

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center



One-Stop for Veterans & Military

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Diversity & Inclusion

As someone who cares about military, veterans and their families, you may have questions about how Mt. Carmel is responding to the national call to action and focus on racial equity, diversity and inclusion.

Rest assured that we remain steadfast in our commitment to promote an environment free from barriers that may prevent personnel, partners and clients from receiving the assistance they need or realizing their potential. To that end, we have taken steps to ensure that the culture here at Mt. Carmel is one that reflects the importance of equal opportunity and acceptance of individual differences.



On February 26th, our team participated in a diversity and inclusion class where we were reminded that diversity is the key to innovation, inclusion is imperative for cohesive teamwork, and equality is critical to achieving our mission.

We have learned that diversity encompasses more than race, gender, sexual orientation, age and other protected classes. Diversity is also about individuals contributing their unique experiences, backgrounds and ideas. This is especially evident with respect to our veterans. Even with the vast experience and broad spectrum of skills brought forth by transitioning service members, we still see a disparity in earnings and employment for recent veterans across military occupations and rank, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Former infantry and combat veterans, in particular, tend to have lower earnings and employment rates after leaving service. Veterans have a deep understanding of teamwork, leadership and the value of a strong work ethic - traits that are often overlooked by civilian employers.

Recently, we were awarded a grant from USAA to assist us with our efforts to help close the gaps that lead to racial disparities in education, employment, and the income gap as it pertains to military, veterans and their families. These funds have already enabled us to offer additional educational assistance to job-seeking clients, which allows them to compete on equal footing with other candidates. We've also implemented Financial Wellness Workshops to help clients move towards financial intelligence, security and success.

During February and March, we celebrated Black History and Women's History months and the tremendous impact these respective groups have had on our military, community and country. Securing our country's liberty and freedom through enhanced diversity and equality is everyone's responsibility, and we here at Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center take our responsibility seriously and stand ready to lead the charge because diversity and inclusion are just words until acted upon.

*By Col. Bob McLaughlin, U.S. Army, Retired
Chief Operating Officer*

Staff

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Melodie Owens
Resource Dev & Events Mgr

Grants

Alisha Hall
Grant Manager

Denise Patrick
Grant Writer

Meet & Greet

Shawna Dusharm
Greet & Connect/Office Mgr.

Chris McGeorge
Facilities Coordinator

Are You Listening to the Award-winning Veterans Voice?

The Mt. Carmel Veterans Voice podcast, presented by USAA, broadcasts the second and fourth Saturday of each month at 08:00. Veterans Voice features success stories from military, veterans and their families and offers military-related news, information and resources. Veterans Voice is FREE and available to download and listen on-demand, any time.

THE MT. CARMEL VETERANS VOICE PODCAST

PRESENTED BY:



PUBLISHED THE 2ND AND 4TH SATURDAY EACH MONTH
WWW.KRDONWSRADIO.PODBEAN.COM

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Visit to listen: <https://krdonwsradio.podbean.com/p/the-veterans-voice/>

Tough Times Ahead for Some Colorado Renters



Katie Travis, Director of VFR

The federal eviction moratorium put in place by the Center for Disease Control is set to expire on March 31, 2021. The state of Colorado did not extend their individual eviction moratorium past 2020, and currently the only additional protection in place for renters is the Governor's Executive Order D2021-052, which is protection from late fees. This executive order is set to expire on March 28, if the governor does not choose to extend it.

What does this mean for renters across the state of Colorado? Simply put, they will have to not only start making current rent payments but will also need to create a repayment agreement with their landlord or property manager.

Repayment is going to be difficult, if not close to impossible, for many Colorado residents who were financially impacted by COVID-19 due to loss of wages, hours or employment altogether.

