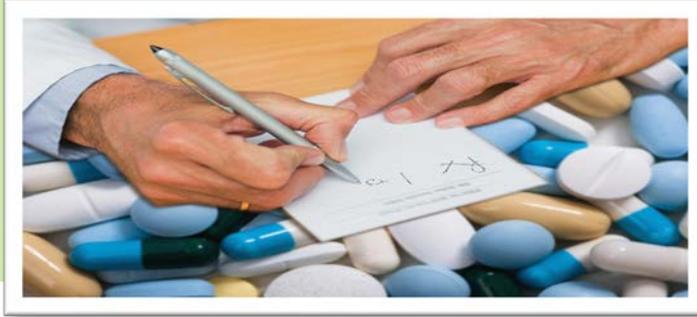




[www.royallifecenters.com](http://www.royallifecenters.com) "Because We Care" 1-877-RECOVERY

# Royal Alumni News

News and Information for the Alumni Community



## Want to Fix Americas Opioid Problem? Start with the Doctors

In response to the overuse of prescription painkillers and the opioid epidemic, states and hospitals have tightened up on the guidelines for Emergency Room prescriptions. The only problem with that is that in a new study in the "Annals of Emergency Medicine," they found that the majority of the prescriptions for Opioids are being written by Primary Physicians in the doctor's office, than by the emergency rooms.

In 2014, more than 18,000 died as a result of Opioids, and that number continues to grow as we continue to try and fight this epidemic that now claims more lives than firearms. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have recognized the role of doctors in over prescribing medication, and have issued guidelines suggesting better prescribing practices. In a study performed by the Medical Expenditure Panel, a majority of the painkiller growth can be attributed to Doctors office visits and prescription refills.

**Author Sarah Axeen**, an assistant professor at the University of Southern California, was struck in the disparity of how high-end users were getting there drugs. Just 2.4 percent of users got their prescriptions from the emergency room; while 87.9 percent come from a doctor's office. "Were seeing these high risk users have medical events," states Axeen, "When there are opportunities to intervene with them and focus on 'well, you're already a high risk user, so let's try to push you towards treatment or alternative therapies.'" Last October, President Trump declared the Opioid crisis a public-health emergency, and states such as Massachusetts and West Virginia have already started to implement insurance programs to address the large number of opioid cases and develop strategies for treatment. There is more movement and recognition to not only stop prescriptions, but to offer treatment to users. "In general, the regulatory motion is headed in the right direction," says Axeen "but it's good to have research that backs up the repeated and chronic prescribing of these medications."

C. Butera (2018). Want to Fix Americas Opioid Problem? Start with its Doctors.

## Fentanyl Overdose Surge in 2017

Vermont saw a 33% increase in fentanyl related deaths in 2017. This can be said for most states in the US, although the exact numbers are not clear. Fentanyl, which is a powerful synthetic opioid believed to be many times stronger than heroine, has been linked to many of the recent overdose deaths over the past couple of years. Fentanyl has been around since the late 1950's, but according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, the painkillers widespread abuse and death toll have only recently began generating headlines. Last Year, a Washington Post Analysis of two dozen densely populated areas found that fatal Fentanyl overdoses had jumped nearly 600% from 2014-2016. Most of the overdose deaths from fentanyl have not come from patients with prescriptions for the drug, but from the drug being manufactured illicitly and illegally, and mixed with other drugs. It is believed that some drug dealers and addicts are using and selling fentanyl laced heroin without even knowing that even a small dose can be fatal. The Deputy Health Commissioner for the state of Vermont Tracy Dolan says that, "It is very important to educate people about this, especially the younger community who are the main demographic affected by these overdoses."

M. Fahrer(2018). Fatal Overdoses Surge in 2017





## Alumni Activities

Royal Life Alumni in Prescott enjoy dinner at an Asian Buffett last month, and also caught a Northern Arizona Suns D League basketball game. Alumni Coordinator for Prescott, Scott Waddell, has devoted his efforts to making sure that completing treatment is not the end of your journey with Royal Life Centers. The relationships that are made while in treatment do not have to end when you walk out the doors, they are just the beginning!

## A Story of Hope – Allison R.

Seven months ago today I made the decision to come to treatment at Royal. It was the absolute last thing that I wanted to do - and that's exactly why I did it.

One thing I've learned throughout sobriety is that 9 times out of 10 the things I want to do the least are the things that will benefit me the most. Today I'm not the person I was when I arrived in Arizona and a huge reason for that is because of Royal. The program as well as the staff have played an instrumental role in my recovery as well as my happiness.

