ensure veterans experiencing behavioral health or mental health crises receive timely and appropriate support. This partnership will enhance our ability to connect veterans with crisis intervention services while increasing awareness of the specialized resources available through 988.

Additionally, a new partnership has been established with Xcel Energy's RED Truck Program. This collaboration will provide another valuable resource for veterans impacted by power outages and electrical emergencies. By working together, we can help connect eligible veterans with assistance during times of need, further strengthening the support network available throughout the valley.

These partnerships and organizational improvements continue to expand our community impact and improve the coordination of services available to local veterans. By strengthening relationships with key organizations and increasing collaboration across agencies, we are better positioned to provide timely, comprehensive support to those who have served. ■



Trinidad - Las Animas County



Over the past few months, incredible progress has been made in strengthening the foundation of support for veterans and their families in Las Animas County, progress that will continue to grow for years to come. At a time when many organizations are facing cuts, the Las Animas County Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center remains steadfast in serving our community through our food pantry, trusted partnerships, and a growing network of resources.

Each month, we see a steady flow of families relying on our services, while also welcoming new faces through intakes. Awareness of Trinidad's Mt. Carmel office is expanding rapidly thanks to our regular presence at city council meetings, network council meetings, monthly Care and Share food distributions, and American Legion gatherings. Our strong partnerships with the County Veteran Service Officer and American Legion Post 11 have been instrumental in connecting more veterans to the care they deserve.

Our veterans' arts and cooking classes, in collaboration with Mt. Carmel Wellness & Community Center, has been a resounding success. We're thrilled that this partnership will continue into the next year, with even bigger plans to expand programming that builds skills, wellness and community. The art classes have been renewed for a fall class that has been filled already.

Helping Hands mobile food pantry continues to have a tremendous response to our June distribution by assisting 52 families that included 115 individuals. The program is scheduled to pick back up in September due to scheduling conflicts in July and August. The positive feedback and great support from wonderful volunteers and community leaders. It is a privilege to be able to offer this wonderful resource to the residents of Las Animas County.

Trinidad's Monthly Helping Hands - Together, with our partners, supporters and community, we are not only sustaining services, but expanding opportunities for veterans and families in Las Animas County to thrive. ■



Westcliffe – Custer County

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center continues to expand its presence in Custer County by strengthening partnerships and improving access to services for veterans, service members, and their families.

We are growing our Veterans Connection Program, increasing community outreach through local media and events, and working with local organizations to bring wraparound services closer to where veterans live. Our goal is to ensure veterans have easier access to resources such as employment, legal assistance, financial counseling, wellness programs, and other critical support while building a stronger network of community partners dedicated to serving those who served ■

Here are future events and outreach schedule:

CUSTER COUNTY VETERANS OUTREACH

SUPPORT ★ RESOURCES ★ COMMUNITY

WEST CUSTER COUNTY LIBRARY

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center is working towards increasing our support and presence in Custer County as we continue strengthening collaboration and coordination efforts in support of our military, veterans, and their families.

Our shared mission remains steadfast: to expand access to best practices, integrated resources, and strong partnerships that empower lives and strengthen communities across Colorado. These efforts are needed now more than ever, and we sincerely believe the strength of our communities grows through cooperative engagement and shared resources.

★ OUR COMMITMENT

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center is committed to ensuring that every veteran and family member in Custer County has direct access to the support they have earned. Through ongoing collaboration with local partners and community stakeholders, we work to reduce barriers, strengthen coordination, and deliver comprehensive, veteran-centered care. We are honored to serve those who have served.

★ WHAT WE OFFER

During these monthly outreach sessions, Mt. Carmel representatives will be available to meet in person with veterans and their family members to provide access to wraparound support services, including:

- Legal assistance and guidance
- Employment support and job placement resources
- Financial counseling and stability planning
- Behavioral health and therapeutic resources
- Veteran-specific program navigation
- Referrals to trusted community partner agencies

★ MONTHLY OUTREACH LOCATION

West Custer County Library
209 Main St., Westcliffe

★ SCHEDULE

Starting July 13
2nd and 4th Monday of each month
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

★ FOLLOW-ON DATES

July 13th	October 12th
July 27th	October 26th
August 10th	November 9th
August 24th	November 23rd
September 14th	December 14th
September 28th	December 28th

10 YEARS

Mt. Carmel
VETERANS SERVICE CENTER
SERVING THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED

CONTACT US

(719) 309-4719 | [veteranscenter.org](https://www.veteranscenter.org)

West Custer County Library District

209 Main Street
Westcliffe, Colorado 81252 | (719) 783-9138
<https://www.westcusterlibrary.org/>

LEARN TO PLAY NATIVE AMERICAN FLUTE

for Beginners

★ FOR VETERANS & THEIR SPOUSES ★

NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED—JUST COME AS YOU ARE AND LET YOUR MUSIC FLOW!

Thank you for your service. You're invited!

