

Voices of Hope

Recovery Month 2023

Stronger Together



During National Recovery Month, Valley Hope's mission is to inspire people and families living in sobriety and to remove barriers for those seeking healing in recovery.

This year, we asked our alumni and our staff to share their stories.



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"You CAN get better. You DESERVE to get better."

"Face your demons, and let them go. You are worth it."

"Work on the issues that keep you in addiction and find something you're passionate about."

"The things that feel the hardest are usually helping the most."

"No matter what happens, know that you are not permanently broken and recovery is possible!"

"It will be YOUR journey and don't compare YOUR journey to anyone else's journey."

"PROTECT your recovery! Because nobody else will or can!"

"You can do this, as long as you draw breath there is hope."

"This is a program of action, so it is time to get to work."



Alumni Stories



Tonya T.
Valley Hope of Cushing



When is your sobriety birthday?

October 15, 2017

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

That power of forgiveness....to myself AND others. My past doesn't define me. Holding onto resentment keeps me in the "victim" mindset. I choose today to not drink or use. I keep my spiritual life in tact and I do the next right thing.....one day at a time!

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

There are a few, but Nurse Link and my counselor, Debbie, had a huge impact on my stay. They will never know how grateful I am for the conversations and encouragement they gave me!

What is life like today in recovery?

It's not always easy, sometimes I have to take it minute by minute. But I know what to do. And I don't have to turn to a substance! I have my family, that support and love me! I have a God that has opened doors for me that never would've been possible while I was in my addiction. I know how to live life sober!

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Your recovery is contingent upon your spiritual maintenance! Just do the next right thing! When you hear people read from the book, or have a these quoted to share with you, listen! Really listen to the words! Hang onto someone that has many years of sobriety. Keep them by your side. Do what they do! And you have to learn to let things go! You may lose some friends, you may have family that won't talk to you for a while. As long as you've tried to make your amends, then you just have to move on! Life goes on! It's not going to stop! We only have today. So live it, one day at a time!



Ed N.
Valley Hope of Norton



When is your sobriety birthday?

July 29, 1989

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

Made me open my eyes to the real person I was. When I realized I was actually an ugly person on the inside, it made me realize that no one was going to change unless I did first. It also made me realize that there are people in this world that care and are there to help. The team at the Norton facility were all outstanding, compassionate, eager to help, and made this terrible person turn his life around. Will be forever grateful to that team. They did the impossible.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

My counselor, Rita H, and the chaplain were incredible. Actually, everyone at the Norton facility helped me. I remember first walking into the facility; I was scared and angry. But the people that I first talked to were so nice and just talked to me like a normal person. I was not expecting that at all. Then each person I met along my journey was like family. Think I cried with all of them at some point, but somewhere along the journey, my smile came back due to each one of the team members rooting for me to get better and become a better person. Somehow they saw that in me. Thank you so much.

What is life like today in recovery?

Today, even though it is still difficult, is one day at a time. I no longer look for answers in a drink, but to the inside. I ask myself why am I feeling this way, and it usually comes out that I am not taking care of myself or letting the way I used to think when I was drinking, sneak into my head. My difficulties are normal like issues, but none of them have to do with drinking. I work on each issue as they arise and then move forward. I still have my daily books by my night stand, and turn things over to my High Power. I am working and living in his life and truly believe that he will provide and take care of me.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Work your program that best suits you. Everyone is a little different, and don't be scared to try to work the program your way. Things work very well for some people, but for me, it was all the little things that added up the the big picture. I went back to church to understand my Higher Power and I have continued to go to church. It brings me peace and confidence each week, for me to keep moving forward and doing what is best for myself and my family. I always thought I was close to my family, even when drinking heavily, but little did I know how far away from them I really was. Once they saw the change in me, then we became family!!

Stacy W.
Valley Hope of Chandler



When is your sobriety birthday?

November 11, 2019

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

I was not given up on. If it wasn't for my counselor going above and beyond finding extended treatment for me I don't know if the last time would have been the last time in treatment. I was at Valley Hope of Chandler 3 times and different treatments 7 times over a year and a half. I'm coming up on 4 years and I'm living a life I didn't think I could live.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

Kim. She changed my life.

What is life like today in recovery?

I finished school and have a career and my family in my life. Not just being sober but worked on all the traumas that lead me to addiction are what help recovery.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Get therapy and surround yourself with people in recovery. Work on the issues that keep you in addiction and find something you're passionate about.



Lori W.
Valley Hope of Cushing



When is your sobriety birthday?

December 19, 2022

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

That life is a journey. As much trauma and struggles you have brought with you. You CAN leave them at the door. You CAN get better. You DESERVE to get better. There are people from all around the globe that are right where you are now and people that have been there and moved on. Its a choice only you can make. Develop a mantra, develop a success plan. Live it day by day. You do not have to do it alone.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

RayB, Grizz and Dee were my counselors and each was special and guided me through recovery. That said, everyone there from the cafeteria folks that specially made peach cobbler for me to the janitorial folks. Everyone was kind and supportive.

What is life like today in recovery?

My life today is clear and productive. I have the love and support of my family and friends. I attend AA meetings regularly and find them very useful and comforting. They also serve as reminders of where I was and where I am now. As an individual, people comment on the difference in my demeanor and of course I look SOO much healthier. Life is always going to present us with challenges - that is a given. Its your choice how to meet those challenges. One day at a time sounds cheesy, but it's real. It can be yours too!