The people I've met have helped me to love myself again and to be a better person. I received and continue to receive so much love and support from the Royal Family. The decision I made seven months ago was definitely one of the best that I've ever made!



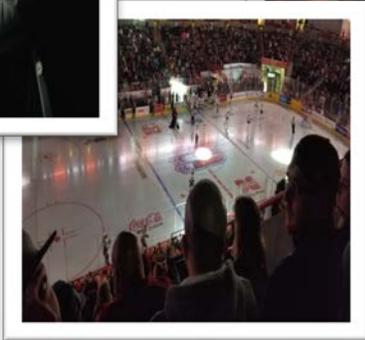
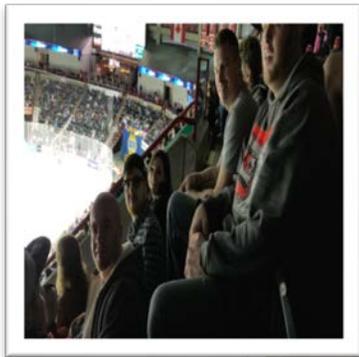
## Royal Life (Prescott, AZ)

Most Recently, Arizona has become a recovery destination for thousands of recovering addicts and alcoholics. Prescott especially, has developed a significant industry growing up around an effort to help people make an addiction free life for themselves. Royal Life Centers is extremely proud to call this city home for many of our current Alumni.



## (AZ) Sobriety Birthdays for Staff/Alumni

Monique P - Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>/ 3 years  
 Chelcie W. - Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>/1 year  
 Katherine W. - Mar. 9<sup>th</sup>/1 year  
 Victoria M. - Mar. 19<sup>th</sup>/3years  
 Pete K. - April 1<sup>st</sup>/ 2 years  
 Scott W. - April 6<sup>th</sup>/ 2 years  
 Heather C. - April 9<sup>th</sup>/ 2 years  
 Miya S. - April 10<sup>th</sup>/ 6 years  
 Jon G. - April 10<sup>th</sup>/ 2 years  
 Sara M. - April 10<sup>th</sup>/ 4 years  
 Kyle L. - May 2<sup>nd</sup>/ 6 years  
 Vlad F. - May 5<sup>th</sup>/ 2 years



## Washington State Alumni

Washington State Alumni enjoyed a Spokane Chiefs Semi-Pro hockey game and sat ringside for an amateur cage fighting event last month. Washington’s Alumni program is continuing to grow and Alum look forward to the events and meetings that are planned monthly.

### WA Staff & Alumni Birthdays

**STAFF**

Jocelyn Q. – Mar. 6<sup>th</sup> – 2years  
 Megan B. – Mar. 8<sup>th</sup> – 2years  
 Sara B. – Mar. 10<sup>th</sup> – 2years  
 Bryant N. – Apr. 5<sup>th</sup> – 2years  
 Luke C. – May 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2years  
 Teresa N. – May 5<sup>th</sup> – 5years  
 Shawn W. – May 9<sup>th</sup> – 5years  
 Kim R. – May 17<sup>th</sup> – 2years  
 Jessica D. – May 31<sup>st</sup> – 4years

**ALUMNI**

Jeremy H. – Mar. 15<sup>th</sup> – 90 days  
 Dominique J. – Mar. 15<sup>th</sup> – 6 months  
 Beau C. – Mar. 25<sup>th</sup> – 90 days  
 Austin M. - Mar. 26<sup>th</sup> – 90 days  
 Emily E. – Mar. 30<sup>th</sup> – 6 months  
 Jaime B. – Apr. 4<sup>th</sup> – 6 months  
 Alic H. – Apr. 13<sup>th</sup> – 6 months  
 Sara F. – May 6<sup>th</sup> – 6 months  
 Con J. – May 30<sup>th</sup> – 1 year



## A Story of Hope

### Elkana “Kevin” Mulamba

“Hi, my name is Elkana Mulamba and I moved to the United States in 1996 when my father was offered a job here. My life in Africa was really good and it was a huge to change to come to the United States. It was hard not knowing English at first but I picked it up quick and made friends fairly easy. In High School I discovered alcohol for the first time and began a partying lifestyle while also joining a gang known as the “Crips.” Being in this gang gave me a sense of protection, but it also led me to fights and violence on a regular basis. I also had multiple run ins with the law and racked up a few MIP charges for drinking. I didn’t think I had a problem though, and continued with the same behaviors. After graduating High School, I found Cocaine for the first time. This quickly escalated to harder drugs like Meth, and finally heroin. After I began to use heroine I started robbing and stealing to supply my habit, while racking up felony after felony along the way. After The FEDs stepped in and threatened deportation I vowed to myself that after 13 years of using I was done. After fighting my case in Jail for a year I checked myself into Royal Life Centers in Spokane,