DISCOVER & PLAY
Learn basic techniques, breathing, fingerings, and simple melodies on the Native American flute.

CONNECT
Build community and share in a relaxed, supportive environment.

RELAX & ENJOY
Music is a powerful way to reduce stress, lift your spirit, and honor tradition.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7TH, 2026
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

CLASS TO BE HELD AT:
3RD ST. GALLERY
59000 N. HIGHWAY 69
WESTCLIFFE, CO

HANDICAP ACCESS | **FLUTES PROVIDED**
No experience necessary

Registration Required
Register at www.westcusterlibrary.org or call 719-783-9138

SPONSORED BY
Mt. Carmel VETERANS SERVICE CENTER | **sag** SANDRIS ART GUILD | West Custer County Library

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ALL VETERANS AND THEIR SPOUSES ARE Welcome!

CREATE ★ CONNECT ★ RELAX ABSTRACT ART CLASS

for Veterans & Their Spouses

NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED—JUST COME AS YOU ARE AND LET YOUR CREATIVITY FLOW!

Thank you for your service. You're invited!

EXPRESS YOURSELF
Explore color, texture, and abstract techniques in a fun and supportive environment.

CONNECT
Build community and share in a relaxed, encouraging space.

FOCUS & RELAX
Creativity is a powerful way to reduce stress, boost well-being, and lift your spirit.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2026
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

CLASS TO BE HELD AT:
3RD ST. GALLERY
59000 N. HIGHWAY 69
WESTCLIFFE, CO

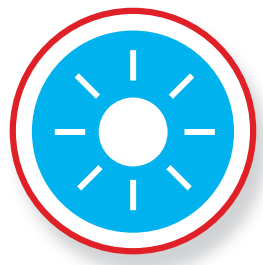
HANDICAP ACCESS | **ALL MATERIALS PROVIDED**
No experience necessary

Registration is Required!
Please register by September 29th!
Register at www.westcusterlibrary.org or call 719-783-9138

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Mt. Carmel VETERANS SERVICE CENTER | **sag** SANDRIS ART GUILD | West Custer County Library

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ALL VETERANS AND THEIR SPOUSES ARE Welcome!



Pueblo – Pueblo County

NEWS UPDATE - Over the past two months, the Veterans Connections Program has continued expanding its impact across Pueblo Count and Southern Colorado by strengthening partnerships, increasing rural outreach, and delivering meaningful services to veterans and their families.

We successfully re-engaged our Custer County footprint, restoring twice-monthly outreach visits that provide comprehensive wraparound services from Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center.

Our team collaborated with regional partners by participating in a YMCA Community Think Session, attending Pueblo City Council meetings, Pueblo Chamber of Commerce collaborative events, and the City Board of Managers Luncheon, where we shared Mt. Carmel's capabilities and explored new opportunities to better serve veterans throughout the region.

Duriig the Aspen Fires, we partnered closely with the United Way of Southern Colorado to provide direct assistance to displaced veterans and wildfire victims, helping connect families with emergency resources, financial assistance, and coordinated support during a time of crisis.

Our monthly Helping Hands Community Coalition continues to make a lasting impact by connecting veterans and community members with food, hygiene items, healthcare resources, and supportive services. We also hosted another outstanding Pars for Patriots Golf Tournament, welcoming 83 golfers whose participation directly supports veteran programs and services throughout Southern Colorado.

Community engagement remained strong as we supported Autism Mania, along with holding our quarterly Pueblo County Community Ambassador meeting, held at the Pueblo Riverwalk boathouse.

We also strengthened collaboration with regional organizations by sharing Mt. Carmel's mission and capabilities with both the United Way of Southern Colorado and Pueblo Diversified Industries (PDI) through mutual tours and mission briefings, reinforcing our shared commitment to serving veterans and strengthening our community. ■

MAKING AN IMPACT - We continue to strengthen our commitment to veterans and their families by expanding access to services, deepening partnerships, and increasing our presence throughout Southern Colorado. Through enhanced rural outreach, emergency wildfire response, therapeutic wellness programs, and collaborative community initiatives, we are ensuring veterans have access to the resources they need when they need them most.

Whether connecting veterans to emergency assistance, healthcare, employment resources, or simply providing a welcoming place where they feel valued, Mt. Carmel remains committed to serving with dignity, compassion, and purpose. Together with our community partners, we continue building a stronger network of support so that every veteran, service member, spouse, and family member knows they never have to face life's challenges alone. ■

UP AHEAD

August

1st Pueblo Helping Hands Community Coalition
14th Military Affairs Committee Meeting
22nd Operation TOMCAT
 Community Festival | Weisbrod Aircraft Museum
28th Legislator BBQ – Colorado State Fair
28th – 30th ... Colorado State Fair Outreach Booth

September

2nd Pueblo Helping Hands Community Coalition
5th Break Your Neck Run/Walk
11th Military Affairs Committee Meeting
12th Heroes Helping Heroes Food Distribution
17th Pueblo Ambassadors Meeting
18th–20th Colorado State Fair Chile Festival
29th.... The P.L.A.C.E. community outreach – Pueblo

Note: The Pueblo Helping Hands Community Coalition with Care and Share takes place the first Wednesday of each month from 10:00–11:00 a.m. in the St. Mary-Corwin Hospital back parking lot.