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Wake up sober, do the work, go to sleep sober...a mantra shared by all. Face your demons, and let them go. You are worth it.

Gaila R.
Valley Hope of Parker



When is your sobriety birthday?

November 28, 2020

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

Honestly it was the schedule, having classes and therapy and mass offered. It was also the little jobs they made us do. It have a since of purpose.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

I don't remember his name but he was a counselor with long hair and he was extremely spiritual and well traveled. Then there was a man that always said "just do it" and he wore Nike shirts often. I loved his classes.

What is life like today in recovery?

Experiencing the joys of being alive and a having a new sober foundation to build my life on. I am an active mother to my two children now, I have a hair salon that I run, I have adopted a dog, and I have a very spiritual relationship with my higher power. I have lived in sober living and then transitioned to an apartment, and have moved from Colorado to Arizona and just recently back to Colorado. I attend meetings, sponsor women, work with my sponsor, and am emerged in the sober community.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Get therapy and surround yourself with people in recovery. Work on the issues that keep you in addiction and find something you're passionate about.



Jack F.
Valley Hope of O'Neill



When is your sobriety birthday?

January 10, 2014

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

That I didn't need to drink...for any reason. That my life can be a happy one without drinking. That family comes first- my wife, 6 kids, and 14 grandkids. That God has let me be clean for my grandkids. That I'm now a fourth Knight of Columbus. Retired, but can still sub schools for band directors. And the best thing is that I can go to Valley Hope and maybe say just one thing that might help someone else.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

John. All the staff really cared. They all did a good job with me.

What is life like today in recovery?

Great....my kids and grandkids all love me. Now I get to hold and play with my baby great grandkids. My kids wouldn't let my grands near me when I was drinking because I would get mean. Sobriety solved that problem. I enjoy doing a book study every week at the treatment center with a friend and we share our story once a month at Valley Hope of O'Neill. I love seeing people being or getting clean and happy again. And, I can give back what was gladly given to me. I also sponsor, even to two great nephews who are staying sober.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Listen and even take notes when you are in treatment. Talk with the staff and listen to what they say to you. I had great conversations with my counselors. Those talks and ideas have stuck with me for a long time. Make a friend or few and keep in contact with them after treatment. That helps me too.



Hailey H.

New Directions for Families



When is your sobriety birthday?

November 13, 2022

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

Structure, like I was taught at Valley Hope, is where I now get the gratification I used to seek from drugs. I think being there gave me structure that I was quite literally incapable of giving and maintaining myself. It felt like the hardest part at the time, but looking back I think that's what made this place different from the others.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

Monica and Tricia. Amber is still to this day the best therapist I've ever had! Krystal is wonderful and introduced me to Joe Dispensa. The staff is incredible.

What is life like today in recovery?

It's simple and oddly satisfying to not be flooded with remorse and guilt at every moment. I'm eternally grateful to be able to enjoy what I once thought was a monotonous life: wake up, work, family, eat, rinse, repeat. Because it was so severe for me that I truly thought my brain and body just weren't capable of feeling satisfied by normal life.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Just don't give up. Listen to advice especially that you don't want to listen to...the things that feel the hardest are usually helping the most. No matter what happens, know that you are not permanently broken and recovery is possible! For many years, I couldn't stay clean for even 5 days in a row outside of a rehab. Now, I am approaching 9 months clean and free!



Jorden W.
Valley Hope of Chandler



When is your sobriety birthday?

July 20, 2022

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

I am not in control or responsible for the world around me. Only God or your higher power has control.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

My counselor, Aimee P.

What is life like today in recovery?

I'm free from the obsession with alcohol and drugs. I regularly attend the Tuesday night alumni meeting, which is also my home group. I call my sponsor daily and am working on the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. I have grown strong friendships and a fellowship with people I attended residential and outpatient with and met outside in meetings. Life is truly amazing, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to reflect on myself and change the course of my life at Valley Hope of Chandler and Valley Hope of Tempe.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Admitting yourself to residential/in-patient treatment isn't enough to keep you sober and change the course of your life. You need to read and reflect on the literature of Alcoholics Anonymous, not only by yourself but with others. Other's perspective is how you truly learn the lessons of AA. The most impactful thing I did while still attending Valley Hope was to get a sponsor. I have the same sponsor today and he challenges me regularly. He has played the most significant role in changing my life.

Heather D.
Valley Hope of Moundridge



When is your sobriety birthday?

March 7, 2023

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

My valuable reconnection to God and how to be okay with where my feet are planted each day! All the time God is good!

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

Donald, Chris, Lana and especially Heather Carty!

What is life like today in recovery?

Joy and a peace that passeth all understanding has returned abundantly! I have finally developed a positive self image that allows me to only want good, healthy things for myself and for those who I love. I'm healthier, happier, more productive and confident than I have been in so many dark years...and I smile!

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Keep seeking, learning, longing and working for your miracle! Surrender your addiction to your higher power and be grateful for the smallest of things.



Kristi H.
Valley Hope of O'Neill



When is your sobriety birthday?

April 7, 2019

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

My biggest takeaway was re-establishing or building relationships. First with God...I had always known and loved God; it was not until I began my recovery that I truly leaned into his strength and stopped asking him for favors and started trusting in his guidance. Secondly with family...I have to set boundaries and it's okay! And then there is my patient group...I've met and still stay in contact with some of the most amazing people!