When I was in treatment I did everything my counselor Rick Rorie told me. I attended groups, meetings, and learned how to live with others. I gained employment while in the 9 week program with Royal Life and began to work while continuing with my regular groups and meetings. I moved directly into the Royal Life Graduate House after completing treatment and stayed in touch with the people I had met. I now have my own place and over 18 months clean and sober. I work the same job and have bought two vehicles since leaving 9 week. Coming to treatment has been the best decision I have ever made in my life!

# Voice of a Felon

By Ryan Chaffins

## How long after someone is released

from prison or jail can we say that this person is not a criminal any longer? How many years does this individual need as a functioning member of society, paying taxes, and working a low paying job with no advancement before we can consider them rehabilitated? The thing is that every day there is someone out there fighting and clawing their way to a livable wage that will never get that chance. It's unfortunate that in today's world, when we are so into giving second and third chances to athletes and celebrities, we overlook the ones who are labeled before their pen hits that Employment Application. There is no one more judged in this world than the American FELON. Granted, it is very understandable as to why we are the most judged group of people there is. We have committed crimes with no thoughts of who we were hurting and of the consequences that might come from it. Burglaries, Thefts, Assaults, and possession charges are just a few of the crimes that you might commonly see throughout a convicted felons Background Check. But are these labels supposed to be connected to that individual for life? Throughout this article, I am going to dive into some topics that you might not know about the formerly incarcerated, and the fact that serious changes might need to be made if we are at all interested in dropping the crime rate, or shrinking jail and prison populations.

The date was 2008 and I had been drinking at a childhood friend's house a few hours by this point. I was very deep into an OxyContin and prescription pill addiction and so when I drank, my cravings for drugs would intensify. I had already lost the job I had held for 3 years at a local Grocery Store due to my addiction, and my life seemed to be headed in the wrong direction. This night I would make a decision that would change the course of my life forever. This one choice sent me down a road with so much misery and darkness, that it would be hard for someone to believe that I had chosen this. Yes, it was my choice to set up a pizza delivery driver, handing her a dollar bill and taking the change for the 100 that I told the restaurant was all I had. It was also my choice to run. I ran not caring or knowing that I had just committed a felony and triggered something inside of me that didn't see the difference between life and death anymore. This new version of myself was not one I was familiar with, but would come to know very well in the next 5 years. From the age of 20 to 25 I spent 3.5 years in jail and state prisons, racking up a total of seven felonies from assaults to thefts. If I wasn't in a rehab or institution, I was in my parents' basement trying to remain sober, or homeless on the streets of Spokane, looking for my next drink or high.

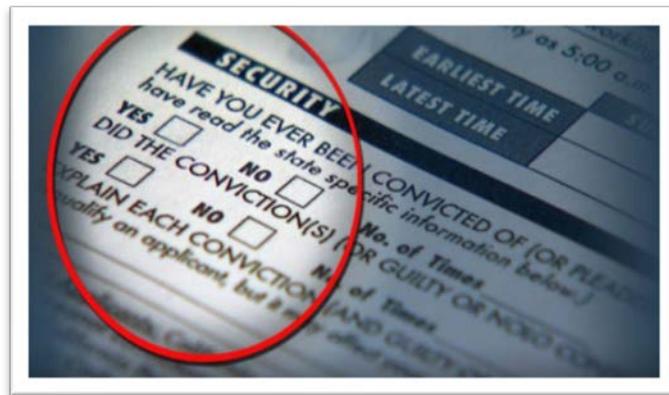


I hear a lot of people who do not understand why someone can be addicted to a drug or why someone would commit a crime say, "It's a criminal's choice to do what they did, and they deserve to deal with the consequences of their actions." I am a firm believer in the laws of this country and I 100% agree that if you do the crime, you must be held accountable and given the correct punishment. What I am advocating for right now is not those who break the law, and I am not saying that they should be treated just like everyone else all the time. I am advocating for that percentage of people who have made some huge mistakes in their life and want nothing more than to right their wrongs and be a functioning member of society. The judgement that surrounds the "Felon" is one that can be so discouraging and debilitating that it's an uphill battle with no sign of letting up. I am so glad that I did not give up on my life and throw in the towel when I felt the walls were closing in on me on a daily basis. How many do give up? How many want change so badly but are not given the tools or good luck that comes others way? I don't know the statistics but I do know that the number would be very high, and much higher than people would ever think.

