

The Hero In Each of Us



www.LASuicidePreventionNetwork.org
10th Annual Summit

Friday, September 11, 2020

Hope, Transformation, Wellbeing: The Hero in Each of US: Finding Your Role in Suicide Prevention

DAY 3 PROGRAM

Opening & Introductions 8:30 a.m.-9:00 a.m/Veterans & Suicide Panel Moderator

Colette Thomas, LCSW, has been a Psychiatric Social Worker with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health since 2018. She currently works as a Veteran Community Suicide Prevention Coordinator, a liaison between the Greater Los Angeles Veteran Affairs and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health for suicide prevention, with the Veteran Peer Access Network. Colette is the co-chair of the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Network Veterans Workgroup. Colette received her Master of Social Work degree from California State University, Los Angeles, where her area of emphasis included Children, Youth, Women, and Families. Colette is also a graduate of the New Center for Psychoanalysis 2-Year Adult Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Program. Colette is an "Army Brat" and Air Force veteran who is passionate about working with veterans and their families, individuals who have experienced trauma, and individuals in recovery of substance use. She is a strong advocate for suicide prevention, trauma informed care, destigmatizing mental health support, and increasing access to consistent psychotherapy services.



James Zenner was with the Greater Los Angeles VA Medical Center in Los Angeles from '17-'18 serving as the Peer Coordinator for the largest homeless veteran program in the

country until joining the LA County Department of Mental Health team July of 2018 where he is in charge of leading the County's effort to create the Veteran Peer Access Network. James' educational background includes a BA in Psychology from Saint Martin's University, and an MSW from University of Southern California.

Mr. Zenner served in the United States Army from 2004 to 2008 with 1-14 Cavalry 3rd SBCT 2nd Infantry Division as an all source intelligence analyst. He deployed in June of 2006 with his unit to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Stephen Peck, who served as a Marine officer in Vietnam, heads the nation's largest nonprofit devoted to providing housing and other essential services to at-risk veterans. United States Veterans Initiative (U.S.VETS), which opened its first facility in Los Angeles in 1993 and has grown to 11 sites in five states and the District of Columbia, serving more than 4,000 veterans a day. Yearly, U.S.VETS helps 8,000 veterans find housing and more

than 1,500 veterans gain full-time jobs. Peck graduated from Northwestern University in 1968 and entered the Marine Corps that same year. In Vietnam, he was a first lieutenant in the 1st Marine Division, serving as a forward observer outside of Danang in 1969, receiving the Navy Commendation Medal. After his service, Peck followed his father into the movie business, devoting his talents to documentary films. Eventually, a series of films on homelessness and veteran's issues compelled him to move from behind the camera to become a full-time advocate.

Continues to page 2



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH
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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health



Didi Hirsch
SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER



CAL VET
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Keith Boylan was appointed February 11th 2013 by Governor Brown as Deputy Secretary for the Veterans Services Division at the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

Keith served in the US Army from 1989-1992 as a Tactical Fire Specialist and was deployed to Iraq with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment in support of Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and Desert Calm.

After graduating from San Francisco State University, Mr. Boylan began working with the Legal Unit at Swords to Plowshares, a non-profit veteran service agency in San Francisco. During this time, he advocated for veterans and provided direct claim representation before the USDVA and Board of Veteran Appeals on their behalf.

Keith later served as the Government Relations and Community Education Director for the Institute for Veteran Policy. There his efforts focused on the development and implementation of the Combat to Community (C2C) program. The C2C program included cultural competency trainings for law enforcement, first responders, HR professionals, clinicians, post-secondary faculty, faith-based providers, and legal advocates.

Most recently, Keith served as the Government Relations Liaison for the California Association of Veteran Service Agencies (CAVSA). CAVSA is a consortium of non-profit veteran service agencies throughout the state that provide housing, employment, and mental health services to more than 20,000 veterans a year.

In his current role as Deputy Secretary with CalVet, Keith shepherds the provision of services and access to benefits for the more than 1.8 million veterans in the state. This responsibility includes: all compensation and pension claims and appeals filed with the USDVA, the approval and oversight of all post-secondary institutions in California for reception of GI Bill benefits, the Veteran Housing and Homeless Prevention (VHHP) program, State Veteran Cemeteries, Veteran Memorials and Monuments, the Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise (DVBE) program, Incarcerated Veterans program, and all outreach efforts statewide. —



Keynote Speaker 9:10a.m.-10:40a.m.