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

Chaplain Wes was most influential in my treatment! There are not enough words to express my gratitude!!!

What is life like today in recovery?

Life is normal...my normal; I'm an alcoholic in recovery!!! I am blessed and grateful for God, my family and my friends!

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

My piece of advice for anyone seeking recovery is it will be YOUR journey and don't compare YOUR journey to anyone else's journey.

Shari M.
Valley Hope of O'Neill



When is your sobriety birthday?

June 7, 2017

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

So many takeaways. Get a sponsor, go to meetings, get to know people, do service work. All of these things combined will keep you sober. Stay connected!

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

Karen. She was real; didn't sugarcoat anything. Her story was scary, yet moving. It showed that we can change if we just do the next right thing. My pastor was also influential. He was the most soft spoken, easy to talk to person; he just had a comfort about him. He remembered every talk we had and that means a lot. It's like family.

What is life like today in recovery?

It's a life I would have never imagined. I won't sit here and say it was easy- it was work. One day at a time is no joke. There's always your firsts: first holidays, first summer, first meetings. I cried the first 2 years and still do because you're feeling so much. Never be ashamed of it. EVER! I always hated speaking in meetings because, believe it or not, without alcohol I found I was quite introverted. But as a newcomer, old timer, or anything in between, we always hear what we need to hear in meetings.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Don't look back and don't look forward - just do what you can in the 24 hours that you're in. Reach out - it doesn't matter if it's a good or bad day. At first, I honestly hated AA because it felt like *oh man another meeting...* BUT how much time did it take spend on our addictions? One day you'll feel like you're in AA - a part of it. Not just a seat in a chair. I learned to trust again. You don't have to do anything alone. EVER!



Nora H.
Valley Hope of Cushing



When is your sobriety birthday?

May 8

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

We are not unique in our struggle and we are never ever alone on our journey, if we don't want to be!

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

My counselor and her husband.

What is life like today in recovery?

Visceral. Authentic. Valuable.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

If you are thinking you may need help, you do. The beauty of being in a room of strangers that understand you without even knowing your name is indescribable. Just show up, you'll be thankful you did.

Ryan W.
Valley Hope of Norton



When is your sobriety birthday?

March 31, 2022

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

Brian Blevins.

What is life like today in recovery?

My life is great - I'm full of joy for the first time in my life. I found my smile thanks to Valley Hope.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Follow the advice they give you and teach you when you leave:

- Pray
- Meditate
- Call your sponsor
- Read the literature
- Go to meetings

I thought the bookmark I was given that said those 5 things was just a cheesy bookmark; now those are the things I practice regularly that gave me back my life.



Jackie R.
Valley Hope of Chandler



When is your sobriety birthday?

June 18, 2023

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

I left Chandler Valley Hope with a new lease on life and the tools I needed to address my addiction, trauma, and mental health issues. I left equipped and armed with the weapons I need to fight this disease every day. I learned so much about myself and why I made the decisions I made that led to my demise. I am 80 days clean and never have to use again.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

All the staff were amazing. Pat specifically made a profound impact on me. His lectures were so moving and the material was incredibly applicable.

What is life like today in recovery?

Amazing. I talk to my sponsor several times a week, go to meetings, journal, pray and talk to God every day. The obsession to use has been lifted. I am working on my emotional sobriety, which needs a major overhaul.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

You can do this. It is going to be hard for a little while but think of your family, your spouse, your children. Ultimately you have to do this for yourself. I am not telling you it will be easy, I am telling you it will be worth it.

Kimberly S.
Valley Hope of O'Neil



When is your sobriety birthday?

April 27, 2022

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

Alcoholism/Addiction is the only disease where I have a choice in my treatment. If I continue to do the work everyday then I can remain happy, joyous and free. The fellowship of the program has strengthened my sobriety and my life in general.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

Jess Duda is an amazing individual and a valued part of my treatment. I had Jess for small group and her lectures were motivating and real. Jess is easy to talk to and in recovery herself. She is also very funny and kind!

What is life like today in recovery?

Today I am so free. I am happy and healthy. I have a job that I love. I have a husband and puppy that also share my recovery with me. I spend my time involved in the program of AA. I work the steps, I talk with my sponsor. I do service work at our local rehabilitation in Rapid City, SD.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

If you are seeking recovery, Valley Hope can give you all the tools you will need. It will be up to you to use those tools. It's the hardest thing I have ever done but it is 100% worth it. I have peace and serenity in my life today. I no longer hide or isolate. I have my friends, family and health as well. It is truly a life beyond my wildest dreams.



Kenneth R.
Valley Hope of Moundridge



When is your sobriety birthday?

April 5

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

If anyone wants to go to a recovery center where the staff actually care about you then I would suggest going to Valley Hope of Moundridge. I can't speak for any other recovery center because I've only been here.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

My counselor Lana! She is the best and I love her for everything she did for me during my time there.

What is life like today in recovery?

I absolutely love my life in recovery! No drugs and no alcohol! I left Valley Hope and hit a meeting that same night and have been going to my home group there since.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

You have to want it! I mean with every fiber of your being and you have to do it for yourself and not because you were told to just to appease anyone else in your life.

Brittany C.
Valley Hope of O'Neill



When is your sobriety birthday?

April 29, 2022

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

My biggest takeaway from Valley Hope was to build a sober community for yourself so that when you leave, you can lean on them for support.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

Kathy and Jess.

What is life like today in recovery?

