

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center



One-Stop for Veterans & Military

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Supporting Military, Veterans and Families Throughout COVID-19

As Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center adjusts to the complexities of the COVID-19 crisis, I am energized by the dedication, compassion and resilience our team exhibited, and continues to display, over the past two months! Without missing a beat, our mighty team was committed to being a Beacon of Support for military, veterans and their families, ensuring no one fell through the cracks. And we continue that commitment as our community slowly reengages.



We witnessed an increase in client interaction as military, veterans and their families reached out for behavioral health, food, housing and employment assistance. Often working remotely, staff and volunteers provided resources guiding clients through uncertain times. Behavioral health clinicians quickly adapted to safe and secure virtual therapy sessions via TeleHealth and have conducted 196 virtual counseling sessions since late March.

Our Veteran & Family Resource Center team witnessed families affected by sudden job loss coupled with limited savings and quickly gave them a hand-up. Within the past two months, we've connected with 43 families and resolved 24 immediate needs.

While unemployment is hitting all-time highs, our employment peer navigators are actively engaging with clients, connecting them to training opportunities, linking them to virtual career fairs and mentoring them through this unprecedented season. Fifty-five clients have been placed into employment or training programs during the crisis.

In addition to serving clients, I've witnessed community collaboration become stronger than ever. Mt. Carmel is building new partnerships with nonprofits to serve our community even better. We recognize the power of partnering with industry leaders to create impact and drive change.

Finally, we are incredibly grateful for the financial support Mt. Carmel has received from generous philanthropic organizations stepping up to ensure Coloradans don't fall through the cracks throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Many community members have donated directly to the Pikes Peak Community Foundation, and I want you to know every dollar is critical in ensuring local nonprofits continue to serve the vulnerable in our community. Thank you for stepping up as we're #StrongerTogether!

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

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Grateful for Grants

While Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center is incredibly grateful of individual donors' financial support, we want to recognize local and state foundations, trusts and agencies who have stepped up support for community nonprofits throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Their financial support allows Mt. Carmel and many other nonprofits to continue offering wraparound support for military and veteran families as we navigate the logistical challenges brought on by social distancing. The following list of donors recognizes their support for our military and veteran community. Funds are directly impacting Mt. Carmel clients daily.



- Albertsons Safeway Foundation- provide hunger relief
- Colorado COVID Relief Fund- general operating support
- Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)- Emergency Housing Assistance Fund provides housing support
- El Pomar Foundation- COVID Emergency Fund provides emergency and behavioral health services
- May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust- general operating support
- Pikes Peak Community Foundation- Emergency Relief Fund to provide TeleHealth behavioral health implementation
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Community Collaboration Feeds Hungry Military and Veterans During COVID-19

Care and Share Food Bank for Southern Colorado and Colorado Springs Food Rescue collaborated with host Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center on Friday, May 8 for a drive-thru distribution of perishable and nonperishable food for families in need. Mt. Carmel staff, board members and community ambassadors organized the event and look forward to more giveaways this summer.

Please call 719-772-7000 if you have questions or to confirm the bi-weekly distribution.

Upcoming Distributions
Beginning at 11:00 a.m. until food runs out
530 Communication Circle

Friday, May 22
Friday, June 5
Friday, June 19
Friday, July 17
Friday, July 31



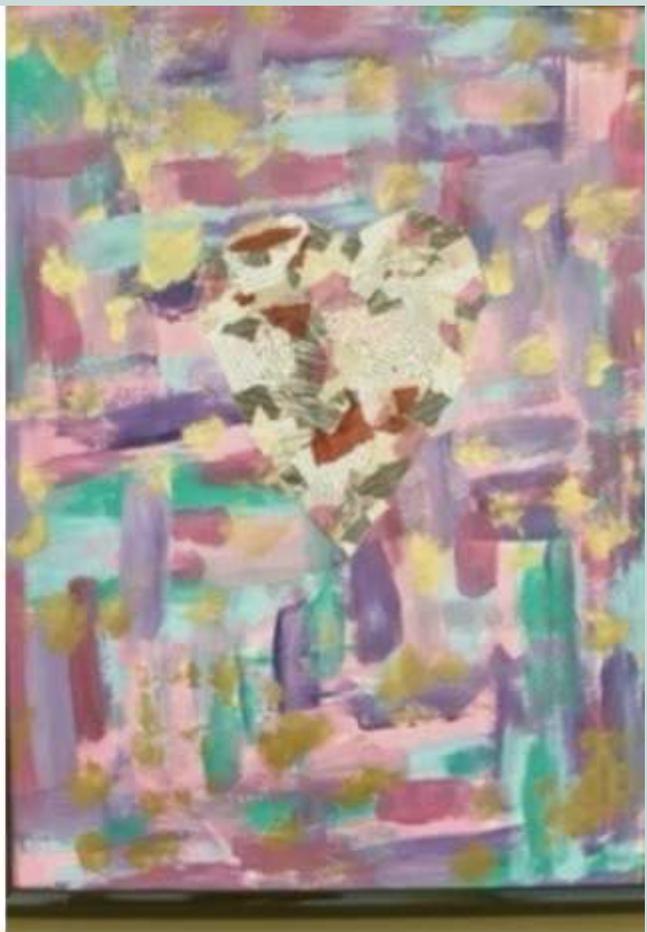
Partner Spotlight: Art Therapy Guides Trauma Healing