Finding the reasons to live when dying makes sense

Nathan Graeser is both a Social Worker and an Army Chaplain in the California National Guard. He serves on numerous local and national boards and is a national expert on policies and programs for supporting service-members transitioning out of the military. He has led multiple Veteran initiatives including Warrior Bards, the Los



Angeles Veterans Collaborative and, most recently with Southern California Grantmakers to build the first county-wide Veteran Peer Access Network. As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, he has worked tirelessly to counsel hundreds of veterans and their families who return home from war. He obtained a Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary, a Masters in Social Work, and a Doctorate in Social Work from the University of Southern California. Most recently, he was called up for the protests in downtown Los Angeles and a Balkan deployment with the 79th Infantry Brigade in December 2018. He lives in Highland Park in an eco-friendly house with chickens, bees and three small humans ages six, four and two. His rock star wife, Rachel, makes it all possible. —

SESSION NINE - 10:50 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

First Responders & Suicide

“Who watches the watchers? Protecting and serving those who protect and serve.”

Beyond PTSD: Impact of cumulative trauma. Rethinking equitable and trauma informed services for those who serve and the communities they serve.

First Responders & Suicide Panel Moderators

Dr. Miatta R. Snetter is a California licensed Clinical Psychologist, who earned both her Master’s and Doctoral degrees from Pepperdine University, where she was trained to provide a full range of mental health services. For



the last 15 years, she has focused on providing direct clinical services to our Nation’s veterans, having worked with the Veteran’s Administration, Vet Centers, and Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC). She is a sought-after expert on matters of veteran combat and non-combat trauma, military sexual trauma (MST), and other clinical challenges facing some of our Nation’s veterans.

Currently, Dr. Snetter is the Director of Clinical Services for the U.S.VETS’ “Outside The Wire Program” in Orange and Los Angeles Counties, where she and a team offer direct clinical services to student veterans on Community College campuses. This Program focuses on early intervention and prevention of chronic social, mental, and emotional difficulties that may surface among some veterans, following courageous military service. In her opinion, “Veterans are often good at serving others; however, less effective at receiving services.” And U.S.VETS, “Outside The Wire” endeavors to help bridge that gap.

Dr. Snetter also believes that a profession of “service-to-others” must inherently include service to the wider community as well, where efforts towards

Continues to page 3

normalizing effective treatments of “disorders of the human condition,” can more effectively occur. She is therefore, honored to facilitate these processes wherever they benefit others. —

Sandri Kramer, a founding member of the LASPN, has over 25 years of experience in suicide prevention and crisis center work. As Didi Hirsch’s Suicide Prevention Project and Grants Manager, she focuses on Program Development and Grants, Community Partnerships, and Public Awareness/ Training. She is currently working on developing Didi Hirsch’s Suicide Prevention Center’s online crisis services, broadening its role in emergency management as a core center of the national Disaster Distress Helpline, and strengthening the center’s collaborative partnerships with numerous law enforcement agencies. She serves as vice-president on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Crisis Organization Directors (NASCOD), as a member of the Board of the Los Angeles Region Long-Term Recovery Group, as a member of the Board of the Emergency Network Los Angeles (ENLA), and as a member of LA’s Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) Community Partnership Council. —



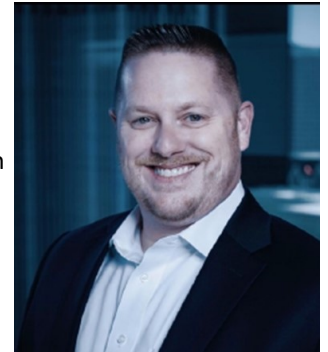
First Responders & Suicide Panel Members

Brian Malte is a nationally recognized leader in the gun violence prevention movement. Over the course of his 25-year career, Brian has led community-based movements as well as strategic political campaigns for sensible gun reforms. In 2001, Brian joined the Washington, D.C. office of the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence. First as National Field Director, then Political Director, and lastly as National Policy Director, Brian became one of the country’s most familiar spokesmen for the burgeoning gun violence prevention movement. In 2016 he returned to his California roots to helm the Hope and Heal Fund to spearhead the philanthropic movement to increase support to local violence prevention organizations and to community advocates working to end gun violence. Brian has been a featured speaker at many state and national conferences and routinely provides expert analysis to news outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *Al Jazeera*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *NPR* and *Mother Jones*. For more information on Brian and to read his blogs please visit hopeandhealfund.org



Mr. Dave Weiner has served both military and civilian communities passionately for well over 27 years in military, law enforcement and corporate security service. Mr. Weiner started his law enforcement career in the United States Air Force in 1993 as a military policeman. As his career progressed, he worked a variety of assignments such as a patrol officer, field training officer, K-9 handler, Special Response Team, Training Coordinator and in supervisory positions over both Patrol and Investigations.

