

2023 Impact Report



VOA
NORTHERN
ROCKIES

Dustin's Journey:

From Combat to Compassion

Your support empowered more Veterans than ever to find hope and safety.

Please read the following story of our very own VOA employee, Dustin.

Serving with the 82nd Airborne Division in Iraq, I learned quickly that the cost of war was high, yet there seemed no payment method adequate for the toll it took. Returning home, I carried not just the memories of my service, but also deep, invisible scars – those of PTSD and moral injury (the psychological effect from actions that clashed with my moral beliefs). These challenges, unforeseen and profound, impact every aspect of my life.

When I first heard about VOA, their support for Veterans, and their Moral Injury program, I realized that I was looking for a sense of understanding, maybe a bit of solace. **Struggling to make sense of my experiences, I felt isolated, battling internal storms that were as relentless as any enemy faced in combat.** The Moral Injury program was a beacon of hope in a tumultuous time. It provided a space to confront my experiences and start to find meaning in them.

The realities of war are harsh. But a more silent, yet equally devastating battle followed me back home. **Tragically, I have lost more fellow Paratroopers to suicide to date within our battalion than we did during our deployments.** This stark reality underscores the heavy, often unseen toll of service and the critical need for support systems for Veterans.

Each loss is a painful reminder of the struggles we continue to face long after leaving the battlefield. It strengthens my resolve to work with VOA, to extend a helping hand to those who might be silently suffering, ensuring that the sacrifices made in service are met with the care and understanding they deserve back home.

Realizing that my struggles, as harrowing as they were, could assist others. I had found a new purpose, and that was facilitating sessions in the Moral Injury program by using my journey to support fellow Veterans. It was about transforming my battles into a source of hope for others.

1,615

Veterans Received Assistance with Housing, Employment, Healthcare, and Other Resources.



98

Veterans Served in the Moral Injury Program.



Over the years, my role with VOA has evolved. From a participant to a facilitator, and now as an employee, I've seen the breadth of its impact – not just on Veterans but on anyone grappling with similar challenges.

My story is a common thread among many Veterans who find in VOA, a pillar of support and a pathway to healing. **Working with VOA has shown me the power of empathy and community support, and how these can transform lives.** In the days that I feel the most alone, I can open my eyes and realize that I am not.

This is shared not to focus on my own struggles or accomplishments, but to highlight the journey many Veterans undertake and the significant role organizations like VOA play in our lives. It's about our collective journey of overcoming adversity and finding a renewed sense of purpose and identity.

In this impact report, my story joins the chorus of voices who have found strength and solace through VOA. It's about resilience, hope, and the transformative impact of compassion and support.

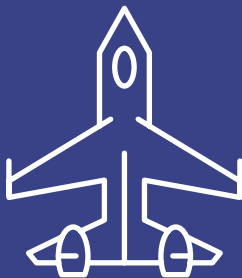
I pray that this is a narrative that doesn't just resonate with Veterans but speaks to the heart of anyone facing adversity. It's about the unyielding human spirit and the profound impact of compassion and community support.

I am truly thankful for VOA, its employees and volunteers; the Veterans Administration; the Department of Labor; and the donors who support this amazing organization.



4,027

Veterans Received Hope and Support in 2023.





*Stephen had
no one to turn
to until he
found VOA.*

Stephen's Journey: From Uncertainty to Certainty

*Thanks to your support, children were able to find a
secure and loving home.*

In the rolling hills of Buffalo, Wyoming, a young boy named Stephen began a journey that would shape his life in ways he could never have imagined. Born into an unstable environment, Stephen's early years were marked by constant movement. **By the age of ten, he found himself navigating through a series of foster homes.** His journey took him from Buffalo to Alabama, then to Colorado, before finally bringing him back to Wyoming, where he found a semblance of stability at Milestones Youth Home.

Finding a stable foster home proved difficult. Many potential families were unable or unprepared to take him in, leaving Stephen's caseworker with few options.

It was then that VOA entered Stephen's life. Unable to secure a foster home, his Department of Family Services caseworker turned to VOA's Youth Services, where Stephen found more than just a temporary shelter. He found a community.

Initially, Stephen was hesitant, finding the new environment intimidating and preferring solitude. However, with time, he adjusted, finding his rhythm and a sense of belonging among the staff and his peers.