The Veteran and Family Resources (VFR) team at Mt. Carmel VSC places a strong emphasis on homelessness prevention. It is significantly easier to help keep a person housed than to bring them out of homelessness. Homelessness prevention has always been a top priority in assisting our veterans but became increasingly more important throughout the pandemic. Since March 2020, the VFR team has provided approximately \$150,000 in COVID-specific financial assistance and an additional \$100,000 in assistance to both veterans affected by COVID and those facing barriers outside of COVID.

The VFR team is equipped with the skills and knowledge to help tenants understand their rights and address the barriers that may lead to homelessness. We currently have COVID-specific grants as well as generic, year-round grants to assist with rent funds to help get our veterans caught up on rent. Coupling financial assistance with barrier assessment in education, employment, mental health, legal and various other aspects of their lives, allows them to achieve self-sufficiency and remain stably housed into the future. If you or anyone you know could use a hand-up to prevent homelessness, please have them reach out to get scheduled with a case manager at (719) 309-4752.

Food Fridays

Since March 2020, Care & Share has generously provided a Mobile Market food distribution on the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month. Care & Share primarily provides nonperishable foods for families in need.

Through collaboration with Mt. Carmel's staff and volunteers, Food Friday is open to military, veterans and their families as well as to anyone in the community who could benefit from this distribution. There is no qualification or identification needed. This event is located in the parking lot adjacent to Mt. Carmel and is generously donated by Penrose Norris Event Center.

Last month, Peter Buckles, the owner of Joey's Pizza and the General Manager of Phil Long Kia, graciously offered resources and food items for the Food Fridays program. Buckles was very concerned about the availability of food for everyone in our community and he wanted to make a difference. He now provides a shipment of fresh produce and fruit for every distribution!

Thanks to our great supporters and volunteers, this program will continue throughout 2021. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Melodie Owens at (719) 309-4771.

FOOD FRIDAYS

2021

FEB 5 & 19
MAR 5 & 19
APR 2 & 16
MAY 7 & 21
JUN 4 & 18
JUL - - 16
AUG 6 & 20
SEP - - 17
OCT 1 & 15
NOV 5 & 19
DEC 3 & 17

11 AM



719.772.7000

OPEN TO ALL

While Supplies Last

Norris Penrose
Event Center
Upper Lot

Across From Mt. Carmel
at 1106 W. Moreno Ave

Find Us on Social Media
for Updates



DRIVE-THRU DISTRIBUTION



Partner Spotlight: Guaranteed Rate



Guaranteed Rate was honored to join the Mt. Carmel VSC team as an in-house tenant beginning January 1. As the third largest privately owned mortgage company, Guaranteed Rate has helped over 13,247 veterans purchase or refinance the home of their dreams using their VA Home Loan Benefit. Our expert

team is comprised of fellow transitioning veterans who continue to serve, and integrating our physical footprint within the walls of the Mt. Carmel VSC is a natural fit.

Educating veterans on their VA Home Loan Benefit is our focus and whether we can help them now or advise them how to improve their position to obtain home ownership, we're committed to helping them improve their foxhole. Whether it be through corporate partnerships with other VSOs across the nation or here locally with our VA Home Loan Seminars and our Career Path in Lending Seminars, we walk alongside our veteran clients.

In addition, our Guaranteed Rate Foundation provides customized financial support to those working to overcome extraordinary hardships. We facilitate 100 percent of donations into the military communities we serve. Grants are given directly to the veteran and their family to assist when they've fallen on hard times, need shelter assistance, or anything in between. Guaranteed Rate's goal is to offer hope to those in crisis - an opportunity to stop, take a breath and begin healing.

We are excited to partner with Mt. Carmel VSC as we jointly serve our robust military community.

The Grants Team Thanks You

As we wrap up our fifth fiscal year at Mt. Carmel, the grants team wants to express our sincere appreciation to all of the private foundations, government agencies and corporations that have generously supported veterans services year to year. The grant program has had our best year ever, raising 50% more than prior years thanks to our generous and ongoing supporters.

