



*To find, train and equip at-risk young men in order that they may become positive influences of our community through a job and caring relationships*

## SPOTLIGHT: GENO DURAN

Geno was born and raised in Denver, Colorado; he grew up loving the Broncos and having to look after himself and his brother. His mother struggled with alcohol and his father was absent. Geno learned from the streets and by the time his mother found faith and saw her life changed through Jesus, Geno had settled into a different life.

Unfortunately that other life led to Geno being unavailable when his mother passed from cancer and to a 30 year prison sentence. But God was not done with Geno. In his first week in prison, Geno's grandfather sent Geno a photo that included the mayoral proclamation naming December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1993 "Charlotte Mae Herrera Day", in honor of Geno's mother. Before she died, Geno's mother was working on a dinner to bring Denver gang members together to try and stop the violence in the city. After her death, it became apparent how much she had done walking the streets looking for her sons. During that time she would meet other gang members and pray with them, something that earned her respect from the community. Her family and community rallied together and put the dinner on in her honor. That photo affected Geno in a profound way. He asked himself what am I going to do going forward and the answer he found was to work to improve himself, to live for God, and to honor his mother. Geno says that the decision to live for the Lord was, "the best decision I ever made."

Out of that pledge, Geno quit the gang life and started taking college classes offered in prison. He received a paralegal certificate, which was the catalyst to stop the heat from the other gang members. The certificate proved to the guys that Geno had left the gang life in order to improve himself, not out of fear.

Geno is also very artistically gifted. One of the guards would look over his artwork and encourage him in his drawing. Eventually that same guard started a cosmetology degree program. She pointed out that cosmetology would be a chance to use his artistic abilities and make money. Geno agreed and admitted that at the beginning it was tough, but he stuck it out and found himself really enjoying the work. The look of joy and self-possession that would appear on a guy's face after getting a good haircut gave Geno an amazing sense of pride.

He also discovered that the stylist's chair can be very similar to a therapist's chair. People talk while getting their hair cut and Geno found a natural opportunity to share his story and encourage and inspire others to improve their lives as well. Now Geno has people from his old neighborhood coming to him and saying that they want to be like Geno, because he did the hard work and is a respected member of society. He hopes one day to open his own barbershop and use it as an opportunity to share his testimony with the youth of the community. He strives every day to live for the Lord and to be the best version of himself possible.

Today Geno works at the Bar Ber Shop on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. Geno is accepting new clients and would love to cut your hair and share his story. Call 970-353-2347 to set an appointment.



# DIRECTOR'S CORNER

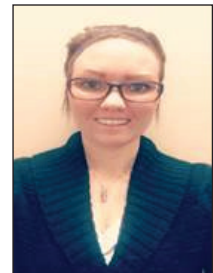
## *Annual Banquet*

It is with deepest regret that we must announce the cancellation of the Annual Banquet. We are dedicated as ever to serve, however we believe the safety of our community comes first. Together we are facing a truly unprecedented time as the pandemic is affecting all of our families, community, and way of life. Our hearts go out to anyone who's been impacted by the virus, either directly or indirectly. And we are truly inspired by the selfless workers on the front lines.

This moment reminds us that we are all connected like never before. We are called upon God to be our best selves, with patience, understanding and compassion. As such, Jobs of Hope is still in need of your support. If you have given at the banquet in the past, we ask that you continue your generous gifts by using the enclosed envelope or give on line at <https://www.continuetogive.com/JOH>. On behalf of the staff and the Board of Directors, we thank you in advance as we couldn't do it without you!

## *New Board Member!*

It is with great pleasure that I introduce you to our newest board member, Meredith Munoz. Meredith is the Community Action Collaborative Coordinator at North Colorado Health Alliance and has worked in non-profit for 9 years. Impacting individuals lives in a positive way so that they are able to live their life fulfilled is something that Meredith is very passionate about. Meredith has been working in the area of care/case management since 2011. She has experience working with a diverse population enduring many social determinants and chronic health conditions. Unconditional health care is the motto that Meredith follows. Cura Personalis is at the forefront on her approach of care management and community health.



We are so grateful to have Meredith on the team and hope you have the opportunity to meet her soon.

Sincerely in Christ, Ernest

## Prayer Points

- Financial support for the good works of Jobs of Hope
- Those at JOH and the community impacted by COVID-19
- Wisdom for our Board of Directors concerning the future work of JOH

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