Here, Stephen discovered solace in music and creativity. In his spare moments, he would play melodies on his guitar and write music. His artistic talents didn't stop there; Stephen also developed a passion for fashion. He learned to sew, dreaming of one day owning a fashion store, a place where his creativity could flourish.

Stephen's connection with VOA grew deeper. He saw VOA as a home, a place that offered comfort during the most challenging times of his life.

The word support became synonymous with his experiences at VOA. On hard days, the staff and his peers were his pillars, providing a listening ear

and comforting presence. Reflecting on the sense of belonging and comfort he found at VOA, Stephen expressed his feelings perfectly, **"It just felt like home."**

Stephen's empathy, once a source of inner turmoil, became his strength. He learned to open up to others about his struggles. The staff at VOA recognized his leadership qualities, seeing him as a role model for others. Stephen's journey with VOA transformed him from a reserved individual to someone more outgoing and connected with those around him.

Perhaps the most powerful piece of Stephen's story is his adoption. **The moment he could finally use the terms 'mother' and 'father' was a milestone, filled with mixed emotions. Leaving his VOA family was bittersweet, but Stephen could finally embrace his forever home and family.**

Stephen's story is more than a narrative of challenges and triumphs; it's a testament to the transformative power of care, support, and community. It highlights the impact that each donation to VOA can have, (including funding from Wyoming Department of Family Services) changing lives and shaping futures.

*As Stephen continues to write
his story, he carries with him the
lessons, love, and strength he
found at VOA, a place he proudly
calls his first home.*

*"It just felt nice
knowing that I had
someone there for me
when I was hurting..."*



4,898

*Days of Services Provided
to Youth Residential
Homes.*



*We Successfully
Reunited*

85%

*of Children with their
Families.*



289

*Children had Safety and
Support when they Needed
it Most.*

Micah's Journey: From Hopeless to Hopeful

Through your support, our Ministry guided individuals to a faith-filled life in Christ.

Micah's extraordinary journey from the depths of addiction to a life of recovery is not just a tale of resilience and community support but a profound testimony to the transformative power of faith, particularly his relationship with Christ, and the pivotal role played by VOA in guiding him toward healing.

In various urban landscapes, from gritty streets to challenging neighborhoods, Micah faced the harsh realities that many addicts confront. Survival was a daily battle in communities rife with violence, gang affiliations, and frequent shootings.

Sleeping on buildings exposed him to the brutal elements, where the air conditioner fans blew out hot air even on freezing days. The struggle was palpable, witnessing friends succumb to overdose, grappling with the specter of suicide, and experiencing horrors that haunted his nightmares. **Micah's adult life was marked by a turbulent cycle of incarceration, each offense bringing him closer to a potential ten-year sentence as a habitual offender.** The turning point in Micah's life occurred in Wyoming, where he encountered a compassionate group of people who not only recognized his need for help

but also emphasized the importance of faith in his journey. While at VOA's residential treatment, with funders such as Wyoming Department of Health, Micah was invited by a dedicated group that invested significant time and effort, sharing their knowledge and support to save his life and begin his personal relationship with Christ.

This experience instilled a newfound hope in Micah, who began incorporating core values and forgotten strategies into his recovery journey, placing significant emphasis on his relationship with Christ. **Through prayer, reflection, and a deepening connection with his faith, Micah found solace and strength to combat addiction.**

Changing his surroundings, meeting new sober individuals, learning to take timeouts, and growing in his relationship with Jesus became pivotal in his path to sobriety.

Micah speaks on how VOA played an instrumental role in this transformative process, with VOA's ministry-focused approach making a significant impact. Micah expresses profound gratitude, stating, **"I want to thank the VOA for giving me the tools to succeed."** These tools, rooted in their ministry principles, became the cornerstone of Micah's healing.

Sobriety brought about a remarkable transformation in Micah's life. Establishing multiple jobs and securing a career marked a stark departure from his troubled past. He found stability with his own apartment and reconnected with his family. **His relationship with his parents, especially his mother, was restored, and Micah revels in being part of his family again, attributing his healing and success to the transformative power of his relationship with Christ and the ministry-focused approach of VOA in guiding him toward a life of fulfillment and connection.**

2,581 Bible Studies &
Chapel Services held in 2023.