Pictured: June Pueblo Ambassador meeting held at the Pueblo Riverwalk Boat House

GOOD NEWS STORIES - This summer, our partnership with the Quilts of Valor Foundation and The Ivy Senior Living Community created a memorable day of recognition and gratitude. Seven veterans representing three generations of military service—including one World War II veteran, four Korean War veterans, and two Vietnam veterans—were presented with handcrafted Quilts of Valor in front of family members, community leaders, and fellow veterans.

Each quilt represented thousands of volunteer hours and served as a heartfelt expression of appreciation for their service and sacrifice. The ceremony reminded everyone in attendance that honoring our nation's heroes is not only about remembering the past, but also about strengthening the connections that support veterans today.

Office Updates

GOOD NEWS STORIES *cont.*

Also, When the Aspen Acres Fire displaced a local veteran, Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center stepped in to ensure a critical medical need was not interrupted. A concerned neighbor contacted Mt. Carmel after the veteran's cancer-related medication was delayed due to his evacuation. After visiting multiple Pueblo Post Office locations without answers and with only three days of medication remaining, the veteran turned to Mt. Carmel for help.

They immediately coordinated with the VA and U.S. Postal Service to locate the prescription and discovered it was being held at the Belmont Post Office in Pueblo. The veteran was directed to the correct location, where his high-cost, life-sustaining medication was recovered and placed back in his hands.

During a time of uncertainty and displacement, Mt. Carmel provided immediate advocacy, compassion, and action, demonstrating our commitment to ensuring no veteran faces a crisis alone. ■

MONTHLY CHALLENGE -

As we move into late summer and fall, we anticipate an increased demand for emergency assistance, particularly for veterans affected by rising housing costs, financial hardship, and the ongoing impacts of recent natural disasters. Expanding rural outreach while maintaining timely, high-quality services requires continued collaboration with community partners and sustained volunteer support.

We will also continue growing sponsorships and community investment to strengthen veteran wellness programs, emergency assistance, and outreach efforts across Pueblo County and Southern Colorado. By working together, we can ensure every veteran and family receives the support, hope, and opportunity they deserve. ■

Partner Relations and Development

The next two months promise continued momentum for Partner Relations as Mt. Carmel prepares to welcome six new community and corporate partners into our growing network of support.

Mt. Carmel has also been selected as a beneficiary of an upcoming golf tournament, providing another opportunity to engage supporters while advancing our mission. In addition, Mt. Carmel has been chosen as beneficiaries for two conferences, strengthening existing relationships,

building new connections, and increasing awareness of the services available to Veterans, Service Members, and their families throughout the region. We are excited to continue expanding partnerships that help create lasting impact for the military-connected community.

If you are interested in partnering with Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center to support military members, veterans and their families, reach out to James Herrington at Jherrington@mtcarmelcenter.org. ■

Community Outreach

We have some outreach events coming up!

- **Sanctuary Golf Tournament- August 20, 2026**
- **Patriot Day- September 11, 2026**

Volunteer Spotlight: Will Jordan



Will Jordan was born and raised in the great state of Georgia, and joined the Army at the age of 17. While serving he had two tours in Iraq and was honorably retired in 2015 after serving 21 years. Mr. Jordan has been married for 27 years and has two beautiful children. He coaches recreational sports and is an impact volunteer at Springs Rescue mission. He loves spending time with his family and living life to the fullest with an infectious positive attitude. ■



The Vantage Point

THE VANTAGE POINT

The Vantage Point Podcast continues to build momentum, experiencing an exceptional **72%** increase in followers over the past two months as more listeners discover conversations that blend scholarship, storytelling, and lived experience. One of this period's featured episodes welcomed **James Daigle**, publisher of Veterans Life Magazine and an accomplished photographer whose career has taken him around the world. Beyond sharing the mission of Veterans Life Magazine as a valuable resource for the veteran community, James reflected on the lessons that shaped his life and career, including timeless wisdom passed down from his father. The result is an engaging conversation about service, storytelling, purpose, and the enduring influence of mentorship.

Continuing our commitment to educational dialogue, we also sat down with Professor **DeLyn Winters**, a writing instructor at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, for an insightful discussion on the power of writing to transform the way we think. Together, we explored the growing influence of artificial intelligence in education, the importance of preserving critical thinking skills, and the remarkable cognitive benefits of writing for as little as five minutes each day. As The Vantage Point continues to grow, these conversations reinforce our mission of bringing together academic expertise and lived experience to equip listeners with practical tools for personal growth, lifelong learning, and meaningful reflection. Scan the QR code to watch on YouTube!



**Scan the QR code
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on YouTube!**