

Endowment Supports Long-Term Success of Step Denver

DID YOU KNOW STEP DENVER HAS AN ENDOWMENT with Community First Foundation to ensure its program of sobriety, work and accountability will continue for generations to come? Endowments provide a steady revenue source, allow donors like you to leave a legacy, and offer stability, fiscal responsibility and prudent planning. Gifts made to the Step Denver Endowment will be held in perpetuity and are eligible for a matching grant from Community First Foundation of \$.25 per dollar. That means we can receive an additional \$10,000 in matching grants this year! Please consider a gift that provides a reliable source of funds to be used each year towards helping low-income men overcome addiction and become productive, contributing members of society. For more information please contact Jordan Fouts, Director of Development at 720-439-8487 or jfouts@stepdenver.org.



StepDenver
A Hand Up Not a Hand Out

2029 Larimer Street
Denver, CO 80205
StepDenver.org

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Please use the enclosed donation envelope to provide vital support for our men.

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Work Works: Personal Banker Overcomes Personal Demons. See story, page 3

Spring 2017

Step Inside Step Denver:

Meet Santiago Ceja, Facilities Supervisor at Step Denver



Santiago Ceja, Facilities Supervisor, Step Denver

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF. My name is Santiago Ceja. I have four sons and I am the youngest of twelve brothers and sisters. I had an average childhood with caring parents who brought me up right. However, later on in my life I started experimenting with drinking. Getting “that buzz” and fitting in with my friends turned into an ongoing occurrence. Eventually my drinking was on a regular basis and it started to effect my personal life, along with causing stress and worry to my family. My drinking got to the point to where my family didn’t want me around and would exclude me from any family functions.

I was a weekly patient at multiple detox facilities. I would leave to go on walks and wouldn’t come back because I’d get picked up and taken to detox, which my wife came to expect. She knew that more than likely I would not be back when I’d leave. She already knew the “drill”. My family, including my four sons, lost all hope and trust in me. I never saw my boys because they never wanted to be around their drunk dad, which was all the time.

I didn’t care about anything except drinking, pacing in front of the liquor store waiting until it opened. I honestly thought that this was my destiny. The beginning of the end was when I got a phone call at work telling me that my oldest son had just passed away from addiction. He was only

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Car Donations

YOU PROBABLY KNOW that you can donate your car or truck to Step Denver and receive a tax deduction for the gross amount it sells for. But do you know that you can also donate your motorcycles, RVs, and even boats? Our expanded warehouse and dedicated team make it easier than ever for you to make a big impact and benefit from the tax deduction.

We make it easy! Give us your title and the keys and we take care of the rest! We arrange pick-up or drop-off. We try to maximize your donation to benefit our program in the most impactful way.



To donate today go to StepDenver.org or call 303-296-9020.

Step 13 is Now Step Denver!

STEP 13 ANNOUNCED MARCH 3RD that it will now be called Step Denver. The origin of the name “Step 13” is unknown beyond myths and legends. It has been said that Step 13 was the “step after the twelfth step.” We have also heard that Step 13 is a reference to Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles, along with the thirteen stripes on the American flag—inferring that with God and Country no man is beyond redemption. Despite the name’s unknown origins, Step 13 has continued to represent the pillars visionary leader Bob Coté set forth—“Sobriety, Work, and Accountability.”

Today, Step 13 has remained true to Bob’s vision while further developing programs around sobriety support, career development, and life skills training. The change from Step 13 to Step Denver aligns with the organization’s intention of expanding geographically.

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Step Denver Announces New Director of Programs, Andrew McClure



Andrew McClure, Director
of Programs, Step Denver

ANDREW McCCLURE IS A COLORADO NATIVE with an extensive resume helping those struggling with the disease of addiction. He, himself, became a recreational drug user at age 11. As a child in advanced classes he was regularly suspended from school and arrested for drug and weapons offenses. This led to jails, switching schools and multiple trips to treatment centers and sanitariums.

By age 16 Andrew had become fully addicted to cocaine, alcohol and other drugs; choosing a life away from his loving family to live a street life of crime and violence. A

few extremely violent near death experiences only furthered his obsession with the escape offered by drugs and ultimately he began traveling the country to run from himself. In heroin, while living on the streets of San Francisco, Andrew found his lost concept of "home". He would spend his remaining years of addiction frequenting hospitals, jails and regularly finding himself losing days or even weeks of time.

Having returned to Colorado, experiencing multiple unsuccessful attempts to stay sober, Andrew remained in semi-regular contact with an outreach worker from a Denver based homeless services program. This man allowed Andrew into a housing program for young adults with severe substance use disorders, in spite of the fact that for two years he had been unable to pass his required initial drug screen. Two heart attacks and a mild stroke over a one year period led to Andrew's final surrender, and the housing program offered Andrew the stability and support necessary to rebuild his life.

