

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center



One-Stop for Veterans & Military

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Mt. Carmel a Beacon of Support Amidst COVID-19

The traditional saying about March coming in like a lion and going out like a lamb has definitely been modified this year! As we prepare to close March and the end of our fiscal year, we are closely monitoring the evolving information from national, state and local leaders regarding COVID-19. Please know Mt. Carmel's doors continue to remain open to our community's veterans during this time of uncertainty! As always, we want to be a Beacon of Support. However, the health and safety of everyone is paramount. We are screening in-person visitors and are encouraging guests to call ahead before visiting, but our lobby is open and available.



To encourage social distancing, a majority of Mt. Carmel staff is working remotely. Meetings with clients are taking place over the phone and services are continuing. Our Behavioral Health team of counselors is continuing therapy sessions, as needed. If you are a veteran in need, or know of a veteran needing immediate services, please contact us at 719-772-7000.

We recognize individuals and organizations want to help and we are incredibly grateful and honored to have you join us in supporting those who have served. The most immediate need is grocery cards for clients who've found themselves out of work due to business closures. We know this need, along with housing and utility shortages, will increase in the weeks to come. If you'd like to donate grocery cards, please let us know by calling 719-309-4715. If you're in a place to give financially, please visit our online donation page at VeteransCenter.org

As every other organization, Mt. Carmel's leadership is closely monitoring the evolving situation and will make programming updates as necessary. We encourage you to visit us at facebook.com/mtcarmelvsc/ to stay abreast of changes. Thank you for your continued support and for joining us as we're #StrongerTogether!

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

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Welcome, New Board Members

Mt. Carmel is grateful for its esteemed and supportive Board of Managers. As we begin a new fiscal year in April, we welcome new members to the board.



Col. Jim Hannon, USAF, Ret.
USAA
Regional Site Management – Director



Evan Pappas
KOAA Communications
President & General Manager



Lt. Col. Michelle Ruehl, USAF
Flight instructor & Executive Officer
to the Commander, USAF Reserve Officer



Kevin Shaughnessy
Phil Long Dealerships
VP/Partner

These new members join the following diverse and committed group, led by Chairman Larry Dozier of Integrity Bank. Each is a leader in their industry and we appreciate their passion for serving veterans.

Paulette Greenberg - Greenberg Center for Learning & Tolerance

Michael S. League - 5Star Bank

Terrance McWilliams - El Pomar Foundation

Chuck Murphy - Murphy Constructors, Inc.

Douglas P. Price - Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau

Mark Waller - El Paso County Commissioner

Behavioral Health's Graduate Interns

“If it wasn't for the volunteer hours of our impactful graduate interns and licensure candidates, there is no way we could provide the quantity of counseling sessions and quality mental health breakthroughs our patients experience,” shares Kirsten Belaïre, Mt. Carmel's director of behavioral health and wellness. This spring semester, we are excited to welcome 16 interns and 7 licensure candidates from seven colleges across the state and one in Minneapolis.

While providing practical experience to interns and licensure candidates, Mt. Carmel believes in creating future cohorts of clinicians who are culturally competent to provide services to our military community. Through the support of dedicated interns and licensure candidates, Mt. Carmel is poised to provide both traditional and non-traditional counseling services, serving approximately 160 individuals weekly through traditional sessions and another 20 weekly through non-traditional therapy.

Colorado Christian University student Marie-Kriz O. Saintil has been making the most of her experience working with veterans and their family members this semester. “The internship experience with Mt. Carmel is empowering and inspiring,” Marie comments. “Working with veterans helps my development as a counselor in real-life situations and one-on-one contact with clients. The best thing about my internship experience is being given the space and time to apply what I know and develop my identity as a counselor on my own. But also knowing that my supervisor (director of behavioral health) is available to help and educate whenever needed and she gives me insight that challenges my growth as a counselor. I've gained confidence and my internship experience has been enjoyable and definitely worthwhile,” reflects Marie.



Marie-Kriz O. Saintil, MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling Student, Colorado Christian University

Notes from Those We Serve



Mt. Carmel's Transition and Employment team experienced a bittersweet farewell last month as Mandy Wade, Mt. Carmel client turned volunteer, accepted a long-awaited job.