My life is amazing today. I am clear-headed and able to live life without the constant anxiety of waiting for my next drink or anxiety about what I did or said when I blacked out. I am back in school getting my Masters Degree, I have a fulfilling job helping others, and I've managed to rebuild relationships I ruined with my alcoholism. I will always be an alcoholic but being a recovering alcohol is pretty amazing.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Do what works for you! Whether it be yoga, running, reading a book, going to meetings, calling a friend. Do whatever YOU need to do to stay sober. There is no checklist of things that magically works for everyone.



Jennifer H.
Valley Hope of Parker



When is your sobriety birthday?

February 24, 2020

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

I'm not a horrible person, and I'm not alone.

I was at PVH in October of 2017 too. Back then, I still had it in my mind that this was my choice and it was my fault. After some of the classes that explained what alcohol does to our body and mind, I had a much better idea of what this illness is all about. I didn't choose this. I am a good person who has an illness that is treatable daily.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

I can't choose just one. Tammy was my counselor, and she just has the sweetest, most precious soul. I could tell she actually cared about me as a person.

Dale was my chaplain. After suffering from religious trauma as a child, one of my biggest fears was being forced into what I saw as "the religious part of it". I can't tell you how thankful I am that I got Dale. He was 100% supportive of me having my own beliefs. He even helped me find connections to Native lead organizations in the Denver area.

I wish I could remember the name of the counselor who loved rock music. Her classes were so much fun, and I really loved her no nonsense attitude. She was just so real.

The kitchen staff - absolutely stellar!

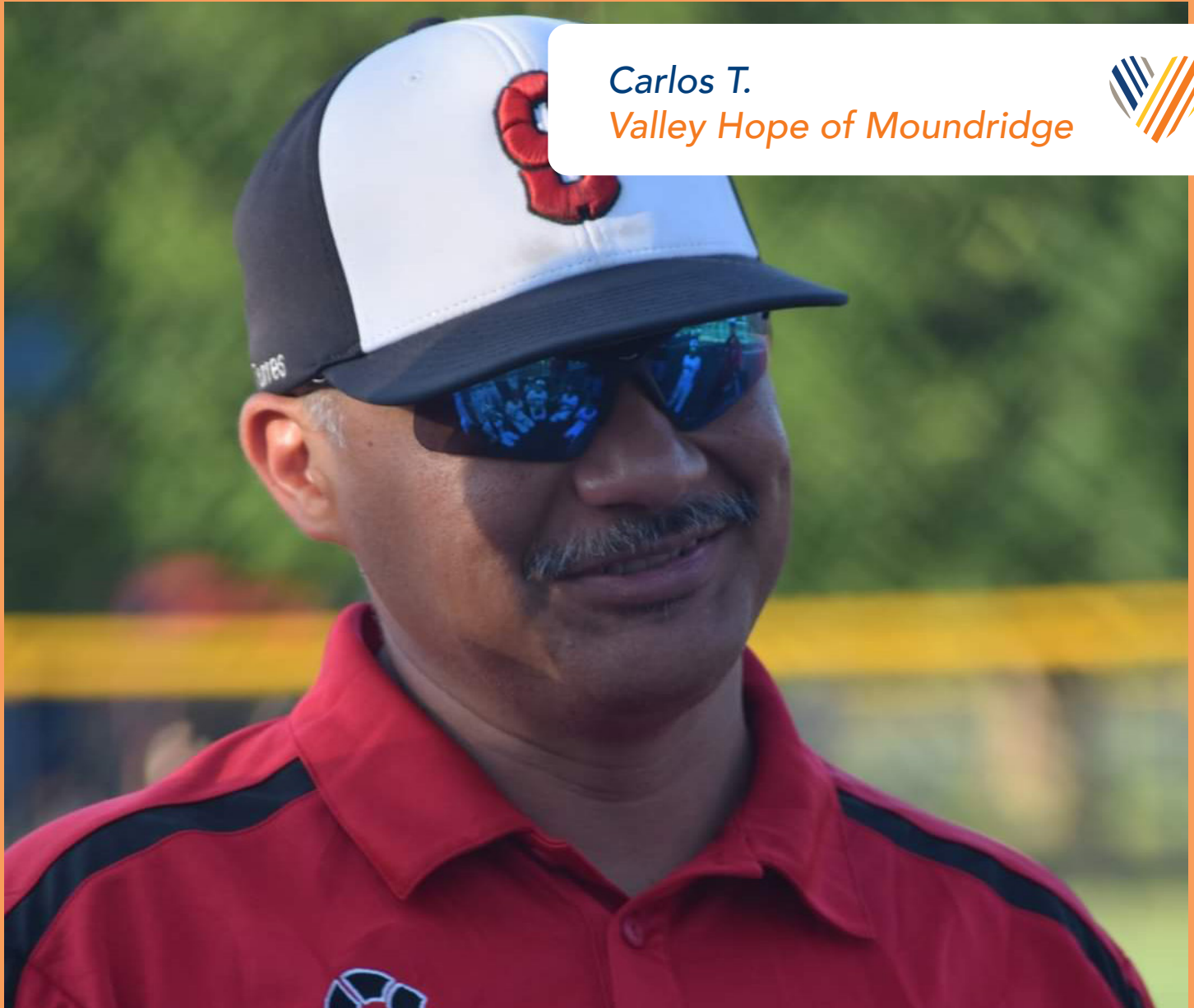
What is life like today in recovery?