While a resident in the long-term housing and recovery program, Andrew connected with a peer recovery community. He remains active in that community and has been sober since August 21st, 2005. At a year sober he quit his job in the music industry and started working as a street outreach worker for Urban Peak, the organization that had helped him get sober. He spent 6 years as an outreach counselor and housing case manager, getting involved in advocacy and drug policy reform. Later he served as Executive Director of a non-profit he helped to start and in January of 2017 he joined Step Denver as Director of Programs.

Throughout his recovery Andrew has found ways to experience all that life has to offer. He's an avid mountain climber, a daily fitness enthusiast and loves 4 wheeling in the Colorado Mountains or riding his Harley Davidson. Recovery means many things to people. To Andrew it means freedom and living on borrowed time. We are thrilled to have Andrew join the Step Denver family.

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27 years old. This was obviously devastating. I was filled with guilt, anger, disbelief and confusion. I drowned myself in the bottle and lost my job. I ended up at detox once again and received some information about Step 13, now Step Denver. I thought I'd give it a try because nobody else would help me or take me in, so I had nowhere to go. This was the best choice I ever made. A lot of people might say, "Step saved my life". I can honestly say this too because I've been at Step for more than 4 years now, first as a resident and now as an alumni employee. I am so thankful for what they have done for me. I am fortunate enough to have the opportunity to be a part of their staff, empowering me to improve myself. Step isn't just about sobriety, it's about learning lifelong skills to live a normal life. I've developed more confidence in myself, along with so many other things. Step has also given me the opportunity to be of service and share my past experience with other residents. It's a gift to be able to share with them a sense of hope and understanding that they're not alone. In addition to being the Facilities Supervisor, I am also a trained peer coach that works with the new residents in their first week in the facility, teaching them skills and motivating them along the way.

I haven't drank since the first day I walked into Step Denver more than 4 years ago. I regularly see my kids and grandkids, I've gained back trust with my family and I can't remember when I've been happier, healthier and felt so good about life. If I can help at least one person and make a difference in their life, that would be awesome, because that is what Step is all about. A person cannot ask for more support than what Step Denver gives them. I will always be in their debt and so grateful to them for helping me get my life back together.

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"In our efforts to integrate more thoroughly with the recovery community and with the goal of growing the Step program throughout Colorado and the United States, we have chosen a name that further engages our community and allows for other communities to add the Step brand to their city name. Our goal is to help as many men, in as many communities as possible. While our name may be changing our program and its core principles of sobriety, work and accountability will not," said Executive Director Paul Scudo.

The goal of Step Denver is the same as Step 13's goal in 1983: to provide a sober, safe living environment where residents can rebuild their lives. The overall goal is for participants to graduate from the program and become productive, contributing members of society. Step has received national attention for a dynamic recovery program, its sustainable funding model geared toward self-sufficiency (the organization will accept no government funding), its "Work Works" program in which 95% of the men receive full-time, tax-paying jobs within the first two weeks of entering the program, and its accountability model helping men toward personal responsibility and self-respect. For more information visit StepDenver.org.



Mark Peterson

Work Works: Personal Banker Overcomes Personal Demons

BEHIND HIS AFFABLE PERSONALITY and restaurant successes, Step Denver graduate Mark Peterson was desperately hiding his grief. He lost his mom in 1998 from several health complications, and lost his sister a few years later to cancer. He withdrew and became obsessed with his work – putting in 80 to 85 hours a week. The sorrow inside began to build, until he stopped drinking for social reasons, and turned to alcohol to cope with his overwhelming emotional pain.

"I was using alcohol to deal with my grief, even as I was watching my marriage fall apart," Mark said. Finally, after his marriage ended and friends tried unsuccessfully to intervene, Mark said he reached such a low point a couple of years ago that, "I cried out to God, 'I need a sign! Show me what to do.' I knew I was the only one who could change my situation."

It was at that point that he took back control of his life. He moved from Colorado Springs to Denver and joined Step Denver in May 2016.

It was through the Step Denver Goodwill Career Connections Center that Mark learned about the Goodwill BankWork\$

program, which provides an eight-week intensive course in financial services job training to low-income young adults and those with barriers to employment – at no cost for participants. After taking an assessment test, Mark was one of 24 people chosen for that program, out of more than 100 applicants. "I really committed to it. I needed a career makeover and a change," he said.

Mark graduated from BankWork\$ in October 2016, and was hired by U.S. Bank shortly after. "The support I've gotten here, from my interim managers to my coworkers, has been instrumental in helping me with my career," Mark said. "I really love this organization, so wherever my career takes me, I know I'm in the right place."

Mark graduated from Step Denver in February and is happy to report that he has been sober for more than a year, he has a wonderful girlfriend and he's gotten very involved in his church.

"A friend of mine gave me some advice when I was really struggling," he said. "My friend said, 'You know, Mark, you've been a successful guy all your life, except now. You have to change only one thing in your life ... everything.'"