As a military spouse of 21 years, Mandy's story was all too familiar. “Due to my husband's military commitment, moving often and raising our children, I had to put my career on hold,” shares Mandy, mother of two. And while she was content with their joint decision, she was ready to get back to work last year after many years being out of the workforce.

Her excitement soon diminished as she quickly realized how daunting the process would be. It was difficult to figure out how to connect with employers and what to include on a resume when you've spent multiple

years immersed in the valuable task of raising the next generation.

Thankfully, Mandy connected with Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center and quickly plugged into many of the events hosted by its Transition and Employment team. A graduate of the week-long Prep Connect 360 job training workshop and resume writing classes, a Hiring our Heroes event and Onward to Opportunity professional certification support, Mandy has charged forward. In fact, she recently landed a position with a national financial organization at a local Colorado Springs branch office. “I'm excited to have my feet back on the ground after 17 years. Mt. Carmel provided such valuable opportunities, and most importantly for me, networking!”

Mandy recognizes there are so many other military spouses in her situation and she shares these words of wisdom, “Get plugged in, talk about your experiences, volunteer and re-acclimate yourself with fresh and pertinent professional development skills.”

Are You Listening to the Award-Winning Veterans Voice?

The Mt. Carmel Veterans Voice Podcast was awarded first place in 2019 at the Colorado Broadcaster Association Awards of Excellence in the Best Use of New Media Category! The bi-monthly radio show is a podcast broadcast on KRDO Radio. Veterans Voice is hosted by KRDO personality and Navy veteran, Mike Lewis, and is presented by USAA in partnership with Star Dental Institute.

Listen at:

<https://www.krdonewsradio.podbean.com/p/the-mt-carmel-veterans-voice-with-mike-lewis/>



Mt. Carmel Honored to Host Honor Flight Veterans Monthly



L-R: Honor Flight alums Cliff Stoker, Jack Froehle, Jan Kinney, Donald Anderson & Claude Julian

Mt. Carmel is honored to host a myriad of veteran-specific events throughout the year and the Honor Flight of Southern Colorado monthly fellowship gathering is a highlight for those who attend. Honor Flight Network is a nonprofit created to honor America's veterans for their sacrifice by flying veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect at the memorials.

While the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit our nation's capital, monuments and memorials is highly anticipated, what veterans are unprepared for is the community's support from send off to welcome home a couple days later. Claude Julian, Honor Flight of Southern Colorado alum of flight #8 in 2016, remembers that no matter where they were in public, fellow Americans young and old lined the sidewalks welcoming them. "It was quite touching," reflects Claude. "And then on the flight home, they surprised us by doing a mail call and we each received an envelope full of cards, pictures and messages from family, friends and strangers thanking us for our service. It was just amazing," exclaims Claude.

Claude is part of the local Honor Flight group that meets the second Wednesday of the month and they always enjoy welcoming fellow Honor Flight alums. If you know of a veteran who has taken an Honor Flight, please encourage them to stop by 9:00-11:00 a.m. the second Wednesday of each month.

There is also a financial need to provide future Honor Flights. Honor Flight Network relies 100% on donations, and trips are completely covered for veterans. Many veterans from Southern Colorado are on the waiting list. You can make their dream become a reality. Check out their website at <http://www.honorflightsoco.us/index.html>

Make a Difference Today!

At Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center, we believe military heroes need a hand-up, not a handout. You can play an important role and have a direct impact on thousands of veterans in our community!

**Donate today to help provide vital services,
programs and resources.**

Visit veteranscenter.org to Donate

Partner Spotlight: Break the Silence Against Domestic Violence



In 2017, Break the Silence Against Domestic Violence (BTSADV) was introduced to Mt. Carmel by one of their former board members and Survivor Sister Retreat participants during a visit to Colorado Springs. The founder of BTSADV, Kristen Faith, met Bob McLaughlin who shared stories about the organization and the vision of bringing their message to the Olympic City. The meeting was encouraging and full of hope. BTSADV had asked countless times about serving military families and had been waiting for the right moment. As a military spouse and domestic violence survivor, Kristen believed partnering with Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center was the right fit for her organization.