I finally love me! My first attempt at sobriety in 2017 was for other people. This time, my recovery is for myself. I have finally forgiven myself for the choices I made during my body and mind reacting to trauma. No longer am I comparing myself to others. My dreams really are coming true. I am accomplishing things in my life that I truly only thought were dreams. I have a calmness and acceptance in my soul for this life that I never thought possible. I wish I could share this feeling with everyone.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Stop blaming yourself. I believe the key to absolutely everything is how you feel about yourself, and how you feel about yourself should not be in the hands of others. Also, don't expect everything to fix itself as soon as you stop drinking or using. That takes time. Be thankful that you have time, because this thing will kill us.

Carlos T.
Valley Hope of Moundridge



When is your sobriety birthday?

March 28, 2022

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

I discovered that I was not alone and I could get better. That a better way of life is out there.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

My counselor Arnie.

What is life like today in recovery?

Life now has gotten so beautiful; I learned how to cherish life. It is a great feeling to be of service. I never knew how great it feels to do something from the bottom of your heart.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

That life can get better and they will not have to be alone anymore.



Nick B.
Valley Hope of O'Neill



When is your sobriety birthday?

May 10, 2022

What was your biggest takeaway as a patient at Valley Hope that has informed your recovery journey?

When I showed up to Valley Hope, I was scared, nervous and reserved about what treatment would look like. I had never talked to anyone who had been to “rehab” and the stigma of it had me feeling like a complete failure. This was until the first AA meeting I attended the night I arrived. The biggest thing I took away from attending Valley Hope was that I was not alone. There are people like me who have been in my shoes and the weight of feeling alone in my addiction was lifted as soon as I let myself listen to the others in my first meeting. The most influential thing I could say I took away, was the understanding the science of why my brain was holding onto alcohol even when it was killing me. Amazing.

What staff member most influenced your treatment stay?

In all reality every single staff member had their own role to play in my treatment. My counselor was there to listen, and help. The cooking staff was there to make me smile everyday. And the nursing staff was there to make sure I was safe. Combined, I felt like I could truly focus on being present in the program and be completely in the moment for my education.

What is life like today in recovery?

The first day for my 3 week stay at Valley Hope O’Neill, I received news that my mother had terminal cancer. From her diagnosis, to her passing was 6 weeks to the day. So for the entirety of my stay, I was balancing my emotions of gaining the knowledge I needed to stay sober from alcohol while trying to come to terms of my mother’s diagnosis. The day I was out, I went back to Colorado to spend the remaining time by my mothers side, sober and clear minded. She got to see that from me and what I could do moving forward in my life. When I was in treatment, I made goals. Goals that I knew were impossible to obtain if I were to continue to drink. Get married, become a loan officer, and buy a house. Now almost 17 months sober, I am proud to say I have achieved each one of those goals. All of this and knowing my mom would be proud of where I stood today. This is all in credit to the tools I learned while I was in treatment.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

The advice I wish I could tell each person walking into Valley Hope for the 1st, 2nd, 5th! time, is to take the time each day to do more than just listen to the counselors and other attendees. You are there for the time being and you must take from each meeting you are in. Look for deeper insight into your own self while listening to others. This place can give you the tools to succeed but in the end, YOU are the only one that can use them.

Staff Stories



Valley Hope

ADDICTION TREATMENT AND RECOVERY



When is your sobriety birthday?

June 24, 1998

If you went through treatment at Valley Hope, what was your biggest takeaway as a patient?

I went two full trips through Norton Valley Hope. The biggest takeaway is the kindness and love a patient feels from the moment they arrive. I had a 26 day experience in a for-profit facility and it was a cold atmosphere in comparison. Since I sobered up 25 years ago, I have always said that there is something special happening at Valley Hope and it is entrenched in that welcoming feeling our patients feel.

What led you to serve at Valley Hope as an alumni?

I owe Valley Hope a great deal... maybe even my life. There were obviously some key individuals who helped me find a better way of life but without the tools Valley Hope taught me, I doubt it would have ever happened for me.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

I unfortunately don't get to work directly with our patients. I do attend cup hangings at times and that is a terrific reminder of why this work is so very important...why each of us at Valley Hope, no matter what our position, do what we do.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Like Coach "V" said in his infamous speech... "Never Give Up"! Like many folks, it took me 3 full treatment trips to land at a place where my only good option was to shut up, start listening and get out of my own way. I always tell folks who are new to sobriety to read the promises in the "AA Big Book" at least once a day...twice if having a tough day. If a person hangs on long enough each and every one of the promises will come to be...that's been the case for millions of people before you. I believe the promises are found on page 83 and 84 of the "AA Big Book".



*Ray C., Admissions Manager
Valley Hope of Cushing*



When is your sobriety birthday?

December 31, 1989 is when I got sober. However, whatever time I get up in the morning, that is when my daily recovery clock starts.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

The opportunity to give someone a word of encouragement, and working with patients keeps my 'days of agony' close at hand.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

It's too hard to do this recovery all at once, so do it one day at a time: go to bed sober, wake up sober. It's just too simple! And, PROTECT your recovery! Because nobody else will or can!

Brandon R., Regional Director of Business Development
Valley Hope | NE, KS, MO



When is your sobriety birthday?

November 22, 2007

If you went through treatment at Valley Hope, what was your biggest takeaway as a patient?

My largest takeaway was understanding and truly believing that my life was not only not over, but, in fact, quite the opposite - it was only just beginning!