1,995 Volunteer Hours
for Ministry Services.

250
Meaningful Faith
Coaching Sessions
were Held in 2023.

Lily's Journey:

From Darkness to Light

Your gift brought hope to those struggling with mental health conditions.

Lily's journey through mental health struggles to a place of hope is a profound testament to VOA's continuum of care and the resilience of the human spirit. **Her story begins at 16 years old when the grip of a meth addiction first took hold.** This early encounter with substance abuse marked the beginning of a challenging road, one that would test her strength and willpower for many years to come.

Despite the hardships, a pivotal moment arrived with the birth of her son when Lily was just 21 years old. This life-changing event sparked a deep-seated desire for change, motivating her to pursue sobriety and a positive mental health journey. For the next decade, Lily dedicated herself to a clean life, striving to be a responsible and caring mother.

However, the path of recovery is often fraught with setbacks, and Lily found herself succumbing to the lure of alcohol and other drugs, leading to a harrowing period of homelessness and severe mental health issues.

During these darkest hours, Lily faced immense struggles. She grappled with deep-seated fears and despair, leading to several attempts to take her own life. It was a period of profound vulnerability and pain, where she felt overwhelmed by her circumstances. However, it was also during this time, in the confines of a hospital, that Lily first encountered the services offered by VOA in Behavioral Health Services with funders like Wyoming Department of Health. This discovery marked the beginning of a transformative chapter in her life.



Lily battled with her mental health for years before turning to VOA.

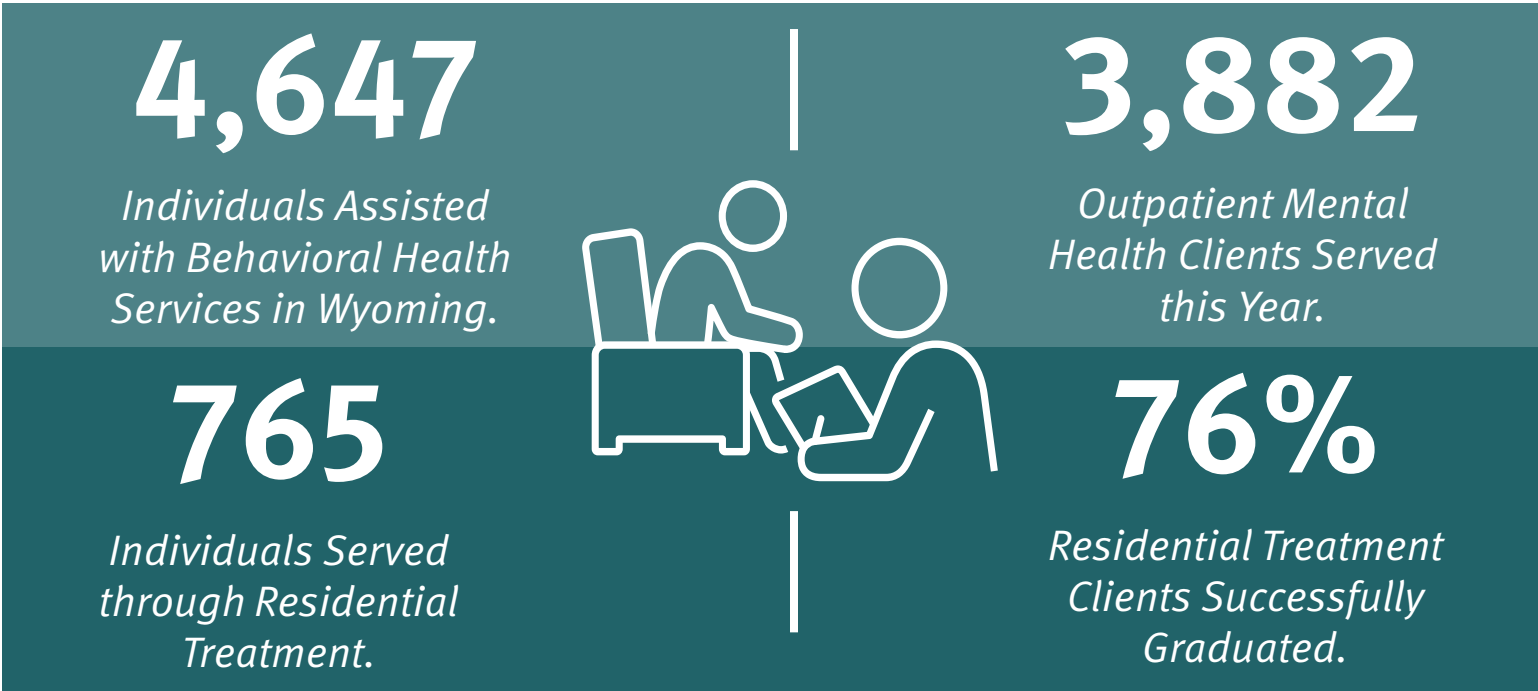
Initially hesitant and overwhelmed by the prospect of confronting her mental health issues, Lily took a courageous step and sought help. She embarked on her recovery journey at VOA's Crisis Stabilization facility, Serenity Place, followed by VOA Transitional Housing, Mirror Lake Manor, where she found not just treatment but a community.