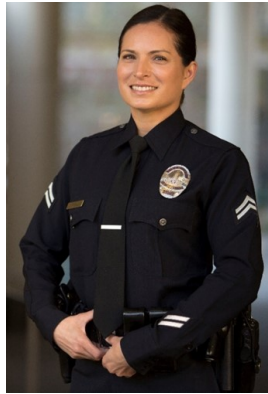
Mr. Weiner also has many years of senior leadership experience in law enforcement and corporate security. Holding executive level positions such as Director of Security and Asst. Chief of Police, Mr. Weiner successfully rose to the level of Regional Chief of Police of the US Department of Veteran Affairs Police in Long Beach Ca in 2014. During his tenure, he worked collaboratively with agencies such as LASD MET, LAPD MEU and Long Beach Police Department MET to address Veteran related issues such as crisis intervention and Suicide Prevention. He created innovative police department programs to keep the communities in which he served safer. Notably, he implemented a mental health outreach program for Veterans called VMET (Veteran Mental Evaluation Unit) and a Threat Management Unit to proactively prevent acts of violence in a healthcare setting that caters to the Veteran community. The VMET program has been adopted by the US Department of Veteran Affairs and is currently being rolled out as a pilot program at several major Veteran Affairs medical centers nationwide. —



Crystal Williams is a veteran of the US Air Force (1st Security Forces Squadron) and Army. A Distinguished Graduate from the USAF Police Academy, Crystal deployed to Kuwait twice in support of Operation Southern Watch. She was awarded an Air Force Achievement Medal for her efforts to initiate security measures after the USS Cole bombing. A military career-ending injury while training in the Army led Crystal to pursue a Master of Social Work degree at the University of Southern California, where she graduated with honors. She continues to serve the community as a licensed Psychiatric Social Worker with Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Veteran Peer Access Network. —



Police Officer III +1 Jasminka Jurisaga has been a member of the Los Angeles Police Department since 2003. She joined the Mental Evaluation Unit in December of 2014 as a Police Officer III and was promoted to the rank of Police Officer III +1 in May of 2016. Jasminka is currently the Senior Lead Officer responsible for assisting LAPD's seven Valley Bureau divisions (Van Nuys, West Valley, North Hollywood, Foothill, Devonshire, Mission, and Topanga) in mental health related issues. She has provided numerous department trainings to LAPD supervisors, senior officers, and newly assigned police officers.



Jasminka also responds to active investigations involving mental health incidents. She participates in community outreach events and provides training to community members. Jasminka graduated from San Diego State University with a Bachelors of Science in Criminal Justice. Jasminka is a mother to a 12 year old son and engaged to a fellow LAPD officer. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, watching sports, and physical fitness. —

SESSION TEN 1:00 P.M. to 2:40 P.M

Veterans & Suicide
“Bringing hope to life: What suicide prevention means to me.”
Engaging and empowering Service Members, Veterans, and their Families in safety planning

Veterans & Suicide Panel Moderators

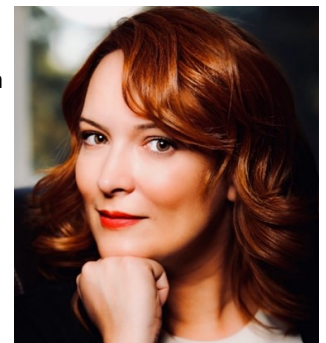
Robert Stohr is the Executive Director of U.S.VETS – Bob Hope Patriotic Hall and oversees programs and operations at U.S.VETS at Patriotic Hall in downtown Los Angeles. At U.S.VETS, Mr. Stohr oversees four distinct programs covering employment, housing, and mental health resources for veterans, and is in charge of launching a brand new effort for mental health support for women veterans. Mr. Stohr earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Minnesota and a master's degree in Educational Psychology from California State University. Following his master's degree, Mr. Stohr obtained a license as a Marriage, Family, and Child Therapist. In his 25 year career as a psychotherapist, Mr. Stohr has worked in public schools, private practice, and has facilitated communication training from couples to corporations. In addition to a private practice, his employment has included a history of