What led you to serve at Valley Hope as an alumni?

Well before any Alumni programs, I stayed in-touch with the facility that aided in getting me clean and sober - Valley Hope of O'Neill. I went back with my family at 1-year, and also back at 5-years. I also stayed in-touch periodically, with my primary Counselor, Deb. In late 2015, I was considering a job change, saw the posting for (what is now) business development in the larger NE Market and I immediately contacted Deb to inquire. She suggested that I apply (and put in a good word for me). The position melded my professional strengths of market-based business development, with my passion for recovery and the organization that helped me get and stay sober to this day. Thankfully, I was chosen, and am still grateful I took the chance to apply, 7-1/2-years later.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

Although I don't have as much direct-patient contact as many positions within the broader organization, the interactions I do have are meaningful and moving. No matter which facility I'm at, when I have the opportunity to speak with a patient, it flashes me back nearly 16-years ago now to when I was a much younger, confused and frankly scared young man. I simply enjoy listening, mostly, and occasionally being able to share some life perspective that just may inspire some hope in someone. The whole situation fills me with a calm and joy I don't find in really anything else.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Be honest. Be open. Be willing. It's really that simple. Listen more than talk. Try to find some fun and joy in the treatment process - it's so incredibly important to be able to laugh. Put the work into your early sobriety as though your life depends upon it - because it quite literally, and truly does! I also feel that there is an important distinction between 'getting sober,' and 'living life in recovery.' Anyone can get sober. It takes truly life-altering behavioral and other changes to result in happily living a life in recovery. It's been said, and I could not agree more... 'You don't have to change much (to be happy, joyous and free in recovery), just everything.'



*Claudia M., Lead Counselor
Valley Hope of Cushing*



When is your sobriety birthday?

December 21, 1999

If you went through treatment at Valley Hope, what was your biggest takeaway as a patient?

I have to work a program that involves changes in my life that are for the better.

What led you to serve at Valley Hope as an alumni?

Valley Hope saved my life. I was honored when I was asked to submit an application and even more so when I was hired. It has been an opportunity to give back to the place that helped me. I have blessed to help the most amazing people I have met are those that struggle with addiction.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

Seeing the changes that they pursue making in their lives while here in treatment. Allowing them to be where they are, grow at the pace they need to and being just a small part of their journey.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

You can do this, as long as you draw breath there is hope.



Kathryn R., Alumni Coordinator
Valley Hope of Moundridge and Wichita



When is your sobriety birthday?

June 6, 2015

If you went through treatment at Valley Hope, what was your biggest takeaway as a patient?

My biggest takeaway as a patient of Valley Hope was learning that addiction is a family disease. I was 18 when I attended Valley Hope, so my counselor encouraged my Mom to attend some of our sessions. We were informed that people who start drinking before turning 21 are 5x more likely to develop an addiction. Although I did not heed that warning, my Mom was equipped with knowledge and education about the disease of addiction and learned about boundaries. Tough love is essentially one of the things that helped save my life.

What led you to serve at Valley Hope as an alumni?

Honestly, my love for people who suffer with the same disease as me is what led me to serve at Valley Hope as an alumni.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

The empowerment processes. I will never forget Ryan, my counselor at Valley Hope, who empowered me to take control of my life by setting goals and taking actionable steps to achieve those goals. I always thought I had no control over anything in my life because of how unmanageable it was. So, being able to offer this same empowerment to others is a dream of mine. I am able to utilize my skills during the most pivotal moments in people's lives; The alumni coordinator's role is vital in the beginning steps of a person's recovery. I, also, love that I get the opportunity to walk beside them their first year in recovery and to continue offering support throughout their lives, if they want me to.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

I have many insights from my experience with early recovery. I would encourage anyone that has begun the healing process to change everything. I know that sounds extreme, but when I became desperate enough, I became willing to do whatever it took to remain sober. I moved into a sober living house and remained there for 27 months before moving into my own place. This helped me have structure and accountability, which was incredibly important early on in my recovery. It was not just a game changer for me, it was lifesaving. I changed phone numbers, deleted old contacts, social media pages, and stopped hanging around my old acquaintances. This was difficult, because one of those acquaintances was a family member. However, putting up those boundaries meant the beginning of learning how to love myself. I would highly encourage getting plugged in to a home group, whether it be AA, CA, NA, or DAA, and finding a sponsor. This is a program of action, so it is time to get to work. The work, which consists of the 12 steps, living spiritual principles, and getting into your heart space, is ultimately where you transform. The transformation that occurs for people that are willing to do whatever it takes, is nothing short but miraculous. You can do this, you are capable of change, and it is time to start believing this truth! The time is now.



*Tye S., Director of Business Development
Valley Hope of Parker and Denver*



When is your sobriety birthday?

February 16, 2015

If you went through treatment at Valley Hope, what was your biggest takeaway as a patient?

I learned I had to accept the fact that I did not know what was best for me and depended on my treatment team to tell me what to do to begin a life of recovery.

What led you to serve at Valley Hope as an alumni?

I believe that Valley Hope does a phenomenal job at being present to direct patients in a way that is beneficial to their recovery while also allowing enough autonomy for the individual to feel they are taking an active role in their recovery journey.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

My role does not deal directly with patients to often. That said, I thoroughly enjoy speaking with a prospective patient on the front end. In these moments, a prospective patient is reaching out trying to get help with getting into treatment.

