

Hope Highlights

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



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"I WILL DO IT, WHATEVER IT TAKES": TRAVIS'S STORY

I was born in Fort Collins, and at a super young age my dad took us to California. We grew up in this little town called Imperial Beach. In about 6th grade, my siblings and I got pulled into the nurse's office, as they had reason to believe there was abuse in our house, so they asked us to lift our shirts and we were covered in bruises. From that day my life just completely changed. They removed us out of the house, and at first they tried to keep us all together and put us in the same foster home or group home. But we were just these young kids, and we gave the system a run for their money. We would run away from wherever they put us. No matter how messed up everything was at our house, we'd always somehow navigate back home, because that's what we knew. Even though it was crazy over there, we still wanted to be there. Finally, we ended up moving from Imperial Beach to Chula Vista. My dad moved into this place because he thought he was going to be getting us back.

Things weren't going too good between him and my mom. There was one point where he was just dragging her through the house by her hair, covered in blood. My brothers and I tried to jump on him to get him off her, and it was enough for her to get up and run. She got up and ran and never came back. For a long time, we struggled with that. We thought she just abandoned us, but as I got older, I came to the realization that we probably saved her life that day. Come to find out she came back out here to Colorado. It was one of those days where life sucked, my dad had sold off all the food stamps for drugs, and there's nothing to eat. So, I just grabbed my little brother, and I told him "Come on, we're out of here, we're going to go find mom." And I hustled up just enough money to get us some bus tickets and got on a bus to Colorado.

My mom was remarried and had two more kids, so she wasn't really set up for when we showed up. We would just sleep on the couch, or a chair or wherever. By this point I was 14 or 15. We were in a complex messing around when the laundry room caught on fire. So, me and my brother ended up in Brighton at the Adams Youth Services Center. We got committed to the Department of Youth Corrections and lived out the rest of our adolescent years in the youth corrections system. Once released my brother went one direction and I went another.

Once out of that place, I was on the streets for just a short amount of time and ended up catching some more felonies as an adult. I crossed state lines with some drugs, and I ended up doing five years and three months on a seven-year sentence. Once released I was in Cheyenne with my son's mom. My brother had gotten into an argument with his girlfriend so I was like, we have extra room, you can come live with us. It was just a matter of time before drugs were introduced back into our life.

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Travis's Story, Part 2

It was Memorial weekend, and we were all going to the lake. Some friends brought me some drugs. My little brother ended up getting some of the drugs and he did a shot of meth. That shot missed his vein. Unfortunately, when you start shooting drugs and you're using the needle, any bacteria that the needle pushes through your skin can cause a bad infection. This one was a flesh-eating bacterium. It only took seven or eight hours for that to travel up his arm and into his heart and as soon as that happened it killed him. I lost my little brother and I blamed myself for the longest time for his death. I felt all the guilt and shame over it, and I just couldn't get right. I mean I tried many times to get clean, to get sober, and it was just in-and-out of facilities and institutions.

From the time my brother died until I caught my last felony charge, I was in and out of prison. It was one traumatic event after another. My mom and dad both overdosed and died, then my aunt shot herself because she blamed herself for my mom overdosing. The longest I was out in that period was six months, but it was enough time to get another girl pregnant and have another kid. I have six kids, and my three oldest kids basically grew up with me in the system and not part of their lives. Going through that turmoil and all that happened through those years just left a big hole in my heart. I was always trying to fill it with something—with drugs, women, lifestyle, money, anything so I didn't have to feel or process all that I went through.

In 2011 I ended up out on parole in this sober living house in Fort Collins. That's where I met my wife. We fell in love, and I thought this was it, this was the woman for me. Our daughter was born shortly after that. As hard as I wanted to be a good dad and role model and just change my life, substances still had such a draw on my life. Addiction's the enemy and the enemy had done whatever it could to sink its claws deep into me. It was so hard to cut loose and be rid of it.

Fast forward a little bit and I ended up going back to prison, did some more years, got out and my wife got pregnant again with our second daughter. Then I go back to prison again and I got out when our second daughter was two. I ended up going to the Peer 1 program in Denver which is an intensive inpatient program, and then my wife got pregnant with our son. My wife has always stuck by my side and rode it out with me and just showed me honestly what really loving someone's about.

The last time that I was in trouble was in 2017. I was only there for six months, and I got out to this halfway house in Englewood. I got a really good job, and somebody's talking one day and puts it out there that there's this program that'll pay for your CDL. I jumped right on it. I fought tooth and nail and for some reason, it was a miracle, they let me go to truck driving school. Every morning I got up at 4:00, caught the bus all the way to Wheat Ridge, went to school for 10 hours a day and then came back. I did that for four weeks and got my CDL.