You could say that I am one of the lucky ones with a serious and violent past that has made it out of the life that plagues so many felons and people addicted to substances. One of the crimes that will never probably be erased from my record is an Assault in the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree that I committed 10 years ago. This means that this crime is considered violent in Washington State and is a class A felony along with (continued on next page)

# Voice of a Felon

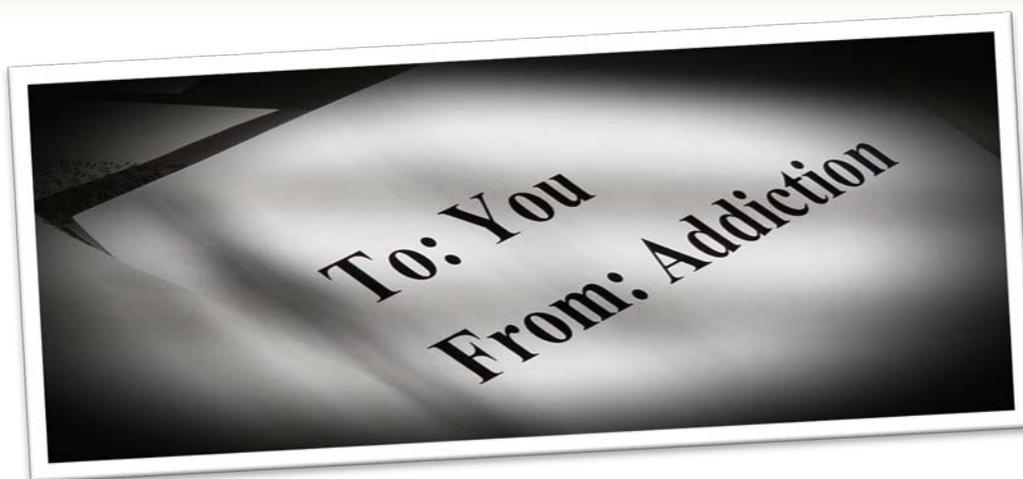
(continued)



**Murder, Robbery, etc...** Would it alarm you to know that most employers look down on a misdemeanor theft more (which would be the equivalent of stealing a stick of gum) than my assault in the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree? In fact, in my experience as an Employment Specialist for Royal Life Centers, and dealing from my own personal experiences, a theft can disqualify you from a job faster than anything. Now here is another question. Can you blame them? Probably not, seeing as how in most jobs you might be handling money and product of some value on a daily basis. Now this is where it becomes very hard to defend someone who has a history of stealing in their past, and for example wants to become a cashier. Is it possible for a human being who has a long history of stealing to work in a job where the temptation for theft seems so high? Absolutely!!! I see it all the time. Actually, most people with a criminal record who are given the opportunity to work in a place where they are trusted might be less likely to steal from a company than someone without one.

**The road for someone** who has a dark past riddled with bad decisions can be a very difficult one, even given a chance to make a livable wage. There is so much shame and regret that comes from living that kind of lifestyle that some are so broken, and their self-esteem too low to make the necessary changes. But there is a very large percentage of felons that just want an opportunity, and if given one, will flourish and go on to do incredible things with their life. Now when I say incredible things, what I am saying is that this individual will go on to be a functioning member of society and live a life worth living after living one of chaos and misery. Now for a felon, that is an incredible thing. I am not saying those with a criminal record cannot go on to win a Pulitzer prize or run a fortune 500 company, but what I am saying is that what seems like a normal life to your average person, is actually an amazing one for someone who has been through the criminal justice system. My point is not only to convince society that change is very possible in someone's life, but also to inform society that there are real benefits to employers hiring a felon. Yes I said Benefits! Not only are you giving someone a shot who you think doesn't deserve it, but you are saving money as a tax payer when that individual stays out of jail. Is it really possible for someone who used to use drugs and commit crimes to completely change their life? If only everyone could see the changes I see going on in people's lives, I know there would be a community effort to unite and do something about this problem.