I love to be able to speak with someone at this stage as they are typically very stressed and concerned about what they are going to do and I get to jump in to help them find quality treatment, whether that is with Valley Hope or not.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Nobody has to do this alone. So long as you are willing to reach out for help, it is at every angle. Whether you are going to treatment, peer recovery communities or the like, there is a large amount of help ready and waiting for those willing to accept it. Additionally, be willing to accept that someone else might know what is best for you more than you do yourself.



Jason W., Case Manager/LCDC - Intern
Valley Hope of Grapevine



When is your sobriety birthday?

July 1, 2020

If you went through treatment at Valley Hope, what was your biggest takeaway as a patient?

I MUST always invite a Higher Power into my life and others into my thinking. The 12 Steps are a program of recovery and when lived, will allow me to undergo an awakening of the spirit which will change every aspect of my life.

What led you to serve at Valley Hope as an alumni?

I had made a commitment to do any form of service I could to give back to the facility and the people who helped save my life. For 2 years and four months, 9 of which were spent bringing in recovery meetings with the Valley Hope of Grapevine Alumni group, and the other one year and seven months, serving as the Fort Worth Area H&I panel leader for Narcotics Anonymous, bringing in recovery meetings every Wednesday night.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

I love "getting in the mud" with the patients who are sincerely seeking freedom from active addiction. I use my personal experience, strength, hope, and active daily recovery to help guide other recovering persons in undergoing a spiritual awakening. It will completely change each one of us and guide us in living a way of life which allows us to use our "superpowers" to live out our Higher Power's will, and carry this message to others.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Work the first step in its entirety. You will find that if your first step is "Broken", nothing else will work. Only through Sponsorship and recovery literature do we understand that there are five components to a 1st Step:

Surrender- I must surrender to a HP, as well as my understanding of the disease of addiction. I need others and cannot recover alone.

Acceptance- Accepting my life exactly the way it is right now no matter what that looks like.

Honesty- The only way to gain true honesty is by inviting God and another trusted individual into my thought process.

Open-Mindedness- Being fearless and open enough to trust guidance from others, and do the things instructed that my brain did not think of.

Willingness- Take positive action and "Do it!!!" Awareness without action is apathy. Apathy and procrastination are two of our inherited enemies.



Ashley R., Admissions Nurse
Valley Hope of Atchison



When is your sobriety birthday?

March 1, 2016

What do you like most about your work with patients?

I get to witness their transformations from lifeless to full of life. I love watching them come alive again in all aspects of life. I full-heartedly just love loving them and connecting with them, as I truly believe that the opposite of addiction is connection.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

You are not alone. You are not your past, nor should you allow it to define you. What you're doing takes so much courage, strength, and dedication and I admire your strength for reaching out for help. You ARE loved, you matter, and you are SO, SO important!

*"There is freedom waiting for you,
On the breezes of the sky,
And you ask 'What if I fall?'
Oh but my darling,
What if you fly?"*



Megan O., Executive Director
Valley Hope Foundation



When is your sobriety birthday?

June 20, 2001

If you went through treatment at Valley Hope, what was your biggest takeaway as a patient?

There is hope and help!

What led you to serve at Valley Hope as an alumni?

I had 5 years sober and clean with the help of AA/NA while living in New Mexico and Arizona. In 2000, I relapsed and completely lost the desire for recovery. Addiction was like the bite of a Pitbull. My boss at the Phoenix Country Club wanted me to get help. I was forced to treatment with the fear of losing a good job. Somehow I made my way to Norton for residential care and Tempe for Outpatient and Continuing Care. Valley Hope helped me 1) want to live, 2) live in recovery again, and 3) before I left treatment, I knew I wanted to work for the organization. I moved from AZ to KS and became a licensed addiction counselor at the Norton center. I've been with the organization since 2003, and have managed the Foundation for 18 of those 20 years. Now I get to help others - there is nothing that compares to working for Valley Hope.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

My team is fantastic and we raise a lot of money for patients and facility improvements. It's a gift to be able to say "yes" when a patient needs financial support for treatment, sober housing, or other essentials. It's also about making the centers better for many, many patients for years to come by raising money for expansions and renovations. Lots of patients benefit from donated dollars. We are just the stewards of that generosity, and it's truly wonderful to see how many people love and care for our patients and treatment centers.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

Recovery changes everything - and there are many people who support you and your recovery. And also,God has bigger plans for you. Hang on for the ride...keep what you need and leave the rest. And remember..."Life isn't fair, bad things happen and people don't act right" - as long as you remember that, you can navigate any life situation. And it's a big, wonderful world in recovery full of light and love. Don't give up before the miracle happens!



Judy E., Clinical Program Director
New Directions for Families



When is your sobriety birthday?

June 19, 2006

If you went through treatment at VH, what was your biggest takeaway as a patient?

Friendships and accountability partners. Addiction is very lonely. I developed true friendships with people who would challenge me around my poor behavior.

What led you to serve at Valley Hope as an alumni?

Once leaving treatment, I spent several days a week at Valley Hope of Chandler attending meetings and working with other women. I felt the support of others and built a family there. I wanted to help others experience the same support. Valley Hope means the world to me. I know when family and/or friends are needing help, Valley Hope will be there with open arms.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

I love seeing families reunited, moms gaining custody back of their children and learning how to have healthy relationships. This can be the most challenging and rewarding experience. With the continued ups and downs, seeing the baby steps in someone who was ready to give up is priceless. My youngest son grew up in the rooms of recovery and now shares his experience working with patients at another Valley Hope facility. What is better than that!

