

Hope Highlights

"To restore hope and see transformation in the lives of gang-affiliated individuals and those involved in the justice system."



In the March 2023 Issue:

Nick's Story—pp. 1, 3

Welcome to Our New
 Executive Director
 Dan Ordaz—p. 2

Prayer Points—p. 2

Community Partners—p. 4

“THE ONLY WAY IS UP”: NICK’S STORY

I grew up poor, in a very abusive childhood. Both my mother and my father were active drug users and alcohol abusers. My mom and dad separated when I was two years old, and I moved here to Colorado to stay with an aunt. Then my mom met my brother's dad. He was just as abusive. We constantly had to deal with a high level of physical, verbal, and mental abuse, but no sexual abuse, by the grace of God. It was a hard life, and we were poor, so we just lived from one moment to the next. My mom was an amazing woman. I never knew we were poor until later on, years down the road, because she always made sure that there were presents under the tree for Christmas and that there was food on the table, no matter how little it was. She had this sign in her kitchen that said, “Chicken Today, Feathers Tomorrow,” and basically that meant that whatever we don't eat today, we're going to eat tomorrow, we're going to eat everything. I remember getting food stamps when they were still paper food stamps and you had to hand them to the cashier. So I just grew up poor. I don't regret any of it, my mom made do with what she had and did a good job of it.

I've always been a troublemaker. I've always been that person where any time someone tells me to go left, I'm going to go right. I started getting into trouble at a really young age. Luckily I've never been to prison, which is a good thing. I didn't get into serious trouble until I was in my forties, and that was because drug addiction took hold and I started doing stupid stuff that I never thought I would do. I've been in jail many times. I think the last time I was in jail was the 39th time that I've been arrested. And that was the longest stint I ever did in jail, one year. My bond

was only \$138, and I sat in jail for a year because of it, because I'd burned all kinds of bridges and nobody was going to bail me out of jail. It was well worth it actually. I'm glad I was in jail. I think that if I had been bonded out that I probably would've gone back right back to what I was doing. The lesson that I needed to learn wouldn't have sunk in. So jail was very important to me as part of my growth. I needed to learn that I can't just go through life without there being consequences. There will be consequences no matter what.

Before, every time I went to jail I always knew there was somebody who could get me out. I knew that I wasn't going to spend much time in there, and I was cocky and arrogant because of it. Most people who go to jail think, “Oh, this is a wake up call, I need to not do this.” Not me! I thought, “I'm getting out in a couple hours anyway, I don't care,” or, “I'm gonna spend the night in here, who cares?” But then when it started settling in to where I was going to be in jail for a day, and then for a week, and then for a month, and then six months down the road I'm still in jail, then eight months down the road I'm still in jail, and finally a year later I'm still in jail, that resonated. It made me realize, “Oh, maybe I can't go through life just not caring.” I knew that if I continued to keep using drugs and keep abusing the system and being a degenerate, that's the way I was going to go. That was a good wake up call for me. I did not enjoy it, I did not enjoy jail at all. But I enjoy the things that I learned while I was in jail.

Continued on page 3 >>>>>>>>

Director's Corner

Hello to all our Families, Friends, and Supporters,

My name is Dan Ordaz, and as you have probably heard by now, I am the new Executive Director at Jobs of Hope. I'm thrilled to join such a great organization. It's only my second week, but already I have met some amazing staff in our offices, and outstanding men at our House of Hope.

I want to first of all give a big round of applause to Ernest Cienfuegos-Baca, our outgoing Executive Director. Through Ernest's leadership, Jobs of Hope is on a solid financial footing, and programs are running smoothly and successfully. Ernest continues to be a champion for Jobs of Hope, and I'm quite sure you will see him around town.

A little bit about me – I moved to Colorado in 2019 from San Jose, CA. While in San Jose, I was the Director of Operations and Business Services for University Preparatory Academy (UPA). During my 10-year tenure at UPA, we saw our school rise to be one of the top charter schools, as well as one of the top overall high schools in the US. Prior to UPA, I spent a number of years in Silicon Valley's tech industry, most notably at Hewlett-Packard where I led a fulfillment and channel marketing team. But here is the role that has brought me the greatest joy: in addition to my various career positions, I also helped found a non-profit organization in San Jose. Led by Pastor Adam Ybarra (former chaplain to the Oakland Raiders), The Tenacious Group has been running strong for over 20 years. The Tenacious Group works primarily with at-risk and gang-impacted young people through the use of a purpose-development and motivational curriculum. Thousands of young people have experienced the impact of our program, and have learned to Take a Stand! – for their families, education, and communities.

My wife, Paula Ordaz, is the Director of the Fort Collins Rescue Mission. Together, we volunteer in our church in various capacities, attend Bible study with Bible Study Fellowship (BSF), and wander all over Northern Colorado looking for new restaurants and experiences. We are empty-nesters, with our children grown and out of the house. Instead, we get to spoil our granddaughter out in CA!



I'm looking forward to working alongside all of you in the Northern Colorado Community as we proclaim the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to reach into even the most dire of circumstances and change lives. Without Christ, change can only be temporary at best. It's our goal to model and share the love of Christ with every person who comes to Jobs of Hope. We can't accomplish this work on our own, though. Only through the Holy Spirit empowering and inspiring every one of our efforts will we ever see lives changed. Please pray for the staff of Jobs of Hope to carry out our Great Commission calling as we invest in the lives of men that come to Jobs of Hope.