**Did you know** that the prison and jail population has risen by over 600% in the last 40 years? Did you know that in one year it costs the United States 65 billion dollars to house and feed inmates in jails and prisons? That number is the second highest to only Medicaid! These numbers are very staggering and makes the average person wonder what it will take for the community to wake up and make changes to the criminal justice system. If a population rise of 600% does not alarm you, then think of what it will be in another 40 years or so. Or 10. Or 5 even. The fact that our prison and jail population are rising indicates that something in the criminal justice system is not working. I believe it starts with educating the public on these trends and showing employers that when your hiring an ex-convict, you're doing a lot more than just taking a chance on someone. You could be making a real difference towards shifting the growing amount of people being incarcerated, and giving hope to a large group of people that don't know what that word means anymore.



## IM YOUR DISEASE

I hate meetings. I hate HIGHER POWER. I hate anyone who has a program. To all who come in contact with me, I wish you death and I wish you suffering.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am the disease of addiction. Cunning, Baffling, and Powerful, that's me. I have killed millions, and I am pleased. I love to catch you with the element of surprise. I love pretending I am your friend and lover. I have given you comfort, have I not? Wasn't I there when you were lonely? When you wanted to die, didn't you call me? I was there. I love to make you hurt. I love to make you cry. Better yet, I love when I make you so numb you can neither hurt nor cry. You can't feel anything at all. This is true glory. I will give you instant gratification and all I ask of you is long-term suffering. I've been there for you always. When things were going right in your life, you invited me. You said you didn't deserve these good things; I was the only one who would agree with you. Together we were able to destroy all things good in your life.

People don't take me seriously. They take strokes seriously, heart attack seriously, even diabetes they take seriously. Fools that they are, they don't know that without my help these things would not be made possible.

I am such a hated disease, and yet I do not come uninvited. You choose to have me. So many have chosen me over reality and peace.

More than you hate me, I hate all of your who have a twelve-step program. Your program, your meetings, your Higher Power all weaken me and I can't function in the manner I am accustomed to.

Now I must lie here quietly. You don't see me, but I am growing bigger than ever. When you only exist, I may live. When you live, I only exist. But I am here...and until we meet again, if we meet again, I wish you death and suffering.

# Employees Of the Month

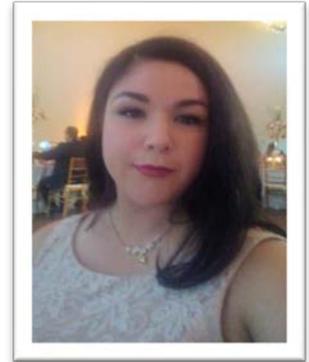
## Florida



Kristie Slinskie (DEC)



Cheryl Giroux (JAN)



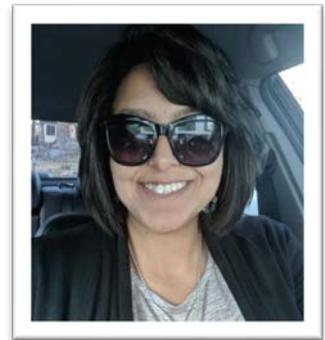
Yolín Tapia (FEB)

## Arizona



Kirk Covington (DEC)

“Congratulations to all for your outstanding dedication and going above and beyond!”

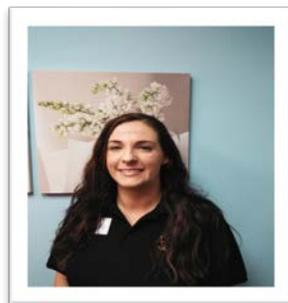


Miya Stafford (JAN)

## Washington



Ryan Chaffins (DEC)



Leia Davis (JAN)



Rick Rorie (FEB)

### DELRAY ALUMNI

We all said goodbye recently to our treatment centers in Florida, but not before our Alumni went out in style! From mixing it up with alligators, and going on a toured boat trip through the everglades, to doing a little free skating at a local Ice rink. The fun didn't end there though. Our Alumni also enjoyed a day of video gaming, rock climbing, and Go-Karting, finishing things with a friendly game of dodgeball, Alumni vs. Employees. On behalf of Royal Life Centers, We thank everyone who was a part of the treatment centers in Delray Beach, and we hope that the relationships continue well beyond treatment. Be sure to keep in touch with all other Alumni activities in our locations In Arizona and Washington!

"Because we care"

# 1-877-RECOVERY

[www.royallifecenters.com](http://www.royallifecenters.com)