In 2019, Kristen and her team moved into Mt. Carmel's building and they continue to be a beacon of hope for domestic violence survivors and their families. BTSADV compliments the services crisis shelters offer and assists in decreasing the number of times victims return to abusive partners. Recovering after abuse can be a life-long journey, and they are committed to addressing healing after crisis by providing a national network for survivors to connect, speak out and advocate against abuse. What an honor it is to host BTSADV and partner with them to serve victims, survivors and families affected by domestic violence.

Real Estate Community Supports Veterans



Mt. Carmel Client Alex McMath shares his success story with the Winter Gala audience.

The weekend of January 31 and February 1 saw strong support of veterans from the real estate community. On Friday, January 31, Carrie Lukins and Preston Smith with Sellstate Alliance Realty and their nonprofit COS Network invited Mt. Carmel to be one of three nonprofits featured at their quarterly social impact happy hour held at The Ivywild School Gymnasium. The COS Network believes that when we come together as many, we can make a bigger impact in our community! As a local 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, they work to combine small donations to generate large amounts and provide a larger contribution to local organizations who need it most. *Donors can still support the January 31 event through the end of March. Please visit <https://thecosnetwork.org/donations/389/> if you would like to donate.*

The following evening of February 1, the Pikes Peak Association of Realtors (PPAR) held their 4th annual Winter Gala at the Wyndham Antlers Hotel. They very generously selected Mt. Carmel to receive all proceeds from the event. Guests heard the moving testimony of Mt. Carmel client Alex McMath, who shared how fully being seen for his potential propelled him to transform his identity and career path. He has this to share with guests, “Today, I stand before you as a testimony to everything a person can regain if we share with them the hope that comes from being seen.” A huge thank you to Alex for sharing his story and guests for their tremendous support of veterans!

Congratulations, Prep Connect 360 Class of March 2020!

With the most recent graduating class of 16, the 5-day transition workshop recognizes 770 graduates during its seven-year program! The next class is May 4-8, 2020. Advance registration is required. Contact Richard Gagne at rgagne@mtcarmelcenter.org or call (719) 309-4777 to sign up or ask questions.



King Soopers Community Rewards Help Veterans

SPREAD THE WORD:

Help Veterans just by using your King Soopers or City Market card - after you select us online (in just a few clicks)...and there is no impact to your fuel points.

Visit <https://veteranscenter.org/king-soopers-community-rewards> for details.

SHOP. SAVE. SWIPE. SUPPORT.
To support veterans through the King Soopers Community Rewards Program!

PROVIDE A HAND-UP TO VETERANS, MILITARY AND THEIR FAMILIES SIMPLY BY SHOPPING AT KING SOOPERS OR CITY MARKET!

ENROLL IN THE KING SOOPERS COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM AND SELECT

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Participation has no impact on fuel points.

Veterans Climb

Serving Those Who Served
In Community Partnership

Career & Transition Services • Supportive Services • Health & Wellness

EL PASO FOUNDATION

PIKES PEAK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PIKES PEAK WORKFORCE CENTER

Mt. Carmel
VETERANS SERVICE CENTER

WELLNESS • TRANSITION • RESOURCES

The Journey

Veterans Tribute Walkway



Honor a loved one or show your support of a veteran friend or family member by purchasing a brick or paver, featured as part of our Veterans Tribute Walkway on the Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center campus.

The proceeds are used to continue providing our essential veterans services. Bricks range from \$175 - \$200; Pavers from \$750 - \$850. They can even be personalized with military emblems.

To order your brick or paver,
or for additional information,
visit www.thatsmybrick.com/mtcvsc



Upcoming Events

(All events at Mt. Carmel unless noted - additional events at veteranscenter.org)

Events are subject to change due to the COVID-19 situation, so please check our website prior to coming to the Center.

PTS Group

Thursdays, March 26 - April 30

Expressive Writing

Fridays, March 27 - April 24

Spiritual Connection

Tuesdays, March 24 - April 28

Honor Flight

Wednesday, April 8

Tricare for Life/VA Medicare Seminar

Wednesday, April 8

Volunteer and Community Ambassador Social

Thursday, April 9

Employer Day Thrivent

Wednesday, April 15

Chamber of Commerce

Thursday, April 16

VA Benefit Class

Tuesday, April 21

Employer Day: Bureau of Prisons

Wednesday, April 22

Are you following us online and on social media?

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