Then things started taking a turn for the worse. My wife's father passed away, and then shortly after that her mom died of a heart attack, and then her brother died from an overdose. Social Services came into our house because they had gotten a call from the school as our kids were missing too much school and wanted to do a check on the kids at the house. So, they came on the last day of school before Christmas break and they removed the kids from the house. I can only imagine the traumatic effect that had on them. That was a little over two years ago and I've had to go through a lot of programs, assessments, and treatment plans. It took everything to fight, to get in compliance. And then I had a violation on my probation and ended up back in jail.

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Prayer Points

- We thank you for transforming the lives of participants like Travis and pray that you will allow us to continue helping men to reconnect with their families and find stable employment and housing.
- We thank you for Ernest's years of service at Jobs of Hope and we pray for your guidance as we search for a passionate, well-qualified person to serve as the next Executive Director.
- We thank you for bringing Opal to our team as the new Case Manager, and we pray that you will guide her as she begins this new role and helps our participants navigate re-entry.
- We thank you for adding Dan to our Board of Directors, and we pray that you will guide the Board as they seek to meet our goals for 2023.
- We pray for all the men of Jobs of Hope and 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)*



Travis's Story, Part 3

When my oldest daughter came and picked me up she said, "Look, you're this close, they're going to adopt your kids out if you do not literally give everything you've got to fight and get your kids back," and I just said "I'll do it, I will do it, whatever it takes."

I stayed on my daughter's couch until I was able to get into a sober living house, and then one day I just walked out of that sober living house and walked up the block. I didn't really have any idea of what I was doing or where I was going, I just had a plan in my head and motivation and determination, like I wasn't going to lose this one. I heard a couple of things about Jobs of Hope, and I heard that they had another sober living house, that this was a program that changed people's lives. So, me and my buddy Roy walked over here together, we knocked on the door, and I just said "Hello, my name is Travis, this is my situation, and I need some help." And it's been life changing ever since. I was in the house for six months and throughout that six months I was able to reinstate my CDL, I was able to save up some money, get a house, and most importantly, I got full custody of my kids back. So, I won, I got my family back. It took everything in me, and I stayed clean and sober.

Job of Hope was everything I needed at the right time. It was the support and guidance that I needed, just the love, the care and concern to make me feel like I was important, my kids were important, everything was worth it. Because there were times I just didn't know if it was worth it, if I was important enough, if I was good enough. But the kids having their parents back in their lives, that's the best thing, and not giving up and fighting the good fight and taking it one day at a time, one step at a time. My goal now is just to give back, whether it's to the guys or the community, because success is possible. I try not to plan so far ahead, but in the future, I see myself raising my family and not being absent anymore, being there on the weekends, at parent-teacher conferences, taking them to dance or karate or whatever they're involved in at the time, and just showing them that they're important, and that our family is important.

New Case Manager: Welcome Opal Hatfield!



Join us in giving a warm welcome to our new Case Manager, Opal Hatfield!

Born in Casper, Wyoming, Opal moved to Colorado at the age of four and was raised in the small town of Castle Rock, Colorado. Always being a person of compassion, Opal discovered a deep passion and calling to serve others as she overcame her own struggles with drug addiction, mental illness, and self worth. After months of hard work, dedication, and developing her relationship with the Lord, Opal found healthier pathways to living and has devoted the last nine years to helping others achieve change through her work as a Youth Leader with the Salvation Army, Peer Support Specialist with North Range Behavioral Health and United Health Group, Correctional Monitor for Community Corrections, and now as the Reentry Case Manager for Jobs of Hope. Opal is excited and honored to be working with the men of this program and grateful for the opportunity to be a part of their journey of transformation.

New Board Member: Welcome Dan Ordaz!

Jobs of Hope is excited to welcome Dan Ordaz to our Board of Directors. Dan is currently a middle school administrator in Denver, and has an extensive career in non-profit social services. In 1996, Dan co-founded The Tenacious Group, a non-profit in San Jose, CA which has gone into middle schools and high schools to help at-risk young people to develop a sense of purpose and motivation and to take a stand for their families, education and community for over 20 years. Dan has a deep desire to follow God's calling to help people that no one else cares about, and he was drawn to serve at Jobs of Hope after hearing testimonies from participants who have been positively impacted by Jobs of Hope at the last three annual banquets. Dan brings a broad management skillset and expertise in policy development, strategic planning, board governance, and finance to the table, and we are glad to introduce him as the latest addition to the board!



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