These funds keep the lights on and staff busy for the Transition & Employment, Behavioral Health and Wellness, and Veteran and Family Resource programs. ***We sincerely thank everyone who has been part of this journey to help our veterans and their families!***



Alisha Hall, Grants Manager

Development Team in 2021



Alicia Grantham, Development Director

The development and fundraising department is very busy planning some great events to engage our community as we continue to navigate the changing times. We want to take every opportunity to foster relationships with our supports while keeping health and safety concerns a priority.

We couldn't wait to share with you our plans, so stay tuned for future updates!

continued on next page

July 2021: Military Art Exhibition - Pikes Peak Community College Art Gallery at Studio West - Mt. Carmel, in collaboration with Pikes Peak Community College, is planning its first Military Art Exhibition. Veterans, active duty, reservists and guard members, as well as family members will have an opportunity to showcase their art during the month of July at Studio West. An opening reception is planned for July 2nd, with the exhibit lasting through July 23rd. Art will be available to view and purchase through Mt. Carmel's auction website. Proceeds from the exhibit will benefit Mt. Carmel's programs supporting veterans, military and their families.



For more information on how to participate as an artist or to view the auction, please visit www.vetart.givesmart.com

August 17, 2021 Charity Golf Tournament - Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center will host our 6th annual Charity Golf Tournament and Silent Auction on Tuesday, August 17, 2021. This will take place at the prestigious Sanctuary Golf Course in Sedalia, CO.

The vision of RE-MAX, LLC Co-Founder Dave Liniger, the Sanctuary allows service organizations to host fundraising events, raising a net profit of over \$112 million during the last 24 years.

Proceeds from Mt. Carmel's tournament and silent auction provide funding for Mt. Carmel to continue its mission of providing essential services and programming to our military, veterans and their families.

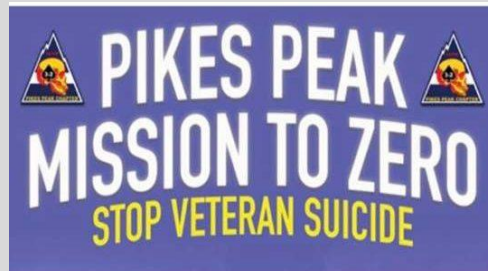
Our tournament will sell out quickly, so if you or your organization are interested in participating and purchasing a sponsorship, please visit: www.sanctuarygolf.givesmart.com You won't want to miss this incredible event!

SANCTUARY GOLF COURSE INVITES YOU TO

MT. CARMEL VETERANS SERVICE CENTER'S
CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT
TUESDAY, AUGUST 17TH, 2021
BENEFITING VETERANS, MILITARY AND THEIR FAMILIES

PRESENTED BY: **RE/MAX** HERO SPONSOR: **Domino's** CHAMPION SPONSOR: **PHIL LONG**
HOLE IN ONE WINS BRAND NEW CAR

FOR SPONSORSHIP INFORMATION CONTACT MELODIE OWENS, 719-309-4771 MOWENS@MTCARMELCENTER.ORG
TO REGISTER: SANCTUARYGOLF.GIVESMART.COM



September 18, 2021 Mission To Zero Poker Ride - September is Veteran Suicide Awareness month and the Pikes Peak Mission to Zero Family is continuing their mission to raise awareness by holding a poker run in collaboration with Mt Carmel. This year Mt. Carmel is the final stop after an enjoyable route that includes a ride up Pikes Peak. The end of event celebration will include live music, food trucks, beer garden and more. Mt. Carmel Community Partners interested in participating in the event by showcasing their services to veterans or organizations interested in sponsoring the event should contact Melodie Owens at mowens@mtcarmelcenter.org or Alicia Grantham at agrantham@mtcarmelcenter.org.

Registration information will be available soon for participants. Check the following link for event updates:

https://www.facebook.com/PPMtZCVMA/?ref=page_internal



Hoedown 4 Heroes - Our 3rd Annual Hoedown 4 Heroes Fundraiser will be held on November 5, 2021. We will provide updates as they become available.