We love and appreciate each and every one of you. My door is always open. Come by and say Hi.

Till then,

"May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Ordaz". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dan Ordaz, Executive Director

Prayer Points

- We thank you for transforming the lives of participants like Nick and we pray that you will allow us to continue helping men to escape addiction. We pray that you will guide Nick as he pursues his goals and continues on the path you have planned for him.
- We thank you for bringing Dan to the team as our new Executive Director, and we pray that you will guide him as he takes on this new leadership role.
- We pray for all the participants and alumni of Jobs of Hope and ask that you will give them success.

*Father, thank you for all; for everything that is working in my life and even for the things that are not working as yet. Just want to say thank you Lord for all and in all, in the name of the Lord Jesus.
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)*

Nick's Story, Continued

So I was sitting there in jail thinking, "What am I gonna do?" They had all these charges that they were throwing at me, possible sentences. There was a possibility I was going to go to prison. It was like an epiphany, it just dawned on me one day, "Do I really want to go through life doing this? I'm gonna hit the streets and not know what's going on, and I don't know what's gonna become of me." That's when I decided, "You know what, I'm not doing this life anymore, I don't want this anymore." I was doing all these things just because I wanted to get high and not take care of my responsibilities. I was in jail for about six or seven months at that point, and I wanted to make a change. That's when I decided to join JBBS, the Jail Based Behavioral Health Services program. I started talking about my problems, telling them what was going on and how bad I felt about it. And Danae from JBBS connected me to you guys, to Jobs of Hope.

I got out of jail and I couldn't get to Jobs of Hope right away, and they didn't have any openings over at respite, so the very first night out of jail I slept underneath a bridge. I was just scared. I didn't know what to do. Back in the streets, I ran into some people that I knew, and right away they wanted to get high. I said, "No, no I'm good." And of course they shunned me. They thought I was a narc, because I didn't want to get high. So I branched off to a spot by myself and slept under the bridge that night, and the next morning I went to respite and found out there was an opening. I spent a week in respite and I got into work release, and then I was in work release for a few months, and then I found my way to you guys, and the rest is history.

When I was on the streets, I actually slept in a little cove in the church right in front of Jobs of Hope. I slept there until the cops woke me up and told me to get out of there. I would sit on the steps when they offered food at the church. I walked past this place probably a thousand times without even thinking about it before getting involved in the program.

Since going through the program at Jobs of Hope, I started working at JBS, and I got promoted at JBS, so now I'm management support. I've got a girlfriend now, who's clean and sober too. She's very supportive of me and my ventures. I'm going back to school to finish up my degrees. And it feels good to actually have stuff again, instead of living out of a backpack. I've got a car, I've got my license, I mean it's been a success from the very beginning. For me to go from where I was to where I'm at now, graduating the program and things like that. That's a milestone on its own. I can't begin to show gratitude for you guys. I love you guys, I really do.

In the future I probably see myself going back into the field of what I was doing before I lost it to addiction. I had my own company with my ex wife, and we had a very successful business for 15 years. I was able to get the entity name back in my name, so that's something I want to pursue, becoming a successful business again.

It's going to be hard work, but it's what I want to do. I like working with my hands. I want to go back into doing construction again. I was a licensed general contractor. So I'm planning on going back to school and starting the business up again. I don't see myself using again. I don't see myself going down that slippery slope again. I'm just trying to stay forward, to stay focused, stay positive. The only way is up.

The best piece of advice that I know, I know this firsthand, is that no matter how alone you feel, no matter how backed into a corner, like you've got nowhere to go, don't feel that way. There's people out there, there's resources out there, and there's people that do genuinely care. There's programs like Jobs of Hope. They're not just going to look down at you like you're just some bum, or just some druggie, or just some convict. These are all labels that society puts on people. But you're worth it. You're a good person, you deserve to be given a second chance, or a third chance, or a fourth chance. Don't give up. Never, never give up. My dad used to tell me, "You know kid, God will give you a lot, he'll put a lot on your plate, but he's never going to give you so much that you can't handle it. You can always handle it. Just keep fighting the fight. It's not gonna be easy, it's not gonna be just handed to you, you're going to have to fight for it. But in the end it'll pay off. In the end you can get back anything that you've lost. It's a hard world out there, but it's not so hard that you can't handle it."

To you guys at the House of Hope and Jobs of Hope, I can only say one thing but God bless you guys. This is a great program, with great people who actually do care. I look at you guys as an extension of my family. You guys saved my life. Some people can say that and it's just a figure of speech, but the people here literally saved my life. I would probably be dead right now if it wasn't for this program. I tell people, if I see an old friend that I knew from the streets, "Hey, if you're ready to get sober, if you're ready to get it together, if you're ready to put your life back in order, give these people a call." I had cards in my pocket and I ran out of them because I was giving them out.

Even when I drive past Jobs of Hope I can't help it, when I drive this direction I will take a detour to drive past the house, it just puts a smile on my face every time I see it. Because I know how much this place has meant to me. I know what this place did for me. And just the deep love and affection that I have for this place. Even on the nastiest days, I just go past this house and it just makes me smile.

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