These programs offered her the guidance and care she needed, creating a nurturing environment that allowed her to heal and grow. Lily learned that recovery, much like raising a child, requires a community's support. **In her own words, VOA became her "village", providing the family support she had longed for.**

The impact of VOA on Lily's life has been nothing short of transformative. Today, she speaks of her journey with a sense of hope and profound gratitude. Her relationship with her son, once strained, has flourished. Witnessing his mother's remarkable progress, he now aspires to join the Air Force, reassured and proud of his mother's stability and progress. For Lily, the challenge of living

independently, a new experience in her journey of recovery, is made easier by the continual support and camaraderie of the VOA staff and her peers in the program.

Lily's story is a powerful illustration of the impact that VOA's Behavioral Health Services has. **Her journey from the depths of addiction and mental health struggles to a place of hope and stability underscores the critical role organizations like VOA play in individual recovery stories.** Her experience is a beacon of hope for many, serving as an inspiring example of the possibility of change and the importance of community support in navigating the complex journey of mental health and recovery.



At VOA our clients path to sobriety merges with our commitment to success, making their recovery our proudest achievement.

Our vision is to see everyone living in the fullness of a healthy body, mind, and spirit.

Rick's Journey:

From the Brink of Despair to a New Beginning

Your support provided vital assistance to Veterans like Rick, turning homelessness into hope.



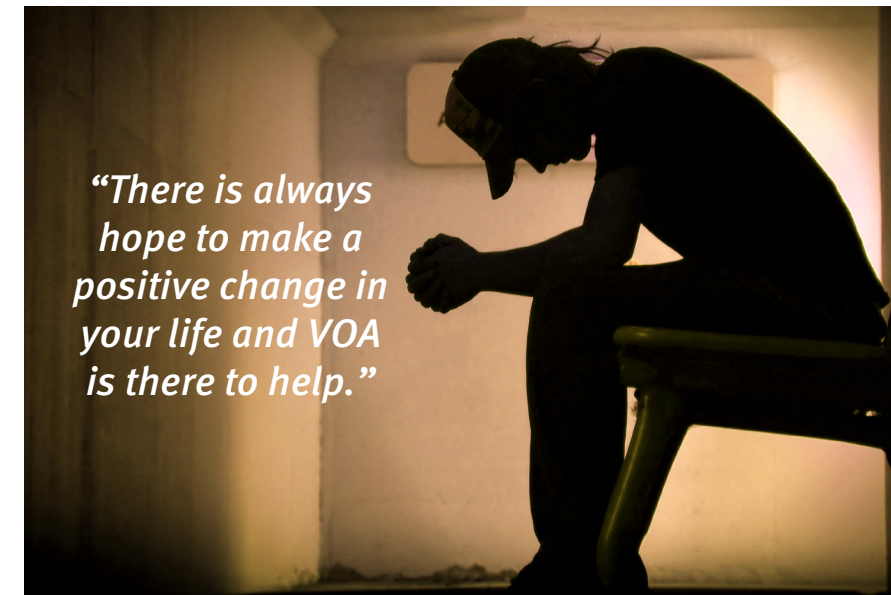
Rick, now in his 40s, has a life story that reads like a chronicle of survival against all odds. Born in Texas and adopted into an environment where abuse was a grim daily reality, Rick found early solace in the dangerous embrace of street life. Yet, even amid the turmoil, he had dreams of stability and service, dreams that led him to the Army – only for an injury in basic training to derail his aspirations, though he still receives benefits due to the injury.