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

The recovery prayers and slogans may seem cheesy however I encourage everyone to find some that connect with them. Give it a chance. Days may be long and challenging, but there is nothing better than the joy in the blessing. Anything is possible if you are willing and open-minded.



When is your sobriety birthday?

September 25, 2015

What do you like most about your work with patients?

In my role, I get the opportunity to connect with the community and be a “face” of recovery, talk about addiction treatment, and provide hope for those either struggling with addiction or for the professionals who are working with individuals who may be struggling. Although I don’t often get to work directly with our patients, when I do, it becomes my fuel - my “why”.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

I think what has helped me most in my personal journey in recovery has been to simply keep putting one foot in front of the other. When life gets uncomfortable, when you encounter bad days, and even on the days that you’re not quite sold on being sober forever...just focus on one tiny step in the right direction at a time. We can’t always see the big picture in the moment, but something I’ve learned is that things have a way of working out just as they should. Just take that first (and sometimes very scary) step into the unknown and I promise, you will be surprised at just how amazing life can turn out! Find your “tribe” of people that will love and support you because regardless of how you feel in this moment, I guarantee those people are out there. We already know what a life of addiction leads to, so let’s explore what a life of recovery will bring! Simply surrender.



Morla T., Counselor II
Valley Hope of Cushing



When is your sobriety birthday?

May 18, 1994

What led you to serve at Valley Hope as an alumni?

While not an alumna, meeting the Executive Director and interviewing with him, and then walking the property at Valley Hope of Cushing, I felt a sense of serenity and hope here that is missing from most treatment facilities; a sense of family and camaraderie among staff, and the feeling that everyone's goal was aligned. As a recovering addict working in the field of mental health and substance abuse in Oklahoma, I can honestly say that I did not think any facility or treatment program offered this type of environment, as my experiences have been full of chaos, well-meaning but ineffective interventions, and agencies clashing over financial matters rather than patient quality of care. Giving back and helping other addicts and alcoholics is a key concept in recovery, and I knew after only a few minutes at Valley Hope that this was a place I wanted to be a part of.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

I enjoy working with patients from every walk of life, who have a common goal to recover. What that may mean for them, in this place, at this time in their lives, may look different for every patient, but the desire to find freedom from their substance of choice is the same. I enjoy seeing those "lightbulb" moments when a patient makes a connection to a previously unknown or unrecognized concept, and seeing patients rise up from detox and become healthier before our eyes in just 30-45 days. Watching a patient make incredible progress in 30 days and then hang their cup with the intention of returning in 12 months to retrieve it is inspiring. Seeing patients grow close and build lasting friendships based in sobriety, some for the first time in their lives, reaching out to each other and supporting each other at one of the most vulnerable times they will encounter in life, is amazing. To be a part of this process is simply amazing.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

If you put as much thought, energy, and work into recovery, as you did to drink or use your substance of choice, changes will happen. As long as you're breathing, it's never too late.



When is your sobriety birthday?

June 2, 2001

If you went through treatment at Valley Hope, what was your biggest takeaway as a patient?

I did not but was guided by Ray Neal that worked at Valley Hope of Cushing for years.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

I love being able to share hope and compassion with our patients, even it is just a smile on a gloomy day. Being able to let them know they are worthy of love, respect, and compassion just as they are where they are! Truly, if I can see a glimmer of hope in one person it is all worth it!!!

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

First, remind them we are human beings - NOT human doings - nothing we have done or that has been done to us defines us. As long as there is breath there is hope! My favorite part of the Big Book to introduce them to is page 417 - Acceptance. I also would remind them to never give up hope - I went through 10 treatment centers - truly as long as there is breath there is hope! Every relapse I have ever had can be traced back to some point where I was being dishonest with myself and/or others - Honesty is a key factor in recovery!!! "Anything you place above recovery, you stand to lose."



Kelcie J.
Valley Hope | Corporate Office



When is your sobriety birthday?

October 4, 2014

What is your position at Valley Hope?

I'm an Accounts Receivable Specialist at the Corporate Office in Norton, KS!! Valley Hope has given me a career I never thought I would have or even be capable of. I was honest during my interview that I lacked the education and training that they had listed. However, I explained I'm very confident that I can learn and adapt quickly with assistance from the team. Kerri (AR supervisor) and Tamara H (team lead) have been very supportive, patient and encouraging. They both trained and modeled customer service and all the AR procedures so that I too am a productive team member. I'm very thankful that I was given this opportunity. I am now confident in my skills in this position and have no fear in asking for clarification. I look forward to coming to my job and proud of the work I do every day.

What do you like most about your work with patients?

My contact with VH patients is through phone conversations assisting them with payment arrangements. On many occasions I have had the opportunity to connect with the patient or family member based on my own personal history. I can use my experiences to relate to what they are going through, build a rapport and a confidence of trust. In one case, I was able to work with a patient and coordinate admissions for him at a facility. I think because I am willing to share my experiences with them the conversation is much more than payment arrangements or a collection call.

What piece of advice would you share with others seeking recovery?

The people you surround yourself with TRULY does affect your sobriety!!!

GET SOBER THERE'S PEOPLE MOURNING YOU WHILE YOU'RE STILL HERE.

Once your sobriety journey is established continue to reflect on where you are, what you have come through and the steps that is took to get here. Everyday is a new day of sobriety.