We're all familiar with the benefits of traditional talk-therapy but Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center offers many non-traditional therapy options, including Art Therapy. Since the fall of 2018, anywhere from four to nine individuals join art therapist Kim Griffis weekly as she guides participants through a group art session providing a safe environment where they can explore their feelings through the use of art materials. This can help release stress and explore emotions without using words.

"I want to do my part in helping them heal from any emotional trauma they may have experienced throughout their military service," shares Kim. "As a facilitator, I have often witnessed a person's mood shift from being reserved and tenuous at the beginning of class to relaxed and more upbeat by the time they have finished their project," reflects Kim.

As an alternative method of therapy that can provide a behavioral health client a non-threatening way to express emotions and feelings related to past trauma or current emotional distress, the free weekly class welcomes regulars who enjoy the opportunity of interacting with their peers in an emotionally supportive environment and drop-in clients just trying out the class.

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center is grateful for its partnership with Bemis School of Art at Colorado College and grant funding through the Disabled Veterans National Foundation (DVNF) and Colorado Springs Health Foundation, which covers all costs. Sessions are held every Monday evening in-person at Mt. Carmel's 530 Communication Circle location. There is limited availability due to social distancing and group size. Pre-registration is required at wingsarttherapy@gmail.com.



Artists are encouraged to take their art to their next therapy session to discuss, if they are already working with a behavioral health therapist.

Notes from Those We Serve

Navy veteran Todd Janszen quickly climbed the professional ladder following his nine plus-year military career to a comfortable and tenured role as a senior systems administrator in the civilian sector. After 14 years, the position provided financial security but nothing else. “I was burned out; I felt I had lost my voice in the company and had nothing more to contribute,” reflects Todd.

At this same time, a combination of life events converged leading Todd and his wife to Colorado Springs last year with no job, no family and no friends. Todd quickly experienced buyer’s remorse and worried he didn’t have the energy to “start over.”

“It wasn’t until I stumbled into Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center and participated in Prep Connect 360, a week-long advanced employment workshop, that I regained my motivation to charge ahead,” says Todd.

But Todd’s professional career in Colorado Springs took two steps back for every step it took forward. That is until last December when he was recruited by a previous employer for a better-suited position than he previously fulfilled. Todd is once again confident in his system administrator role with the United States Air Force Academy Dean of the Faculty where he maintains a server, a small private network and trains junior and senior technicians.

“I maintain, troubleshoot and deploy Windows and a lot of other COTS software for nearly 800 laptops and desktops for faculty, staff and labs” shares Todd, “and I am so grateful to once again be engaged and supporting a leading organization such as USAFA!” The resilience Todd acquired during his Navy career is evident once again as he continues to strengthen his skills by pursuing the Cisco Certified Network Administrator (CCNA) certification through Mt. Carmel partner LeaderQuest.

Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center joins Todd in celebrating his professional resurgence and the impact it will have on the Colorado Springs community.



Todd Janszen and his Mt. Carmel Job Coach Tandi Zerfoss

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/>



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

Registration Now Open for Prep Connect 360 June Class

Looking for more information about how to bridge the gap between military and civilian careers? Prep Connect 360 builds on what veterans learned in TAP/ACAP/Soldier for Life and takes you to the next level. Best described as “Master’s level TAP” or “TAP on steroids,” Prep Connect 360 is a free, week-long workshop that focuses on YOU. What do YOU want to do next? You’ll polish your 30-second introduction, get hands-on interview practice with local employers and learn how to network. The week is all about YOU and your transition! Prep Connect 360 is in its eighth year and has taught over 770 students how to transition into the civilian job market. It is small group instruction so has limited seats available. Dates for upcoming classes are June 15-19 and July 13-17, 2020. Interested? Want to learn more? To reserve a seat, send your two-page resume to prepconnect360@gmail.com.