Life threw its hardest punches at Rick. Marital struggles left deep scars, and the challenge of raising four children was compounded by a work injury that stripped him of his livelihood. **“If it wasn't for VOA, I would be dead...”** Rick admits with stark honesty. His testimony is not just words but a chilling reflection of a man on the edge.

Desperate for help, he walked through VOA's doors and quickly found a lifeline he so desperately needed. VOA provided Rick with the means to keep a roof over his head – without which, he says, “I would be living in my truck.”

Education became tangible as VOA supported Rick's return to school in Montana, and addressed his medical needs, ultimately securing a higher disability rating. This triumph was a turning point, granting him the financial stability to buy a home – a sanctuary for a man who had known little peace.

Rick's message to those who find themselves in the dire straits of their past is one of resilient hope: **“It's difficult but there is light at the end of the tunnel, and VOA will fight for you tooth and nail.”**



“There is always hope to make a positive change in your life and VOA is there to help.”

Rick's story is a testament to VOA's unwavering commitment and the tangible results yielded by those who support VOA.

Now, Rick stands on his own soil, a homeowner charting his course one day at a time, his basic needs met, his dignity restored. His gratitude to VOA is profound, rooted in a judgment-free support that he had never experienced before. **“Trust VOA with everything, they know what they are doing,”** he advises, reinforcing the belief that there is always room to forge a better path in life.

Rick's final words resonate with the power of transformation that VOA facilitates: “There is always hope to make a positive change in your life and VOA is there to help.”

His narrative is a powerful call to action – a plea for support, a reminder of the resilience of the human spirit, and an invitation to others to reach out for the help that is eagerly offered.

6,337

Individuals & Families
Received Assistance from our
Homeless Service Programs.



381

Households Assisted with
Rapid Response Housing
Services in Wyoming.



1,479

Veterans Received Housing
Assistance & Homeless
Services this Year.

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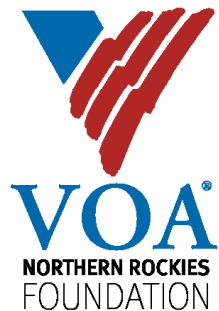


Amy Moon



Sidney Fitzpatrick

VOA NORTHERN ROCKIES FOUNDATION



The VOA Northern Rockies Foundation was created in 2023 to ensure the longevity of services and mission impact for generations to come. Your planned gift can leave a legacy that harnesses hope and re-shapes futures through the faith-based ministry of VOA.

Scan the QR Code to Learn More.

VOANR.org/Foundation



John Muecke

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



The Board of Directors for VOA Northern Rockies stands united in celebrating all that VOA accomplished in FY2023. We are grateful to our funders and donors for supporting the transformational work of our Ministry of Service. Our organizational growth this year was a demonstration of both significant human need and VOA being a premier social service provider. The ministry provided for the spiritual care of both staff and clients through the unwavering dedication of our ministers and volunteer faith coaches. We strive daily towards our vision of “everyone living in the fullness of a healthy body, mind, and spirit.”

VOA provides direct services to our community’s most vulnerable and remains committed to equipping those we serve with tools, training and support for long-term success. Among these tools is The Recovery Podcast, which serves as a source of hope year-round, with interviews from global authors, faith leaders, and personal testimonies of the transformative change we foster. I would encourage you to tune into these podcasts and witness firsthand the breadth of VOA’s commitment to bring light and hope to all people.

Our desire is for VOA to be a ministry that will stand the test of time as funder priorities and human needs change. In order to position VOA for that future, I am excited to share the formation of the VOA Northern Rockies Foundation. The VOA Northern Rockies Foundation will allow donors to participate in the personal and spiritual transformation of lives for generations to come. Please consider supporting the foundation and help us build lasting mission support.

As we embark into the new year, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude for the good work of our staff, the commitment of our volunteers and the trust of our clients. This includes each one of our board members, who not only volunteer their time, but contribute financially. It is our privilege to serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by serving VOA Northern Rockies.

God Bless,

John W. Muecke
Board Chair
VOA Northern Rockies



VOA

NORTHERN ROCKIES

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