As always, we truly appreciate the support that we receive from our community supporters. We have many ways that you can support our efforts, either through volunteerism, sponsoring an event, or individual donations. Please contact us for more information on [how YOU can support](#) our deserving veterans, military and their families.

Making an Impact!

Colorado Institute for Social Impact is finalizing their Social Return on Investment (SROI) assessment pertaining to Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center's value and impact on our community. SROI is the measurement of the value of efforts of an organization to alleviate social, environmental and community issues and depicts the gain generated by an organization's contributions toward strengthening its community. **Initial results indicate that for every \$1 spent by Mt. Carmel, \$2 in support is received by the community through Mt. Carmel's programs and services to include employment, counseling and supportive service programs. These programs reduce homelessness, unemployment and incarceration.** In our next newsletter, we will provide a more in-depth look at the Institute's final findings.

Help Us Help Ours!

Please consider making a contribution to help us continue providing essential services to our veteran and military community. This may be given as a general gift or directed to a specific program. Gifts can also be designated in honor of a loved one. **To donate, please visit veteranscenter.org or text THANKAVET to 44321.**

You may also mail your contribution to:

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center
530 Communication Circle
Colorado Springs, CO 80905

If a gift of appreciated stock is something you are considering, or if you would like to include Mt. Carmel in your estate planning, please contact Alicia Grantham at (719) 309-4774 or agrantham@mtcarmelcenter.org to begin the conversation. And don't forget that you may direct your IRA Required Minimum Distribution to Mt. Carmel to support our work.

Mt. Carmel deeply appreciates your support. Thank you!

Mark Smith Takes the Helm in T&E



Mark Smith, Director of T&E

As a retired Sergeant First Class from the U.S. Army, Mark Smith is originally from Dexter, Missouri and resided there until his enlistment in the U.S. Army. Upon graduation from high school, he joined the Army as a Motor Transport Operator. After Serving at Ft. Carson, Colorado two times, Korea one time and Ft. Knox, Kentucky one time, Smith was assigned to the U.S. Army Recruiting Command. He served in Illinois, Missouri, Colorado and Tennessee and held positions as Team Leader, Squad Leader, Field Recruiter, Station Commander, First Sergeant, Master Trainer and Senior Master Trainer. After 20 years of service, Smith transitioned out of the Nashville U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion and settled in Colorado Springs. After retirement, he was the Shift Supervisor with Allied Barton with duty at University of Colorado Health System/Memorial Hospital Security Team. Then, he went to work for Vencore/Perspecta as a Data Monitor where he tracked the vehicle maintenance of the 1st Stryker Brigade. The new director came to Mt. Carmel to follow his true passion to help veterans and their families! When not at Mt. Carmel, Smith volunteers with the

Veterans for Veterans non-profit organization as the Chairman and assists the El Paso County Homeless Coalition.

Please join us in welcoming Mark Smith as the new Director of Transition & Employment!

Community Ambassadors Reconnect To Broaden Awareness

As influential advocates for the Mt. Carmel VSC mission, 27 Community Ambassadors reconnected in-person and virtually on Thursday, March 11 to hear the impact COVID has had on our military and veteran community. In addition, they learned about impactful initiatives happening this year as we continue to serve those who served. We are extremely grateful for our robust and well-connected Ambassadors who help expand our reach in the community by sharing our who, what, why within their networks.

Thank you to the following Ambassadors who joined the first-quarter Reconnect event:

Nanette Brede (Mueller)
Lisa Buckman
Lynda Cink
Scot Cuthbertson
Nicole de Naray
Tina Erzen
Bob Fenton
Jil Goebel
Longinos Gonzalez
Rodney Gullatte
Nicole Holling
Michelle Johnson
Aaron Kiewicz
Ann Koenigsman

Bob Lally
Carrie Lunkins
Deb Mahan
Bob Manderfield
Samantha Peck
Bill Phillips
Ted Robertson
Gina Sacripanti
Mike Sherman
Preston Smith
Greg Welch
Colen Willis
Andrew Woehle



Transition & Employment Success!