Remembrance Rock at Fort Carson Recognizes Sacrifice Of Military, Veterans and their Families

Earlier this month, Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center founder and Phil Long Enterprise President Jay Cimino and Mt. Carmel Chief Operating Officer Bob McLaughlin visited a treasured-memorial welcoming guests to Fort Carson's Forrest Resiliency Center.

In 2012, when Colonel Bob McLaughlin was Fort Carson Garrison Commander, Mr. Cimino laid a plaque in honor of Phil Long, World War II veteran, and all military members and their families who have committed to defending and preserving freedom at home and abroad. The plaque is prominently paired near the serenity waterfall reminding visitors that we will never forget the sacrifice of our veterans.

Welcoming Mr. Cimino and Colonel McLaughlin earlier this month were Colonel Wortinger, Fort Carson Garrison Commander, and Command Sergeant Major Mack.



Fort Carson leadership join Jay Cimino and Bob McLaughlin at a remembrance rock on Fort Carson honoring military members and their families for their sacrifices.

Veteran Paying it Forward

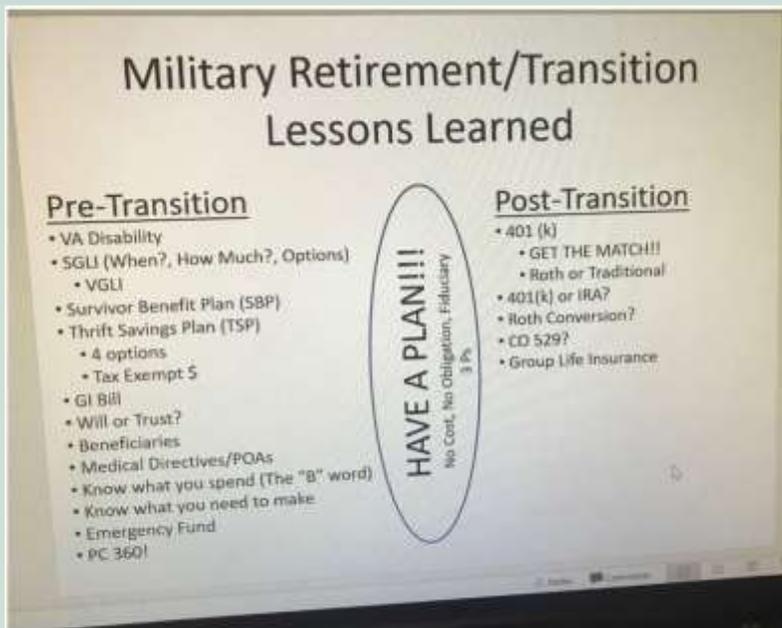
“I want to share not only my lessons learned but lessons learned from other transitioning veterans in how to more successfully navigate a military transition,” says Ryan Plunkett, 22-year Air Force veteran, Mt. Carmel client and now partner. Ryan continues, “I quickly realized after I transitioned that my why ‘was to help others get to their why.’”

As a financial advisor, Ryan is passionate about sharing his lessons learned to help transitioning veterans navigate the complexities of the myriad of critical decisions all veterans face during transition. The timing of some decisions can be critical, so Ryan begins working with transitioning veterans up to a year before they transition and continues to serve them after they have successfully transitioned into their next career. Ryan is excited to partner with Mt. Carmel’s Transition & Employment team, and recently led the virtual workshop *Avoiding Financial Pitfalls in Transition* in partnership with Mt. Carmel.



The “Avoiding Financial Pitfalls in Transition” workshop was held virtually via Zoom on April 29.

“Ryan epitomizes the ‘pay it forward’ mindset that serves as Mt Carmel’s very foundation,” shares Paul Price, Mt. Carmel director of transition & employment. “Ryan was a client who made a successful shift to the civilian sector and is now a selfless supporter of our program assisting transitioning service members and their families!”



Workshop instructor Ryan Plunkett shared valuable lessons learned with participants.

Ryan is passionate about helping veterans navigate the complexities of the transition process. He has walked the journey transitioning veterans are currently taking and has a first-hand understanding of how stressful, and sometimes overwhelming, the process can be as so many aspects of life, as we know it, are changing simultaneously.

Ryan is honored to have the opportunity to pay it forward by working with fellow veterans to gain an understanding of their “why,” help them build a personalized strategy to successfully attain their “why” and to take the journey with his fellow service members, every step of the way, keeping them on track. You’re invited to connect with Ryan via phone at 719-380-1177 or www.linkedin.com/in/ryan-plunkett.

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!

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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.***

Tai Chi

Saturdays at 10am

Art Expression

Mondays at 5pm

Food Give Away

Beginning at 11am until food runs out
May 22, June 5, June 19, July 17 and July 31

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.