administrative positions with various non-profits. In his most recent administrative role prior to U.S.VETS, Mr. Stohr acted as Division Director for the Suicide Prevention Center of Los Angeles at Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services. At Didi Hirsch, he managed the operation of the Suicide Prevention Hotline. This hotline, located in Los Angeles, covered an area of over 11 million people and took over 70,000 calls a year. In addition to the crisis line, he supervised education, outreach, and training in suicide prevention, coordinated efforts with the Mayor's Crisis Response team, trained FBI and SWAT teams on crisis negotiation for suicide prevention, and met nationally at SAMHSA to discuss partnerships between crisis lines and local emergency departments. Mr. Stohr has presented at national conferences on a manual that he co-authored about working with suicide attempt survivors and is now active in bringing this information to the veteran community. —

Veterans & Suicide Panel Members

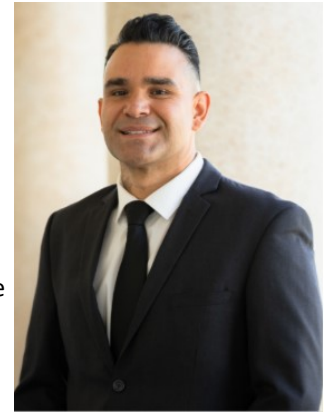
Tess Banko, MSW/MPA, is the Executive Director of the first of its kind UCLA/VA Veteran Family Wellness Center (VFWC) that serves Veterans alongside their families through resilience-based wellness programming and services in partnership with the VA Healthcare System. Tess identifies with fellow Veterans and families on their paths to wellness and empowerment, as a devastating spinal injury in the Marine Corps at age 22 led to a tumultuous return to civilian life and the passionate pursuit of continued public service through social work and organizational leadership. Tess lost her husband, an active duty Marine, to suicide while he was deployed overseas in 2004. In 2013, her own PTS surfaced in part due to sexual trauma experienced during military service. Through developing skills and knowledge in the arenas of social work, stress management, trauma, resilience and post-traumatic growth both personally and professionally, Tess believes that resilience, wellness and growth are possible under even the most challenging of circumstances. Tess is honored to continue to serve the community beside and on behalf of her military and veteran sisters, brothers and their families via assisting with knowledge, resources, and programming. She is an LA County Veterans Advisory Commissioner for 3rd District County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, a member of the Los Angeles Mayor's Veteran Suicide Prevention Challenge for Military and Veteran Families, and the 2nd Vice Chair of the Palisades American Legion Post 283. —



Roberto Alvarez works to equip and empower military service members and veterans through his role in the office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, who represents the Antelope, Santa Clarita, Crescenta, San Fernando, and San Gabriel Valleys. His job as a Special Assistant includes serving as a community liaison and overseeing policies, projects, and programs related to Military and Veterans Affairs. Prior to joining the office of Supervisor Barger, he was a District Liaison for a Pasadena Councilmember, and he proudly served in the United States Army as a Network Switch Specialist from 2010 to 2013. After medically retiring from the military, he faced difficulties reintegrating to civilian life and navigating newly diagnosed mental health issues. He received his BA in Political Science from Arizona State University in 2017. Using his personal experience, he advocates for increased military and veteran competency in county government and agencies to ensure service members, veterans, and their families have access to the comprehensive, compassionate resources they need and deserve. —



Eric Barrera is a Homeless Veteran's Outreach Worker with the Department of Mental Health's Veteran Peer Access Network. Eric works with homeless veterans wherever they are mentally and physically, to bring them a message of hope and recovery. His personal experience with untreated mental illness, self-medication, homelessness, addiction and recovery helps him connect with others that may be giving up on life. Recovery has become a beautiful part of Barrera's life and he is at his happiest when he is able to share that with others. —



With gratitude and appreciation to CalVet for their technical support and partnering for this events.

With many thanks

—The LASPN Planning Committee

National Suicide Hotline (800)273-8255



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