Meriah Reinhart

Meriah Reinhart first connected with Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center while she was a recruiter for Spectrum/Charter. The Transition & Employment (T&E) team partnered with her to secure employment for several Mt. Carmel clients and looked to her expertise to assist with resume and interview training.

Recently, Meriah, who is a military spouse, requested assistance in finding a new team. After a few job coaching sessions, the decision was made to use the USAA Diversity Grant to help her obtain a new certification in recruiting to make her more competitive in the job market. While she accomplished her certification, the team went to work on finding prospective employment opportunities for her. T&E has built a good relationship with Amazon, and the team was aware that they were expanding their recruiting team. As soon as Meriah obtained her new certification, she interviewed with our friends at Amazon and was hired!

The story gets better...

Ken Hoerning from ACI Learning/LeaderQuest, an on-site partner of Mt. Carmel, asked for help with highlighting opportunities for their graduates. Since ACI trains vets in the same field as what Meriah is now doing for Amazon, we were able to connect them!

Partnerships continue to be the key to clients' successful transition.

With a Little Help from Our Friends

Mt. Carmel is a non-profit organization that provides low/no cost services to ALL veterans, military and their families without restriction or eligibility requirements and without a steady stream of earned revenue such as fees or insurance reimbursements. This means **we rely on fundraising to support programs and serve clients**. We are very thankful to the generous foundations, government agencies, individuals and corporations who support Mt. Carmel. This month, we would like to thank the employees of Phil Long Dealerships for their generous and ongoing support!

Colorado Drives
PHIL LONG
PhilLong.com Since 1945

2021

Date March 11

Pay to the order of Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center \$ 34,950.92

Thirty Four Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty and 92/100 Dollars

Memo Partner Support Phil Long Employees

01234 0123456789 00012315468798

Behavioral Health Program Staying Busy



Kirsten Belaire
Director of Behavioral Health

We have seen an increase in need and have been working diligently to meet the needs of our clients! We have worked hard to smooth our warm handover process for clients who we refer to other agencies. Many of our community partners have had to start client waiting lists, which is something we have not seen before. This just proves that with the COVID pandemic, behavioral health needs are on the rise. We are almost to completion with our behavioral health buildout, which will add four new offices to increase services! Our director has been collaborating with community members on suicide prevention initiatives and has testified in favor of Senate Bill- 129 (Veteran Suicide Prevention Pilot Program). We are excited to be re-engaging in our couples retreats after cancelling all of them in 2020 due to COVID. Our couples retreat will be held at the Bar NI Ranch in May 2021. Our behavioral health team also attended a Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder training and has been implementing the interventions taught. We also started an Active Duty and Veteran Women's group on Fridays at 12:30pm and expanded Art Expression to now offer classes for families on Wednesdays at 5:50pm.

We look forward to 2021 being an engaging year full of successes.

Purple Up! for Military Kids

Held on April 15th of each year, "Purple Up! For Military Kids" is a day for Department of Defense Education Activity communities to wear purple to show support and thank military children for their strength and sacrifices.

Purple Up! Day will be celebrated on Thursday, April 15, 2021.



Weekly Groups & Classes

MONDAY

Art Expression

TUESDAY

Medicare Mentors

Yoga Therapy
Bible Study

Spiritual Connection Group

WEDNESDAY

loanDepot
Medicare Mentors

Art Expression for Families

Veterans Upward Bound
United Healthcare

THURSDAY

Veterans Upward Bound

Post-Traumatic Stress
Support Group

Medicare Mentors

FRIDAY

Military and Veteran
Women's Group

SATURDAY

Tai Chi

See our event calendar at veteranscenter.org for specifics.

Are you following us online and on social media?

For the latest Mt. Carmel information, events and services, visit veteranscenter.org.
Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter; and listen
to our weekly [Veterans Voice Podcast](http://KRDO.com) at KRDO.com.

